

(2) the legislatures of two-thirds of the States may call a convention for proposing amendments; but amendments proposed in either way would not be valid until they had been subsequently ratified by legislatures or conventions of three-fourths of the States.

No better scheme could be devised for centralizing absolute control of government in the hands of a privileged class. Given to a few a sufficient pecuniary or class interest to put them on the defensive, and under our form of government the little finger of those few is stronger than the loins of the people.

That no such indefensible obstructions to popular sovereignty are possible under the British constitution may be readily seen from a consideration of the political struggle already referred to as now in progress over there.

The Liberal party was in the majority in the House of Commons. They formulated a plan for raising public revenues, which the House of Lords refused to approve. Immediately upon this refusal the leaders of the majority in the Commons asked the King to dissolve Parliament and call elections, so that the people might pass judgment on the questions at issue by the election of a new House of Commons. If the King had not wished to do this, he would nevertheless have been compelled to; for the present majority would not authorize the collection of any revenue for the government except under the Budget bill which the House of Lords refused to sanction. All this culminated in the last days of November, and before January is gone it will have been settled by the vote of the people, at elections in every Parliamentary district in Great Britain.

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And what of the outcome? If the Liberals are defeated so badly that the reactionaries in the Commons are in a majority over the Liberal and the Irish and the Labor parties, when the new Parliament assembles in the latter days of January, the probabilities are that taxes will be imposed upon the food of the people instead of the land values of the aristocracy and the plutocracy.

If the majority of the three parties against the reactionaries should be small, no one can possibly predict the outcome. The only prediction reasonably certain in that case is that the new Parliament would not last long. But the ultimate result might be either more progressive or more reactionary, and no one can foretell which.

If, however, the Liberals come back with a decisive majority, it may be predicted safely, not only

that the Budget will be insisted upon, but that the House of Lords will be constrained to acknowledge by formal statute that any measure passed by the Commons and vetoed by the Lords, shall be law if the Commons passes it a second time. In other words, the common purpose of the three progressive parties of Great Britain now contesting the elections there—Liberal, Irish, and Labor—is to substitute a suspensory for the plenary veto, as the sole legislative function of the House of Lords. The House of Lords might thereafter advise on legislation, but its power to defy the popular and responsible legislative chamber would be at an end.

Of course a future House of Commons might repeal this act, but no majority would dare do it unless elected for that express purpose.

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How could this abrogation of the legislative powers of the House of Lords be accomplished against their will? The explanation is written in British history. It is another and may be a long-story.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE BRITISH FIGHT FOR LAND VALUE TAXATION.

Birkenhead, England, December 9.

The long-looked-for day is drawing near when the landless peoples of the British Isles will engage in a stand-up fight with the land-grabbers in the House of Lords.

In 1904, in a Tory House of Commons, a bill for the taxation of land values was carried on second reading by a majority of 67. As the measure was promoted in Parliament by a private member, it was impossible to proceed further without adoption of the measure by the Government. We had to begin again.

In 1905 the second reading was again carried—this time by a majority of 90—but it was blocked once more.

Then came the general election, and a sweeping victory for the Liberal party. The bill was again introduced by a private member, supported as before by municipalities to the number of 600, and was carried on second reading by a majority of 258 in a House of 380 members. This was on March 23, 1906.

The Liberal Government then adopted the measure, and on April 24, 1906, sent it to a select committee of fifteen, with Alexander Ure as chairman. On December 13, 1906, this committee recommended that (1) the bill referred to the committee be not further proceeded with, but (2) that a measure be introduced making provision for a valuation of land in the burghs and counties of Scotland, apart from the buildings and improvements upon it, and that no as-

assessment be determined upon until the amount of the valuation had been reported and considered.

Accordingly, a bill to provide for the ascertainment of land values in Scotland was introduced May 13, 1907, by the Government—was debated, read a first time, and July 10, 1907, ordered to be printed. This was opposed by Balfour and his party. The second reading carried by a majority of 218—for, 294; against, 76. There was then a debate of four days by Scottish standing committee, August 5, 6, 7, 8. On the 20th and 21st of August, 1907, it was debated for twelve hours, and ordered read a third time by a majority of 139—for, 172; against, 33. Having thus passed the House of Commons, the measure went to the House of Lords, where on second reading it was rejected, August 26, 1907, by 118 to 31—an adverse majority of 87.

So ended chapter one. February 19, 1908, the land values bill for Scotland was again introduced in the Commons, where it again passed through all the forms without a division, and was again sent to the House of Lords. March 25, 26, 1908, the Lords read the bill a second time and mauled and mangled and tore it to tatters. The Government repudiated their work.

A memorial was then signed by 250 members of the House of Commons, asking the Government to incorporate a scheme of land valuation and taxation of land values in the Budget or finance bill. This was done. The Budget was introduced on April 29, and debated till November 29, 1909, when it went to the Lords. For the first time in hundreds of years the Lords have now thrown out the Budget, and the battle-royal begins.

Land values taxation is well to the front. The people are aroused as they have never been before, and ere the battle ends all will be made familiar with the manner in which the Peers have cheated and bamboozled and robbed them of their God-given inheritance in the land. The Land song of the people of London is:

The Land, the Land—'twas God that gave the land!
The Land, the Land—the ground on which we stand.
Why should we be beggars with the ballot in our hand?
God gave the Land to the People.

EDWARD McHUGH.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

THE GROUND OF ENGLAND.

Providence, R. I., Dec. 17, 1909.

Sixty-six years ago, in the days of Chartism, the Concord poet, William Ellery Channing, wrote a poem entitled "England in Affliction." In this poem occurs the following stanza, which rings with a startling pertinence at the present hour:

England!—the name hath bulwarks in the sound,
And bids her people own the state again;
Bids them to dispossess their native ground
From out the hands of titled noblemen;
Then shall the scholar freely wield his pen,
And shepherds dwell where lords keep castle now,
And peasants cut the overhanging bough.

H. L. KOOPMAN.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, December 21, 1909.

The Cleveland Traction Settlement.

Subject to referendum, final settlement of the Cleveland traction question was made on the 18th, by the adoption by the City Council of the tentative ordinance (p. 1064) which has been awaiting the decision of Judge Tayler as arbitrator on certain questions reserved.

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This ordinance, with blanks for the insertion of the arbitral findings of Judge Tayler, which was agreed upon by the Council, the Mayor, the company and Judge Tayler early in November, left four questions open (pp. 1043, 1044), namely, (1) a dispute of only local interest over an East Cleveland connection; (2) a question of interurban connections, of no general interest; (3) the value of the existing property, and (4) the maximum rate of fare to be allowed. It had already been determined that the company should be allowed to earn only 6 per cent on its actual investment (inclusive of the arbitrated value of its existing property), and that it might increase fares to the maximum limit to be fixed by Judge Tayler in order to earn 6 per cent and must lower them if its earnings rose above that profit.

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After a hearing closed last week, in which Mr. Andrews, president of the company, represented its interests and Mayor Johnson represented the public interests, Judge Tayler decided the remaining questions in dispute on the 18th. He fixed the maximum fare at 4 cents for a single fare and seven tickets for a quarter, with one cent for transfers, thereby making 5 cents the utmost fare, inclusive of transfer. His valuation of the existing property was \$22,932,749.53, inclusive of the formerly fixed valuation of \$1,805,600 for the property of the low fare company, being \$21,127,149.53 for the property of the old monopoly company. The latter sum is \$6,166,665.47 lower than the company's claim, which was \$27,293,815, and \$9,045,736.53 higher than Mayor Johnson's concession, which was \$12,087,413. But it is less than the Goff-Johnson compromise of two years ago (p. 1161) by more than \$1,000,000. On the subject of the guaranteed stock the decision was