
EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

BACK FROM ENGLAND.

New York.

New York, Feb. 21, 1910.

"New York has a real Mayor now," were the first words that greeted us as we stepped off the "Minnehaha," at the New York dock on the 15th, after an almost placid and quite uneventful voyage of ten days from Southampton. And so it seems to be. As Mayor of New York, Judge Gaynor appears at this time to have brought into the old metropolis a new civic life.

Already the police are said to be so far tamed as to realize that they are public servants—guardians of the peace, administrators of the law, friendly co-operators in promoting the safety and comfort of all and of each—and not licensed bullies, as they have been accustomed to think. For once they are afraid, I am told—afraid of defying the law as they have been accustomed to on pretense of administering it. There is a reasonable guarantee, so I am further assured, that during Mayor Gaynor's term there will be no lawless suppression of peaceable public meetings by the police of New York, nor any repetitions of police "sweat box" criminality.

On questions of public ownership, too, Mayor Gaynor seems to have begun to set a satisfactory pace. The old trick regarding subway building, of uniting operation with construction in putting out contracts, so as to head off competition in bids from building contractors who know nothing of operation, is not to be repeated, as it would appear; for the new administration is proceeding to build the new subways out of public funds and in the public interest, as public property, leaving the question of operation open until the problem of operation arises. If this policy had been followed with reference to the original subways, instead of the Chamber of Commerce policy, the New York subway system, and the city's interest regarding it, would be in a much more wholesome condition to-day than they are.

The subject of taxation is another field into which the Gaynor administration appears to have entered in the right spirit and the right way. In his correspondence with Lawson Purdy (p. 157), whom he most wisely retains as head of the tax department, Mayor Gaynor indicates the direction of his fiscal reform policies; and I find a great deal of confidence in most quarters that he will be found cordially supporting this notably excellent appointee. Nothing more vicious in the civic sense exists in any of our fiscal methods than the personal property tax and taxes falling under the same general principle. Not only are personal taxes so evaded and misapplied that they fall with heavy weight upon the various classes of small owners of personal property instead of the wealthy classes, but all taxes of this type operate to obstruct business, to put a check upon trade, to lessen employment, to reduce wages, and to discourage the buying of goods. By action and reaction along those lines, they become deadly enemies to industry, and efficient allies of privilege. Mayor Gaynor is now enlisted officially in the work of ridding the city of New York of them.

In every way the new Mayor appears to be "making good." In his appointments, in his dismissals, in his retentions, in the general administration of his office, as well as in his attitude toward the police, toward public utilities and toward the subject of taxation, he is strengthening the confidence in him of friends of genuinely good government and confounding its enemies. As a general rule in politics, the "appointment and disappointment" period which speedily follows a radical victory in politics, is for the most part, marked by such talk as that "if the election were to be held to-morrow, the victor would be snowed under"; but the talk about Mayor Gaynor at this critical moment runs the other way. Not only is he said by his friends to be "making good," but almost without discord the chorus proclaims that he is "making good." Go now into any mixed gathering (politically mixed), and the word you hear is that if Gaynor were up for election to-day he would go in with a big majority and "hands down."

In the evening of the day of our arrival in New York, Henry George, Jr., and I were given a "welcome home" dinner by the Manhattan Single Tax Club. Over 200 guests were present. Many a new face was among them and many a new name came to my ear; but there were also the young fellows of twenty-five years ago, grown into veterans now, with crow tracks about the eyes, and snow in the hair—those that still had hair,—or masked in beards, some in responsible places in the public service and some still tugging away as wheel horses in the common work, but all radiant in an atmosphere vital with thrilling memories of seed time and with unabated hopes for the harvest that Henry George pictured in the future.

Frederick C. Leibuscher, president of the Manhattan Single Tax Club, presided, and the speaking (aside from the president's) was by Mr. George and myself, the object being to get an account of the British elections. The surprising fact was the general impression that at those elections the progressive movement in British politics suffered defeat. It was a queer commentary upon the competency of American journalism—assuming the good faith, of course, of editorial supervision. For nothing except journalistic incompetency or editorial mendacity (though Mr. Bryce may have been right when he said that American newspaper correspondents drink a good deal of tea at Tory clubs) can account for the impression I find so common here, that the Tories were triumphant in those elections.

A most gratifying feature of the New York homecoming dinner was the reading of a letter received by Mr. Leibuscher as president of the Manhattan Single Tax Club, from Mr. Pinchot. I reproduce it without comment. In behalf of the club Mr. Leibuscher had written to Mr. Pinchot in January, saying: "Your fight to conserve the public domain and national resources of the United States commends you to every believer in the right of all men to equal opportunity before the law. Your perception that the final closing to settlement and development of the public lands by their passing into private ownership marks the end of the epoch of comparative freedom for the masses, is in harmony with the views of single tax advocates. The Manhattan Single Tax

Club, founded by Henry George twenty-three years ago, therefore has instructed me to offer you its support in the manly and determined stand you have taken." To that letter this was Mr. Pinchot's reply:

February 4, 1910.

Mr. Frederick Cyrus Lebuscher, President, Manhattan Single Tax Club, New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir: I thank you for your letter of January 12. The support and encouragement of yourself and of the Manhattan Single Tax Club are most welcome. Now that the lines are being clearly drawn between the special interests and the rest of us in the fight for conservation and the square deal, we shall win, for the people are on our side. What has happened to me is of no consequence, except as it will help us to win. Please give my hearty thanks to the members of the Single Tax Club for their good wishes and support. Sincerely yours,

GIFFORD PINCHOT.

Although I make no comment at this time, Mr. Lebuscher's comment at the dinner should be remembered. He said:

The Pinchot agitation comes at an opportune time. The Court of Appeals of the State of New York lately handed down a decision in the case of *People vs. N. Y. Carbonic Acid Gas Co.*, in which the chief judge laid down the doctrine that "A man owning a coal mine may mine the coal and waste it, regardless of the interest of the present generation or of succeeding ones." They say it "is not that such conduct would not be an evil, but because the people who framed our system of government, taught by experience, deemed it wiser to trust the use of property to the dictates of the enlightened self-interest of the owner, rather than to subject it to governmental interference."

It is well to observe, I think, that the wickedness of this New York decision is not in the court's application of the law, which seems to be right enough, legally, but in the laws themselves. So long as we of this country hold to the vicious principle that the earth and labor products are essentially the same as property, so long as the trusteeship involved in land ownership is ignored, we must expect and ought to get such decisions.

A few days after the dinner Henry George, Jr., left New York for a lecturing trip in the West under the management of Frederick H. Monroe of the Henry George Lecture Bureau.

Boston.

Boston, Feb. 23.

Upon the invitation of Prof. Lewis J. Johnson of Harvard, I spoke here yesterday afternoon at a meeting of 300 or more in one of the halls of Tremont Temple, under the auspices of the Massachusetts Single Tax League, James R. Carret presiding; and while staying here I have had some opportunity to note the subjects that are attracting local attention and engrossing public interest. Here again taxation is at the bottom of it all.

The movement for a better Boston by 1915 has already run counter to the interests, for it is becoming apparent enough to the shrewd "business" mind, that a better Boston will not be all custard for the owners of the site on which Boston rests, but that land values must foot the bill.

Nor is that all. The effort to tax personalty has been so efficiently made here, in many respects at least, that the tendency of personal property to run away is being felt. So there is a movement on to reduce taxation in the hope that a low rate will

induce owners of personalty to pay the tax. There are Constitutional difficulties, for in Massachusetts the Constitution requires taxation to be "proportional." The effect of that clause might be avoided by exempting personal property altogether. But both as to reduction and as to exemption, there is strong opposition from real estate owners; and these are supported (or perhaps befooled) by traction interests, whose bonds are exempt from taxation and therefore have an advantage in the securities market, so long as other securities are taxed. It is a curious commentary upon the common sense of real estate owners, that they fail to see the benefit to themselves of tax exemptions on personalty. Such exemptions would on the one hand throw but slight additional burdens upon real estate; and on the other they would greatly stimulate local business. The increase in land values caused by business stimulation would manifestly exceed the increase in real estate taxation.

One of the especially interesting movements in Massachusetts is that of Cambridge for a new charter. The proposed charter has been formulated for submission to the legislature with a view to bringing its adoption up for referendum before the people of Cambridge. As formulated, it is an adaptation, and a good one, of the Grand Junction charter (vol. xii, p. 1092). The initiative, the referendum, the recall, and preferential voting are all embodied in its provisions.

Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, Feb. 24.

At the City Club here tonight, though not under its official auspices, I was given a reception dinner by tax reformers and others interested in the progress of British politics.

My visit to Philadelphia was in the heat of the street car strike. Few street cars were running, and the railroad station was packed with people seeking this substitute for street car transportation. The causes of the strike are complicated in detail, but clear enough in general. They all classify into the one issue of "open shop" versus "closed shop." Having secured closed shop conditions for themselves, the street car interests have set about (there being no election on now) imposing open shop conditions on their employes. So far as I could learn, the violence so liberally reported over the country was caused by no street car employes, but by indignant people of the class who do not know how to strike back with the same velvet covered bludgeons that street car magnates use, but resort to more primitive weapons.

Cleveland.

Cleveland, Feb. 25.

In this city, so recently under the administrative management of Tom L. Johnson, the long street car fight has come to an end. Mayor Johnson has in the settlement secured the rights of all who invested in his program for municipalizing the street car system. Whether the interests of the people of Cleveland are to be secure or not is a problem for the future. At the referendum on the settlement ordinance he issued an address (p. 158) in which he gave fair warning that the Taylor ordinance leaves it well within the power of the street car ring to bring about condi-

tions increasing fares and nullifying the ostensible purposes of the ordinance. So much he felt bound to advise the people. If they were tired of fighting, he felt that they ought to know nevertheless the possible cost of their yielding to their weariness. But he made no fight. His condition of health would not have permitted that, even if he had cared himself to push the fight on to a better settlement. The people were tired of the fight and they sanctioned the Taylor ordinance, which has now gone into effect. If the traction interests of the United States (for this is not a local Cleveland question) are wise enough to work under the Taylor ordinance according to its spirit, the low fare regime now in operation will continue; but if they are as fatuous as such interests usually are, Cleveland will soon be in their grip once more.

Regarding his condition of health, ex-Mayor Johnson appears to be happily convalescent and wholly confident of an early restoration of his physical powers. The fight is not yet over and better work than ever confronts him, in which he busies himself daily and to the fruition of which he looks eagerly forward. Within a few days the completion of his first struggle for public rights is to be celebrated by the presentation of a fine medallion upon which Richard F. George, the sculptor, is now engaged in his studio in New York.

The British Situation.

At Home, Feb. 27.

Looking over the meager, mixed and misleading cable reports of British politics, and American editorials on the subject, I am interested, with a peculiar interest, in the prevailing notion that radical Liberalism suffered a defeat at the recent elections. It did not. The defeat, in so far as it was a defeat, was a defeat of whig Liberalism. Radicalism is in a far better position in Great Britain today than it has ever been in before.

What will occur no one can prophesy with definiteness—whether an early dissolution and new elections, or a long lease of power for the present Government. But if there are no new elections soon (and this is the better guess), there will be an advance in progressive legislation in Great Britain which the American newspapers will be less than ever disposed to report fully or intelligently. Should the present Government stay in power, land value taxation will be established. Moreover, the Lords' veto will be completely cut off as to financial legislation and curbed as to all other kinds; Ireland will be given home rule in home affairs (under a local or State legislature), and so in quick sequence will Scotland and Wales; and with the rest, the abominably Tory-sided electoral system will be reformed so as to secure fair representation upon the basis of adult suffrage. All this is in the air in British politics.

And whether the present Parliament dissolves early or not, those progressive results will at worst be only postponed. They may not be even postponed, for the joinder of issue would be much more definite and clear at new elections, though they were to occur next month, than they were at the recent elections. Protection "red herrings" would not again cross the trail with false scents.

As one final word I should like to pay a tribute to some more of the men whose past work has made the land value taxation movement so strong in Great Britain. It is well known that the Glasgow men, among whom Henry George sowed the seed in the early 80's, have fostered its growth until at the recent elections Scotland secured more Liberal Parliamentary seats than in the landslide election of 1906, and did it intelligently along the lines of land values taxation. It is well known also that the London, the Yorkshire, the Lancashire and other Henry George men, as well as those of Scotland, all concentrated in their efforts now in the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, have done splendid work. But it is not very generally known that three men—J. W. S. Callie of Liverpool, Edward McHugh of Birkenhead, and Richard McGhee (formerly a member of Parliament)—did shrewd and influential work in the Liberal party in the western divisions of Great Britain in the 90's, and that the funds for this work were supplied by Arthur J. Moxham of Wilmington, Delaware. The Tories in those divisions made no gains over the phenomenal Liberal victory of 1906. To know the history of radical work in Great Britain is to realize that Mr. Moxham is entitled to credit for much of the work of the earlier days out of which this result has come, even as Joseph Fels is for so much of the same kind of work and in the same places at the present time.

L. F. P.

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, March 1, 1910.

The British Parliament.

Advices by mail confirm our inferences (p. 130) regarding the political complexion of the New House of Commons (p. 177), with the single difference that the progressive Irish under Redmond hold one seat more and the tory Irish one seat less than from the cable reports we had gathered the fact to be. The official result, to be found in the Pall Mall Gazette's handbook for 1910, shows the following:

Liberal (including labor members not in the Labor party, single taxers, and other radical Liberals, being the elements of which the Liberal party is now almost wholly composed) . . .	274
Labor (composed of Labor party and Independent Labor party)	41
Irish (under Redmond's leadership)	71
Progressive membership	386