

NEWS

Week ending Thursday, April 21.

probability of passing measures demanded by the people much greater than before. There is also a clause in the new constitution providing that if certain legislation is twice demanded by the people as shown by the return of a majority of men pledged to a programme, then in the event of the Upper House still refusing, there shall be a joint sitting and on failure to agree a double dissolution and appeal to the country.

In the Federal House a great number of the members are single-taxers or strong advocates of land values taxation. Their policy is to endeavor to cause a shortage in the State revenues so as to compel a resort to direct taxation, and with this object they have prevented the Commonwealth from going into the loan market. Of course the fiscal issue has been the burning question since the foundation of the Commonwealth, and through the overwhelming Protectionist vote in Victoria that party has managed to secure a working majority in the House of Representatives—the House of initiative—though in the present parliament as a whole the Free Trade party have a majority.

But the parties are so close in the representation that nothing can be done. There is a triangular duel between the Ministry, the Opposition, and the Labor party—all fairly equal in strength. What the outcome is to be is just now of special interest. My own opinion is that if a coalition takes place between the Ministry and the Opposition (as the papers are advising), as against the Labor party, there will be defections from both sides which may give the Labor party a majority.

W. M. TRUEBRIDGE.

Sydney, N. S. W., Mar. 17.—Although Max Hirsch was defeated in Victoria for a seat in the Commonwealth parliament, we of New South Wales elected three single taxers: Edmund Lonsdale, for the New England Electorate; W. E. W. E. Johnson, for Lang, and W. H. Lee, for Cowper. In this State the free-traders simply swept the polls, returning 19 out of 26 for the Commonwealth House of Representatives, and 6 out of 6 for the Senate. The Commonwealth elections generally resulted in decidedly nailing down Chamberlain's coffin. The Opposition are against him because he is a protectionist, and the Labor party because he is an imperialist "Jingo." And these parties together form about a three-fourths majority.

J. R. FIRTH.

The real heroes do not always wear solemn faces, and do not generally deal in big words. A soldier going into battle (he was doubtless a Frenchman) found his knees trembling under him. "Shake away, old legs!" said he, "you would shake worse if you knew where I'm going to take you!"—Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

Since the sinking of the Russian flagship Petropavlovsk, with Admiral Makaroff and nearly all his officers and men on board (p. 24), there have been news dispatches in abundance regarding the Russo-Japanese war, but they have transmitted very little news. It appears to be certain that Verestchagin, the famous peace painter of war pictures, who was at the time a guest of the Russian admiral on board the ill-fated flagship, went down with the rest. But there is no certainty that the rumors of other disasters to the Russian fleet are true. From St. Petersburg it is reported with a strong show of probability that the Russian viceroy, Alexieff, who is said to have been chiefly responsible for plunging Russia into the war, has asked to be relieved. The reason given is that his bitterest enemy, Admiral Skrydloff, was appointed to succeed Makaroff in supreme command of the Russian fleet in the East.

Russia has become involved in further international difficulties by notifying neutral governments that newspaper correspondents who report movements of Russian warships and troops by wireless telegraphy will be shot as spies. The notice as received at Washington is reported from there as follows:

In a case where neutral steamers having on board correspondents who might communicate war news to the enemy by means of perfected apparatus not being yet foreseen by existing conventions, would be arrested near the coast of Kuantong or in the zone of operations of the Russian fleet, the correspondents will be looked on as spies and the steamers furnished with wireless telegraphy seized as prizes of war.

This is regarded as a direct menace to the corps of the London Times, whose chief makes the following declaration from Weihaiwei on the 18th by wireless telegram:

I possess a system of wireless telegraphy which, even if messages were not veiled by cipher, neither a Japanese nor Russian instrument could record. Messages go to the central cable office, thence to London, no one having access to them. I have never yet sailed in Russian

waters. All my messages are sent from the high seas and neutral waters. All fighting on shore which was witnessed could have been placed with neutral cables after five hours' steaming. Information has been conveyed to me that Russia threatens to treat correspondents using wireless telegraphy at sea as spies. As the London Times is the only journal which employs this means of communication, this is a direct threat upon the ship system directed by me. It behooves me, therefore, to inform the world at large of the course I am pursuing and call upon the several governments interested to protect their citizens who are in the employment of the Times. The definition of a spy in international law is one who disguises his true identity and insinuates himself within hostile territory for the purpose of communicating with the enemy. If I had insinuated myself in Russian waters and I had communicated with the Japanese I might come within this category, but I am guilty of neither.

News of American politics (p. 26) for the week relates chiefly to the Democratic convention of New York, which met at Albany on the 18th. The convention was securely under the control of David B. Hill. Only routine business was done at the day session, but in the evening a platform was adopted and the delegates to the national convention were placed under the unit rule and "instructed to present and support Alton B. Parker for the Presidential nomination. No opposition was made to the platform nor to the unit rule, but the instruction for Parker was opposed vigorously. A minority of the committee on resolutions offered an amendment recommending Judge Parker, but leaving the delegates "free to take such action at St. Louis as a majority thereof may consider most likely to insure the success of the candidates selected by the national convention." Speeches in support of this amendment were delivered by Senator Grady and Congressman Bourke Cockran. It was opposed in a speech by Senator McCarren, of Brooklyn, the chairman of the resolutions committee. When David B. Hill arose at the close of Mr. Cockran's speech the crowd supposed he intended to reply, but he merely moved that the vote be taken. This was promptly ordered, and the instruction for Parker came off victorious, the amendment being defeated by 301 to 149. There was no motion to