

been supplied by the small country merchants. The mail-order business is the ogre with which they frightened each other. They saw in the growth of the mail-order business, not a reflection on their own antiquated methods, but only a loss of immediate profits; and, true to their bourgeois instincts, they set about arousing the protective spirit. On the one hand they bulldozed the rural press into supporting their cause, while on the other hand they frightened the city wholesalers into joining them. If the mail-order houses had cheap postage they would drive out the rural merchant, the country paper would be deprived of advertising, and the wholesaler would lose his customer. And so all three fell upon any Congressman who dared to entertain the idea of a parcel post.

In the struggle to secure this much-needed Governmental service, it would have been comparatively easy to overcome the opposition of the express companies alone; but when it came to running counter to the wishes of the country merchant, backed by the country press and the city jobbers, Congressmen paused and calculated the chances of re-election. And once they set about finding excuses for opposing the parcel post, it is surprising what a multitude of reasons they found. One unaffected with the protective spirit might have supposed that the main essential is to secure the most economical exchange of goods between the farmer and the manufacturer. Whatever part middlemen have in this should be such only as makes the exchange cheaper than it would be without them.

But that was not the view of the middlemen. The question with them was, not the cheapest service rendered the farmer and the manufacturer, but the highest toll that could be exacted by the middlemen. "Suppose," argued the rural editor, "the farmer can buy a necktie or a currycomb cheaper of a mail-order house, what does the mail-order house buy of the farmer? What taxes does it pay in his community? What charities does it support? Go to, we'll keep our money at home." The editor supported the merchant because the merchant patronized the editor; and both together made the farmer think they supported him. It was the old, old story of protection, under a different guise. And like the older theory of protection it had in the farmer a docile victim.

Even now that the parcel post has been brought to an issue, it has about it the air of one intent upon robbing his neighbor's hen roost. The House bill went only to the extent of permitting

parcels on rural routes, and at a rate of five cents for the first pound, with one cent for each additional pound. The plain purpose of this was to permit the rural merchant to do a mail-order business, while shutting out the city merchant; and, incidentally, to turn the Post Office Department into a country errand boy for the express companies. But once a breach was made in the protective wall, others rushed in. Even the Postmaster General has mustered up sufficient courage to come out for a general parcel post before Congress had time to act upon his original suggestion of a rural parcel post. The Bourne bill adds to this five-cent rate for city and rural delivery, the following rates for varying distances, or zones: In the 50-mile zone, six cents for the first pound and two cents for each additional pound; 200-mile zone, seven and three cents; 500-mile zone, eight and four cents; 1,000-mile zone, eleven and seven cents; 2,000-mile zone, twelve and ten cents; all above 2,000 miles, twelve cents for the first pound and twelve cents for each additional pound. The limit of weight is eleven pounds.

That these rates are unnecessarily high will doubtless be proven in practice; but the main thing is to make a beginning. Once the principle is established it will be comparatively easy to amend the law. And not the least of the good things to be hoped for from a parcel post is that the great volume of mail will make the abnormally high charges of the railroads so plain as to compel their reduction to something within reason.

STOUGHTON COOLEY.

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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### BRITISH DEMOCRACY.

Grasmere, England, July 15.

The by-election at Hanley has resulted in a great victory for land reform. The triumph of Mr. Outhwaite, the Liberal candidate, in spite of the hostility of the Labor Party and the general unpopularity of the Insurance Act, cannot fail to give an impressive stimulus to the attack on the landed oligarchy to which the Liberal Party is now definitely committed.

Of the two leading Liberal journals, the "Daily News and Leader" and the "Manchester Guardian," the former has thrown its whole weight in favor of the land taxation campaign. Before the poll was declared it said editorially, "We do not underestimate the importance of this election. . . It is a matter of the most urgent importance that the great campaign in which Mr. Outhwaite is one of the bravest and sturdiest fighters should not be checked at the outset and the door to a reform which is the very hope of all future progress be slammed just when it is

opening." The "Manchester Guardian" has remained lukewarm, if not actually hostile to these ideas, contenting itself with conventional support of the Liberal candidate while deprecating his introduction against the protest of the Labor Party.

In its failure to grasp the significance of the Single-tax the Labor Party has shown itself less far sighted than the class it ostensibly represents. Like all organizations, political parties tend to lose sight of the ideals they are formed to serve, and are governed by the law of self-preservation. Reforms have always grown in strength outside of political groups and therefore free from the repressing influence of expediency. If the Liberal Party offers hope at the present time it is because the eyes of the people have been opened by the non-political propagandists, and the pressure from the constituencies forces it for the moment to attack interests that are by no means negligible within the party itself.

The attitude of the Labor Party was thus defined by its leaders during the campaign. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald declared that "there was no more absurd idea than that all rates and taxes should be imposed on land. It meant that employers, stock exchange gamblers, financiers and millionaires would be free to exploit the workers, but unless they owned land they would not pay a penny in the rates and taxes. The Labor Party would tax unearned increment whether derived from land or from capital." Mr. Keir Hardie described the land tax policy as the latest red herring of the Liberal Party. "The policy of the Labor Party was nationalization on the lines of the telephone purchase." Mr. W. C. Anderson referred to the "few eager enthusiasts who appear to imagine that land was given not to use but to tax. Vague denunciation of landlordism and land monopoly," he continued, "may for a time win electoral support; but the workers will not follow very far or very long the cry, which is essentially a capitalist cry, that the element of unearned increment in capital should be relieved from taxation and the element of unearned increment in land made to carry the whole burden." The words of Labor members during this contest may return to plague them at some future stage of the controversy when the lines are sharply drawn between the people and the landlords.

Hanley will not soon forget the Land Song. During the past weeks the air has vibrated with the notes of "Marching Through Georgia," and the refrain, "The land, the land, 'twas God who gave the land." The Liberal platforms were provided with harmonium and gramophone to give the pitch at the appropriate moment, and even the opposition speakers must have gone home from the contest with the melody singing in their heads. The announcement of the poll was greeted with prolonged cheers by the crowd of 30,000 assembled in front of the Town Hall. Addressing them Mr. Outhwaite said, "I came down here to show how the people may be emancipated. I told you I thought you could trust the Liberal government to adopt the policy. You believed that and you have sent me with a mandate to the Government. That mandate will be delivered in all honesty. Believe me, we have to-day done a great thing for freedom." As soon as he had ceased speaking the crowd, with one impulse, broke into the chorus of the Land Song. Some 40,000 people were waiting to cheer the new

member at Burslem and there also the enthusiasm culminated in the Land Song.

F. W. GARRISON.



## CANADIAN POLITICS IN SASKATCHEWAN.

Ceylon, Sask.

The recent Saskatchewan campaign affords a good cross-sectional view of Canadian politics in action. It shows the party machines in full working order, and also a new factor that may "cut some ice" in the future. The subjects discussed in the speeches were direct legislation, government farm loans, government storage elevators, the transfer of title to our natural resources to the Province, and others more remote or less important. The above cannot be said to have been issues, for the two parties were in substantial agreement in favor of them all. The real battle was between the national parties to gain control of the Province for strategical purposes in the next national contest.



Elections here are simple, in that you only vote for the single office of member of legislature or parliament. Nominations are made in a most undemocratic way, not by a representative convention, but by a select gathering, and a candidate need not be a resident of the constituency he seeks to represent. As a result, in my own constituency two candidates were nominated neither of whom had ever been heard of by perhaps a majority of the voters. If a primary election law ever was urgently needed it is here.

The parties did not divide on local issues. If the policies both alike advocated are progressive it is because they are supposed to be popular and no powerful interests have seen fit to oppose them. The same may be said of past legislation, such as the Torrens land titles act, some excellent labor laws, and our exemption of farm improvements from taxation.



It is hard for a "Yankee" to understand why Canada, with no Civil War traditions, should exhibit such extreme party feeling. In the prairie Provinces, settled from the four corners of the earth, large numbers have not yet found a party home, but every campaign shows a stricter alignment; every year less straggling among party leaders. Strong men have violated conscience and home interests at the behest of the Ottawa machine. When this Province was created our Premier-to-be demanded that Saskatchewan own and administer her natural resources. Later he accepted and defended in lieu thereof, a ridiculously low annual cash subsidy. Our Opposition leader, in a ringing speech, defended reciprocity and refused "to learn at the feet of the eastern Gama-liels." Later, he was constrained to change his mind, and so went into this contest with the greatest handicap of his life. It is to the credit of both men that their untrammelled decisions were in favor of the people, and provocative of lasting suspicion that the party machines hold other interests as of more consequence.