

champion of Protection in this country, knew absolutely nothing about the subject on which they professed to be better informed than anyone else.

Before leaving the subject of the harbor bridge—the contract for which, by the way, went to the English firm of Dorman Long & Co., for something over £4,000,000—it should be mentioned that a third of the cost of construction is being defrayed by a tax of $\frac{1}{2}$ d in the £ on the unimproved capital value (the u. c. v.) of land situated in Sydney and in the suburban municipalities directly served by the construction of the bridge, while the other two-thirds will be paid by the Railway Commissioners, whose receipts will in consequence be largely increased. This, of course, is a step in the right direction, but it is only a step. What the Single Taxers of the New South Wales aim at is a tax on all the land values of the Commonwealth to pay the interests on the cost of the construction of public utilities, such as the railways and tramways—which in Australia, of course, are run by the Government,—works of irrigation, water conservation, and defence, etc., which are now paid out of Customs or Income taxation or, worse still, out of borrowed money for which a heavy interest has to be periodically found.

OTHER NEWSPAPER CONTROVERSIES

Another newspaper controversy, which excited a good deal of interest at the time, was started by Dr. Arthur, M. L.A., who has forsaken medicine for politics, and deluges the press with contributions on all sorts of subjects, mostly of a philanthropic type. He regaled the readers of the *Herald* and *Telegraph* with this poser: "How can a man with a wife and from four to eight children carry on under a basic wage meant only for a man with a wife and two children?"

This elicited numerous answers, but none more convincing than those from Single Taxers, who showed the fallacy of a wage based on the cost of living instead of on the value of the work done. They pointed out that the real cure was to be found in the taxation of land values apart from improvements which would open up the land to labor and enable labor to employ itself, by the abolition of all taxes on industry and enterprise. This would necessarily be followed by the cheapening of commodities, the raising of the purchasing power of wages, and the removal of the injustice done to the primary producers by compelling them to pay higher prices to the manufacturer for their tools and machinery than the goods are worth.

Another controversy, carried on like the former in two city papers, was as to whether Protection was "just and equitable," a phrase used in a resolution on the subject unanimously passed by the Nationalists Association and supported by the State Treasurer, Sir Arthur Cocks. Of course we easily showed that it was the other way about, that a protective tariff is the most unjust and inequitable

that could possibly be devised, and that it coddled the local manufacturers at the expense of the primary producers and the community generally. In fact, if we had a High Court here with similar powers to the one in the United States, and Protection were arraigned before it, it could be easily proved to be unconstitutional since it forces one section of the community to its own detriment to contribute towards the upkeep of another section, which is entirely contrary to the spirit and letter of the constitution.

There is a lot more to tell about the progress of the movement here, but I must have already exceeded my space, so I will leave further details for another time.

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British Labor Now Facing Realities

THE Labor Government has now enjoyed three months of office. Though but a short time it has been long enough to bring Ministers and those who sent them to Parliament face to face with realities. The Millenium has not yet dawned, nor do we detect upon the horizon the faintest glimmer of its coming. For our part, we were not of those who expected that it would, notwithstanding the very confident predictions of "the good time coming" made before and during the General Election by those who today cry out for more time, and plead, as did the Minister for Labor when pressed in the House, that "we cannot be expected to produce rabbits from a silk hat."

If there were any evidence that the Government possessed the requisite knowledge combined with the courage to handle the situation now confronting them, we should be disposed to grant them the future time for which they so plaintively appeal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is in our opinion the boldest of them all, yet he fears to stand up to the interests, for he told a deputation of timid step-by-steppers that waited upon him on March 26th, to suggest "a small levy, such as a ld. in the £ on the capital value of land" that "he was afraid it would be too sanguine a view to expect that any measure of this kind could be carried through the House of Commons without a long and acrimonious discussion. Opposition would be aroused by any proposals which were construed as adversely affecting the landed interests which had been so deeply entrenched for so many generations." Judged by their proposals the Government are no wiser than their predecessors, nor is there any difference in principle between them and the Tory, Liberal and Coalition Governments whom they succeeded. That there is a difference in spirit we fully admit; but as the present Home Secretary, Arthur Henderson, has said: "Goodwill without Knowledge is Warmth without Light." The "Good-

will" is there right enough, but we are not so sure about the "Knowledge."

HOUSING

To take the vital question of Housing. Labor included in its "definite, well-thought-out and comprehensive plan," founded, we were assured, on "well-defined and strongly held principles," the immediate provision of adequate accommodation for the workers. In his speech last November opening the Election campaign Mr. Ramsay Macdonald referred to the existence of "rings and trusts," and declared his intention to smash all such rather than they should be allowed to hold up his plans. When Mr. Wheatley, the Health Minister, in whose province this matter lies, took office, he spoke confidently of the 200,000 houses to be provided the first year. At once, and quite naturally, the prices of all building materials leaped upwards—bricks, for example, rising at one bound from 65s. per 1,000 to 72s. 6d. and they are still rising.

Instead of immediately "smashing" these rings the Health Minister cut down his figure to 150,000, and later knocked off a further 30,000. Possessed of that "simple faith" which is said to be "more than Norman Blood," he next met the representatives of the "makers and producers of building materials" in conference, when the "manufacturers assured the minister that the Government would have the whole-hearted cooperation of the materials manufacturers of the country, and that there would be no attempt to advance prices as a result of the Housing Scheme." And he believed them!

Since that Conference there has been an all-round increase in prices. Replying to questions in the House on May 14th, Mr. Wheatley said that "the average prices of the non-parlour houses included in the contracts let this year were: Jan., £386, Feb., £389, March, £416, and April £425." At this rate we shall pass the £500 mark before the present year is through.

Small wonder it is that the Minister is now talking less confidently of the 90,000 houses for which he "hopes to pass the plans." His chief concern is for what he calls "that class which does not earn a wage sufficient to pay an economic rent." Why such a class exists, it would not appear that he has ever enquired. The passing of plans is not the same thing as building the houses, however, so we are not seeking an estimate from the furniture removers yet awhile.

The solution of the so-called Housing problem will not be found in passing plans, nor even in actually building houses for the class to which he referred. This is but tinkering with an effect while leaving the cause untouched. Low wages and lack of houses are alike due to the monopoly of land which prevents men from housing themselves, and sets them competing with each other for an artificially limited number of jobs. State aided housing is but disguised subsidising of land monopoly at the expense of the low paid workers themselves, since it is from the general

taxation of the country that the subsidies alone can be drawn. At the moment of writing the Labor Government has produced with a flourish of headlines in their faithful and unquestioning supporter in the press, the *Daily Herald*, their latest suggested scheme. They hope to provide 2,500,000 houses in the next 15 years, we learn, and it should be noted that after all they have said in condemnation of the "rabbit-hutches," as they styled the houses built under the Housing Schemes of the previous Governments, the subsidies now to be offered, if they carry their Bill, are contingent upon the Houses being of the same dimensions as those upon which they have poured so much scorn!

Subject to the houses being small enough and being built to let and not to sell, the State is to give an annual subsidy of £9 per house, and the local municipality £4. 10s., i.e. £13, 10s. per house, for 40 years. The present value of the subsidy is not less than £200, and should the plan go through it will not be long before the land monopolists have raked off that sum in increased cost of site and materials. But perhaps this was one of the matters the Prime Minister had in mind when he said at York on April 19th. "Never give a pledge, never say you will do anything, but within reason always keep the people expecting you are going to do it."

Certainly the Landlords have nothing to fear from Labor!

UNEMPLOYMENT

This is another reality which the Government has to face. "The Labor Party has alone a positive remedy for unemployment" was the claim made on every hand by Labor candidates and speakers during the last Election. And it cannot be doubted that many votes were gained on this. Where is that remedy? When first challenged in the House of Commons, the Minister of Labor, instead of immediately producing a plan, weakly pleaded, "we have only been in office six weeks." Again and again that plan has been called for without success. The failure to produce it can only be construed as an admission that no plan exists. No other interpretation is possible, for it cannot be believed that the Government would deliberately hold it back—and the electors who voted Labor on the promise of a remedy for the present terrible conditions of unemployment will be calling to account those by whom they have been so grievously misled. Already there are murmurings of the coming storm.

Pressed by the House, Mr. Shaw, lacking the boasted plan, was forced to admit the impotence of the Government and to fall back on "Foreign Trade." He said: "For a country like ours, the most highly developed industrial country in the world, which has travelled farther than any other from agricultural and pastoral pursuits, the only solution is a restoration of our foreign trade." This is to relegate the question to the Greek Calends. Meanwhile it should be noted that his colleague, the Min-

ister of Pensions, has since stated that "it is doubtful whether under the most favorable condition of trade there will ever be less than half a million unemployed."

Students of world conditions who have followed the march of events in the economic development of the different nations during the past twenty years will not need to be told that there can be no restoration of our foreign trade—for the simple but sufficient reason that those who once were our best customers are today manufacturing for their home markets, and even competing with us in the remaining markets of the world. This being so, we shall be driven more and more to rely upon our own resources, and herein lies the true solution. Mr. Macdonald would seem at times to see this, for in the closing days of the Tory Government he told the House that if he were to describe his programme in a phrase he would say: "We are going to develop our own country, we are going to work it for all it is worth, to bring human labor into touch with God's natural endowments, and we are going to make the land blossom like a rose and contain houses and firesides where there shall be happiness and contentment and glorious aspirations." But, as the present writer pointed out at the time, it will be necessary first to get hold of "our" country, and it is just here that labor fails. Mr. Fenner Brockway, Secretary of the Independent Labor Party, and Labor candidate at the Westminster by-election, when asked if he would support the demand for the immediate restoration of the land to the people and the collecting of the economic rent for public purposes, replied, "No, that would be too revolutionary."

The I. L. P. at its conference this year has definitely adopted Land Purchase as an integral part of its Land Policy, and thus ranges in line with the Tory Liberal and National Labor Parties, each of whom stands committed to compensation for Landlords.

STRIKES

The Dockers struck recently to the cry of "Work or Maintenance." They won a "victory" and got an advance of 1s. per day as from April 1st while the rest of their demand is to be further considered. Incidentally the dock charges were all advanced from the same date by rates varying from $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 52 per cent. As these increases will all be passed on to the consumers in higher prices, it follows that ere long the Dockers (and with them all other workers) will awake to find that the extra shilling has been more than swallowed up in the increased cost of living, and once again we shall see the old struggle renewed—but still within the vicious circle of land monopoly.

What are the facts? Competent authorities agree that there are three men at the Dock gates for each job going. Of the three two are agricultural laborers driven off soil. Thirty years ago there was a population of 3,000,000 engaged in agriculture in Britain. Today it has dwindled to less than 600,000. The men have gone, but the land is still there. "Work or Maintenance" even if it could be

established, would only mean that the one who got the work would have to maintain the two who are to get the maintenance. A truly Gilbertian situation, but obviously quite impossible. If the leaders of Labor had the "Knowledge" they would first insist that the power that drives men off the soil should be smashed, and this done, they would find in the trek back from the towns of the many thousands now dwelling therein against their will, the most effective lever for raising wages to their proper level, i.e., the full value of the service rendered by the laborer. Of course it is quite possible that when men saw they could command their full wage and determine their conditions themselves, they might cease to rely on leaders, but, in the Free Cooperative Commonwealth resulting there would be scope for those with organizing ability to lead in voluntary cooperative effort, and so, though no longer required to organize the wage-slaves in their slavery, these would find congenial service assisting to direct the efforts of free men in equality of opportunity.

WHY LABOR MUST FAIL

The reality that has to be faced by the electorate is that on its present lines Labor must fail. And the reason is lack of courage. When Arthur Henderson stood for Burnley after his defeat in the General Election he said to the people there. "Of course, the programme is not the same as at the General Election." That is to say, it is no longer a "definite, well-thought-out and comprehensive plan;" while the daily apologies from and for the erstwhile pacifists and anti-private enterprise members now seen voting with Tories and some Liberals for new cruisers (pleading unemployment as the excuse for their change of front) and supporting subsidies and cheap loans for capitalistic enterprises in the Sudan and elsewhere, all go to dispel the belief in that foundation of "well-defined and strongly held principles" about which we have heard so much so often. Indeed, one of their number, Mr. J. Sexton, M. P., summed the situation up quite accurately the other day when he said of the Government, "It is the finest Tory Government this country has ever seen."

In a moment of candor the Prime Minister himself has supplied the reason why this Government is bound to fail. Speaking at Brighton on March 6th he said: "What the world is now suffering from is that we have not the courage to go right down to the source of all these evils, and, instead, spend our time patching here and patching there."

Yet he still goes on "patching."

THE MORAL OF IT ALL

For the members of the Commonwealth Land Party the world over, the moral of it all lies in these words of Henry George:—"The advocates of a great principle should know no thought of compromise. They should proclaim it in all its fullness; and should point to its complete attainment as their goal."

J. W. GRAHAM PEACE.