

POLITICAL SPEECHES AND WRITINGS.

THE SOLDIER'S REWARD.

The Hon. George Wallace, of Jamaica, N.Y., spoke in favour of the Budget during the recent campaign. He dealt with war, and how it affected the ordinary soldier. His remarks are appropriate at the present time, when there seems to be a desire to provoke a war with Germany. Mr. Wallace, whose father was born in the Scottish Highlands, said that in 1901 he was on a visit to some near relatives there, and after the usual greetings he asked about Aleck, the youngest boy, and was told that he had gone to war with a Highland Regiment. "Of course, I was proud of Aleck," said Mr. Wallace, "when I learned he was keeping up the old reputation of the family and was willing to fight for his Queen and his native land.

"Inquiring where Aleck's land lay I was told that he had none—(laughter)—and that he had been even born on land that did not belong to his parents. I asked what land Aleck would have if he got back alive, and was told he wouldn't have any. I was not so charmed with Aleck's fighting qualities as at first. (Laughter.) Then I asked as to the owners of the land in the district. Had they gone to the war with Aleck to fight for their native land? (Laughter and cries of "Oh, no.") I see you have the answer. (Laughter.)

"Now let a stranger from across the water give you a suggestion. When you have the next war ask your Government to make a conscription, and allow none but landholders in the first regiments that go to the front. (Laughter.) They would certainly make the best soldiers fighting for their King and their native land. You should put all who have land worth a quarter of a million or more in the firing line. (Cheers.) Let the smaller owners come up as the reserves. (Laughter.) Those physically unable could join in liberally in the expenses; but volunteers like cousin Aleck should not be allowed until all the landholders had the first chance."

We are inclined to agree with a member of the audience who interjected "We shouldn't have any war at all if that were done."

SIR EDWARD GREY ON THE BUDGET.

Speaking in the City of London on March 14th at a dinner given in honour of Sir Hugh Bell, Liberal candidate for the City at the election, Sir Edward Grey said:

And now for the other matter of which Mr. Tritton (the Chairman) spoke—the question of the Budget. With that, too, the credit and reputation of the Liberal Party is bound up. (Cheers.) We who fought the last election have no intention of going back to our constituents and saying that we have made no attempt to pass the Budget, or that the Budget has ceased if it is not passed, to be a live issue. (Hear, hear.) Our first business in these weeks before Easter was to make the country safe by passing Supply, but after Easter we shall have not only to make the country safe, but to make the country comfortable by regularizing the financial position. (Hear, hear.) Our view of how that position should be regularized is to reimpose the taxes of our Budget. (Cheers.) We are bound to stand or fall by the willingness of the House of Commons to do that, and to do it within a comparatively short limit of time, as much as we stand or fall by anything. We fought on the Budget, and before we hand over the conduct of affairs to any one else or before, which is another alternative, we apply to another Parliament for power to carry on the affairs of the country, I think that whatever the House of Commons may think of our proposals with regard to the House of Lords which will be laid before it directly after Easter—whatever it may think about those, it must have its opportunity of pronouncing whether or not the taxes in our last Budget are to be imposed. (Cheers.) And within two months of the opening of the present Parliament the Government will have brought to a test in the House of Commons its immediate proposals not only with regard to the House of Lords, but also the fate of the taxes included in the Budget. (Cheers.) That is little enough time to have had to prepare the present House of Commons. (Hear, hear.) Within two months of its meeting—meeting close upon an election—we shall have put it in a position to pronounce definitely and decidedly upon these two great questions. (Hear, hear.) We shall no more shirk one than the other, and we realize that with the great question of the Second Chamber is bound up now, until we have settled it, the future of the Liberal

Party, and with the Liberal Party is greatly bound up the safety of Free Trade. (Cheers.) We carry a great trust for the country, and I can assure you the Government is not wanting in a full sense of responsibility and also of the difficulties which are before it. And I believe that even although an election may not be long deferred we shall, however soon it comes, have placed our views on these questions before the country with a clearness and an emphasis which will convince the country not only of their importance, but I believe also of the rightness of our views. (Cheers.)

THE LABOUR POLICY.

The annual Conference of the Independent Labour Party was opened on Monday, 28th March. The subjects down for discussion were "Right to Work," "The Poor Law," "The House of Lords," and "Electoral Reform."

The question of the attitude of the Labour Party on the House of Lords is raised by an amendment to a resolution affirming confidence in the work of the party and congratulating them on their work. The amendment, which is moved by the Bredbury Branch, "endorses the Labour alliance, but regrets that the Labour party placed the House of Lords question in the forefront of its election manifesto, and is of opinion that had they accepted Mr. Balfour's election cry of Tariff Reform or Socialism, with the House of Lords as a minor question, the difference between Labour and Liberal candidates would have been clearly defined, and to the great advantage of the Labour Party candidates."

A further amendment proposed by the Rastrick Branch "condemns the action of the Labour Party in Parliament during the last 12 months by giving its support to a Liberal Budget while neglecting the claims of the unemployed. Also condemns their apathy in the House in regard to Ferrer's assassination. Further, it condemns the action of the Labour members of Parliament to Comrade Victor Grayson inside and outside that House." The same branch also proposes that the Conference "decides to separate from the Labour Party and to call a conference of all Socialistic bodies in the country with a view to forming one united body out for Socialism."

MR. LLOYD GEORGE ON LANDLORDISM.

Speaking in Queen's Hall, London, on March 23rd, Mr. Lloyd George said:—

You have in this country 2,500 landlords owning two-thirds of the soil. I do not know how many people are here, but there are fewer landlords than there are people in this hall owning two-thirds of the soil. But still worse. By virtue of their ownership they possess and exercise a special sway, control and power over the livelihood of millions of men, women, and children in the land. That is a very serious fact. (A Voice: Tax them out of existence.) Well, I have made a start. (Loud cheers.)

What is the first thing to do?

There ought to be absolute security of tenure in this country. There ought to be a full guarantee that every man will reap to the utmost the harvest which he himself has sown. If you do that you would have better farming; you would have men spending more capital, and more thought on farming. They would know perfectly well, even if they themselves did not reap the harvest, that their children would. That in itself would increase the labour in the country; it would increase the quantity and quality of labour; it would double the resources of the soil; it would augment the national wealth, and it would secure in a great measure the independence of the people who live on the soil.

I hope that Liberalism will see its way to go even further than ensuring security of tenure for those who cultivate the soil.

Our chairman has already indicated that in his judgment there ought to be some great measure which will transfer the ownership of the soil from these great landowners to the cultivating peasants. The Tories contemplate some plan of that kind. They—at least at the General Election—had a great scheme for breaking up the big estates. The object is a thoroughly sound one, but as your chairman has already very wisely pointed out it depends entirely on how it is worked. Who is to select the estates? What part of the estates is to be chosen? What is the price that is to be paid for them? Who is to do the valuation? What are the principles upon which that valuation is to be based? Those are matters not merely of detail, but they are essentials to the success of a scheme.

We know something about the Tory principles of valuation when land is purchased from a great landowner for public purposes. I have heard of 80 years' purchase being given before now, and, as my friend reminds me, cases of 700 years' purchase.

And we have seen a great Tory measure for setting up peasant proprietorship working in Ireland. I should like every man and woman here to go closely into the finances of that operation. I can assure you it is fearfully and wonderfully made. (Laughter.) You are to transfer the land of Ireland from the landlords to the tenant farmers.

The first result has been to put up the price of land in Ireland by seven years' purchase. The State loses on every transaction over 20 per cent. If it is a farm of £1,000, the price first of all goes up by seven years' purchase, and the State loses over £200 for every £1,000 in putting the transaction through.

You may be able to do that for Ireland, but if you are to extend those principles to the whole of the United Kingdom you would bankrupt the whole country. The cost would be that of a great war, and that is bad enough.

And what about the tenant? I have seen something of freeholders; I have seen something of peasants who purchased their farms at extravagant prices when the estates were broken up. The poor fellow, in order to secure his property and his home, invariably pays more for it by five or ten years' purchase than it is worth. How does he pay? He has been working hard through all the years of his life; his wife is working hard; generally his children are working hard without any pay; and they have saved just a few hundred pounds. The old home is put up for sale by auction. The auctioneer indicates that someone in the room is bidding against him—"A thousand," "Eleven hundred"—and up it goes, and the poor fellow, in fear and trembling that the old home is to be taken away, gives his last penny—not for value—no, but for excess of value, and finds himself after five minutes in the auction room a bankrupt freeholder. He goes to a man, borrows money on mortgage at a high rate of interest. That man is crippled for life—(hear, hear)—thrifty, industrious, all his labour is of no avail; he is a man without hope, he is broken; he is a beggar even with a year's notice to quit hanging over his head.

That is the Tory notion of land purchase—something that will do what is done in Ireland, what is done now on several estates, something that puts into the pockets of the landowners hundreds and thousands of pounds more than the thing is worth; and the poor tenant and State between them—the State being the taxpayer—have got to divide the loss.

None of that in our ideas of land purchase. (Hear, hear.) That is why when I introduced the Budget—(cheers)—I felt the first step in land reform was valuation—(hear, hear)—a fair valuation, an impartial valuation, not a penny less to the landowner than the place is worth—that would be robbery of the landowner; not a penny more to the landowner than the thing is worth—that would be robbery of the State.

The advantage of all this is not merely economic, it is not merely that you increase the natural resources of the land, and augment its wealth, it is not that you give additional opportunities for productive, remunerative labour—you do more than that by this means, you secure the independence of the worker in the rural districts of the land. And that is an important thing.

Precariousness of work leads to the servitude of the worker. (Cheers.) Certainty of work means freedom. (Cheers.) It is that certainty, that independence that we aim at.

There was a great judge who once said that the moment a man put his foot on British soil he became a free man. We want to translate that great dictum into reality. (Cheers.) Our view, our purpose—the mission of Liberalism is summed up in this—that Labour ought never to be the reward of bondage—(cheers)—that Labour should ever be the road to freedom. (Loud cheers.)

A TARIFF REFORM LEAFLET.

Is it necessary to tax food? **NO!**

It will be better to

Tax Foreign Iron and Steel Manufactures instead of Tea!

Tax Foreign Machinery instead of Tobacco!

Tax Foreign Joinery instead of Raisins!

Tax Foreign Boots and Shoes instead of Cocoa!

Tax Foreign Steam Engines instead of Sugar!

Tax Foreign Motor Cars instead of Food!

Tax Foreign Musical Instruments & Furniture by so doing give work to the unemployed.

MR. REDMOND'S POLICY.

Speaking at Newcastle on March 16th, Mr. John Redmond said:—

In 1893 the Lords rejected Home Rule. Lord Rosebery said that when the General Election took place the country endorsed that rejection. He (Mr. Redmond) said to-day that that was not true. (Hear, hear.) When the Lords rejected that Bill Mr. Gladstone wanted instantly to take up the challenge and go to the country on the question of Home Rule. He failed to carry his Party with him and he resigned. Lord Rosebery came on the scene, and the first thing he did was to abandon Home Rule, the issue on which the Lords had challenged the Commons of England. For two years he dragged out a contemptible existence ploughing sands, and when he went to the country and was defeated that defeat was not the victory of the Lords on Home Rule. It was defeat and condemnation of the pusillanimous and contemptible policy of Lord Rosebery. (Cheers.) Under such circumstances, under such a leader, with such craven counsels, he (Mr. Redmond) said fifteen years ago and repeated to-night, that to attempt to abolish the House of Lords was an absurdity. But the circumstances are different now (he proceeded), and I beg most respectfully to say to the Liberal Party that though the circumstances are different now, they may very easily become the same as the circumstances that wrecked and ruined the Liberal Party under Lord Rosebery. What are the circumstances now? The Lords have themselves started the revolution. The Liberal Party and the democracies of both Ireland and England are at this moment united and enthusiastically waiting to be led on against the House of Lords. The cause of the quarrel now is not the question of Home Rule, great though that question is. The question at issue now is a greater one, because it is the question upon which the whole structure and the liberties of Great Britain depend. The abolition of the power of the House of Lords became impossible because of the vacillating and pusillanimous counsels and policy of fifteen years ago. It is quite possible now, but only if a bold policy be followed.

Having quoted Sir Edward Grey's declaration that the Government were bound to stand or fall by the willingness of the House of Commons to pass the Budget, Mr. Redmond said that that, in other words, meant relieving the Government's opponents of the shame and the odium and the consequences which had necessarily and naturally followed from the unconstitutional action of the House of Lords. It meant the throwing away of the most powerful weapon they possessed, the principles by which in the past British liberties had been secured and won. I say they are bound to stand or fall by no such thing, declared Mr. Redmond amid cheers. I say they are bound to stand or fall by the policy of the Albert Hall, which declared that the Government would not assume office, and would not retain office, unless they had safeguards which would enable them to pass into law a measure limiting the Veto of the House of Lords. They are bound to stand or fall by the policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he declared that he would not retain office for one hour after failure to get the necessary powers to limit the Lords' Veto.

If one were to take the Government's policy from an ordinary man's interpretation of Sir Edward Grey's speech it would be this, that they were quite willing to loosen their grip on the Veto in the House of Commons before they knew what the House of Lords were going to do about the Veto, and before they knew whether they could get guarantees that that Veto would be carried into law. Now is it conceivable that such a policy can commend itself to the intelligence of the Democratic Party in this country? (Cries of "No.") Speaking for the party I represent, I say what I have said before, that the policy of leaving go our grip on the Budget before we know what is going to happen about the Veto is a false and a rotten policy, and is a policy that we from Ireland cannot uphold. (Cheers.) Some people seem to imagine that our attitude on this matter is governed by certain taxes in the Budget. The Irish, they say, do not like the whiskey taxes. Well, we do not—(laughter)—and there are other taxes we do not like. But I vehemently deny that our attitude on the Budget is governed by those considerations. On behalf of the Irish Party I offered in the House of Commons to accept the Budget in one hour—to-morrow, any day it is brought forward, without the change of one comma, so long as we have the assurance that the Government would be able effectively to deal with the Veto of the House of Lords, and we believe that if they cannot deal effectively