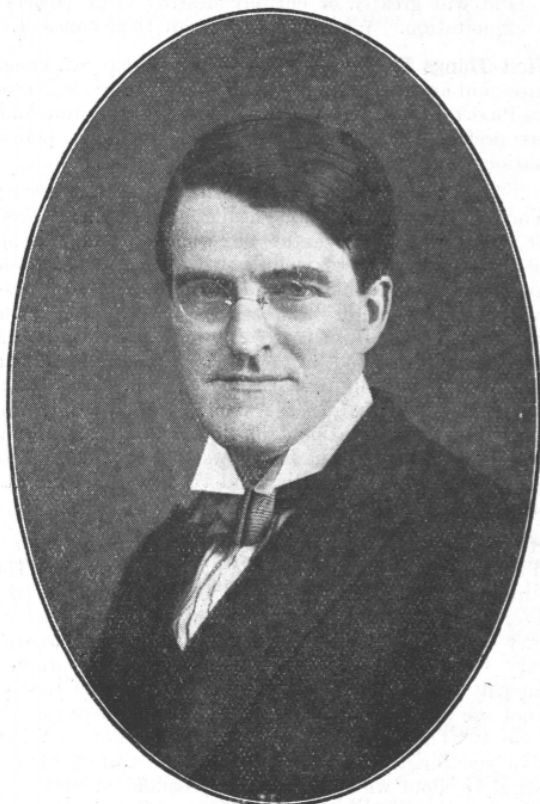


## THE VICTORY IN BURSLEM



MR. ANDREW MACLAREN, M.P.

On 26th November the Labour Party in North Staffordshire celebrated their successes in two great demonstrations held in the Victoria Hall and the Palais de Danse, Hanley. At these meetings more than 13,000 people attended. Four local M.P.'s (including Col. Josiah C. Wedgwood) were present together with Mr. John Watts, the unsuccessful Labour candidate in the Stoke Division. The STAFFORDSHIRE SENTINEL reports that all were received with much cheering, Mr. Andrew MacLaren, M.P., coming in for a double portion. In the eyes of the two meetings he was evidently the hero of the evening.

Mr. MacLaren's victory at Burslem was secured after a most strenuous fight in which he bore the brunt almost single-handed so far as any platform assistance was concerned. He showed an indomitable spirit throughout and gathered around him a great enthusiastic following who, inspired by his example, never for a moment doubted he would triumph. Neither did we nor any of his many friends who desired nothing so much as that he should possess this added power and influence to promote our cause. As a forceful and convincing speaker, and one equipped with an intimate knowledge of the land question and the ability to expound it, his accession to Parliament gives every supporter of our movement the greatest satisfaction. We extend to him our hearty congratulations.

## AN APPRECIATION OF MR. MACLAREN

We reprint with pleasure the following article specially contributed to the STAFFORDSHIRE SENTINEL of 10th November, by an "Admirer of Mr. MacLaren":—

Mr. Andrew MacLaren, the Labour candidate for Burslem Division, was born in the year 1883, in the City of Glasgow, and is of Irish parentage. As he says himself, he is a Scotsman with Irish persuasions.

He received his early education (such as it was) at St. Francis' School, Glasgow. The only distinction he can lay claim to during those years of infantile culture is that on more than one occasion he drove a distracted school-

master to face the alternative of ending or continuing a trying existence. Economic necessity at home, and tempting inducements outside, compelled him to undertake the duties of a tailor's messenger at the age of ten, an appointment which carried a salary of 3s. 6d. per week. This and other appointments of a like nature he held until, at the age of 14, he was sent into the engineering shop as an apprentice.

To a person with an artistic temperament the atmosphere of an engineering shop was anything but congenial, but natural inclinations had to give way to the ruling laid down by an unbending father. Since leaving the day-school young "Mac" had exploited every opportunity of developing his powers with the pencil, and he attained the distinction of being a life student at the Glasgow School of Art at the age of fourteen. At 19 years of age his apprenticeship was completed, and his spare time was fully occupied with the study of music, economics, history and art. Quite a number of articles from his pen have been published by leading Scottish journals on the topics of his studies.

The leading apostles of his creed were Thomas Henry Buckle, Bakunin and Karl Marx. The models of his Art studies were Mozart, Ingres and Walter Pater, and, strangely enough, Cardinal Newman. Though delving into materialist philosophy, the æsthetic side of religion always appealed to him. He would discourse as enthusiastically on the Greek, the Coptic, or the Roman rituals, as he would upon the theory of value as enunciated in "Das Kapital."

At the age of 25 he took upon himself the responsibility of marriage. By this time "Das Kapital" gave place to Henry George's PROGRESS AND POVERTY. The economic principles embodied in this book have been the foundation of his faith ever since.

About the age of thirty he determined to go to London, and there try to earn his livelihood as an artist. After a brief interval of art work, his abilities on the platform attracted the attention of the late Joseph Fels. It was Mr. Fels who was instrumental in linking him up with the Land Values Movement in London.

The famous Budget campaigns of 1909-10 opened up opportunities for him to expound economic and philosophic ideas on the platform. Within a short space of time he became perhaps the most effective speaker and debater on economics in the City of Glasgow.

In 1914 Mr. MacLaren joined the Independent Labour Party, and later took a leading part in the work of the Union of Democratic Control. His insight into economics combined with his knowledge of history, made him take up a strong attitude against war. In the face of the unpopularity of his views, he persisted in expounding his ideas, and his experiences during the Great War, when he refused to comply with the Conscription Act, have only increased his determination to exert every effort to make the people realize that all wars are generated by economic causes which only they themselves can remove.

The part he took in the 1918 election brought him prominently before the people of the Potteries. In 1921 he was nominated as candidate for Burslem Division by the Trade Union and Labour forces of the Division. Since then his activities in local politics have won the appreciation of his political colleagues, and also the respect of many in other political camps.

Mr. MacLaren has been mainly responsible for bringing the land question into the forefront of the Labour Programme. He is well known in the fields of economics and politics, not only in this country, but abroad. He still maintains his interest in literature and the arts, and when removed from the heat and conflict of politics, he is a welcome and active promoter of all forms of artistic and literary effort.

Although he left the engineering bench ten years ago, he is still an active member of the Engineers' Society.

Those who know him best agree with Colonel Wedgwood, who stated recently that he anticipated that Burslem's Labour candidate was destined to be a member of the first Labour Cabinet. Indeed, Bernard Shaw has suggested already that he would make MacLaren the "Minister of Land."

## THE GENERAL ELECTION

### Some Reflections

By JOHN H. HUMPHREYS

The result of the General Election has made many people pay serious attention to Proportional Representation who before had given it but a passing notice. The figures have compelled all to study the question afresh, and although this article must concern itself mainly with figures, fair representation is not the only, perhaps not the most important, reason that impels some of us to press steadily and continuously for this reform. Freedom for statesmen, for parties, for electors to express their minds—that is the mainspring of the movement for Proportional Representation.

But first the figures. They are set out in the table given below. But I would point out that under Proportional Representation the electoral conditions would have been changed. The four main parties would have nominated candidates in all, or in practically all, the constituencies and the fuller expression of the views of the electors would doubtless have caused alterations in the totals of the votes secured by the various parties. But the votes recorded are the only material we have on which to base a statistical comparison. There were 547 contested county and borough constituencies—the Universities are excluded from this table—in Great Britain. The results were:—

Party	Votes	Seats won	Seats in proportion to votes	Average Number of Votes per seat
Conservative ..	5,381,433	296	208	18,180
Labour and Co-op.	4,232,849	138	164	30,672
Liberal ..	2,621,168	54	101	48,540
National Liberal	1,585,337	51	61	31,085
Independents and others ..	337,443	8	13	42,180
TOTALS ..	14,158,230	547	547	—

The total Conservative poll includes only votes given for official Conservative candidates, and does not include votes given for Independent Unionists, such as Colonel Erskine. The votes of Independent Unionists are included with those for other Independent candidates.

There were fifty-seven uncontested seats, held by the parties as follows: Conservatives 42, Liberal 6, National Liberal 4, Labour 4, Nationalist 1. Let us assume that under Proportional Representation there would have been no change in the number of seats gained by the respective parties in these uncontested areas—an assumption somewhat favourable to the Conservative party. If we also include in our totals the contested University and Irish seats (Conservatives 6, National Liberal 2, Independent, Nationalist and Sinn Féin 3), we find that under Proportional Representation the result—the estimate is necessarily an approximation—would have been as follows:—

Party.	Seats.	Seats.
Conservative ..	256 instead of	344
Labour ..	168 instead of	142
Liberal ..	107 instead of	60
National Liberal ..	67 instead of	57
Independent and others ..	17 instead of	12
	615	615

It will be seen that, even when full credit is given for wins in uncontested seats, the Conservative party instead of being in a majority of 73 over all others, would have been in a minority of about 100.

It is often assumed that under the present system the largest party always gains. This is not the case. In the last General Election in Canada, the Conservatives, with more votes than the Progressives, obtained fewer seats. The outstanding characteristic of the single-member system is the uncertainty with which it works. With a different distribution within the present constituencies of the same votes and without the change of a single voter's party allegiance, the result which Proportional Representation might yield might have been the result under the present system. Or, indeed, the Conservative party might have got less than their share. Each General Election, whether in Great Britain, in Canada, Australia or South Africa, serves to emphasize some defect of the single-member constituency system. The particular lesson of this election is that any substantial party may secure a majority of seats on a minority of votes.

But, at the beginning of this article, I stated that the mainspring of the movement for Proportional Representation lies in the increased freedom it confers upon us all. Its advocates believe that political and economic problems can be solved only by free and adequate discussion. Parties, leaders and electors can all bring their contribution to the solution of these problems. Our electoral system tends to make the full and fearless presentation of policies difficult. A statesman, to remain in public life, must please a local majority time and again and pleasing a local majority is not always consistent with honest thinking and lucid statement of policy. Leonard Courtney, from whom modern advocates of Proportional Representation derive their inspiration, once said: "You can have [electoral] machinery which lets life live, and you can have machinery which deadens it, and one secret of the attraction of Proportional Representation is that it lets every germ of life live." Proportional Representation promises victory to no cause; it provides for the more adequate discussion of all great causes; it gives them the opportunity to make good and they will make good if they stand the test of the full and free discussion which Proportional Representation makes more possible of attainment. As in Ireland, Proportional Representation breaks "pacts" arranged over the heads of the electors—"pacts" which determine in so large a measure the conditions under which electors vote under the present system.

## COMPLIMENTARY DINNER

### To Mr. P. Wilson Raffan and Victors and Candidates in the General Election

The United Committee are holding a Reunion and Dinner at the Victoria Mansions Restaurant, 24, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1, on Friday, 15th December, at seven o'clock p.m., to do honour to Mr. P. Wilson Raffan, and acknowledge his eminent services to the movement as member for Leigh, from 1910 to 1922; to congratulate Mr. Andrew MacLaren, M.P., Mr. Chas. P. Trevelyan, M.P., Mr. H. H. Spencer, M.P., Col. Jos. Wedgwood, M.P., Mr. E. G. Hemmerde, K.C., M.P., Mr. H. B. Lees-Smith, M.P., Mr. W. M. R. Pringle, M.P., and other friends and co-workers on their election, and celebrate their victories; and to pay respect to a number of candidates who fought staunchly for our policy, but were unsuccessful at the polls.

Mr. J. Dundas White, LL.D., will preside over what we hope will be a very large gathering.

Application for tickets (price 3s. 6d. each) should be made without delay to the United Committee, 11, Tothill Street, London, S.W.1.