

**EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE**

**MORE ABOUT THE BRITISH ELECTIONS.**

Glasgow, Scotland, Jan. 26, 1910

It produces a curious sensation in an American, this watching of election returns from day to day, not to speculate upon what the general result will appear to have been when fully reported, as in the United States, but to estimate what it may come to be when all the elections shall have been held, and to tighten the belt for each day's further fighting.

There have been election returns every day since the 14th, when the first announcement was made that there would not be an election in Joseph Chamberlain's district the following day, as no opposing nomination had been made. Two other unopposed seats were reported on the same day as having obviated the elections set in those constituencies for the day following. This lack of opposition is not uncommon in an utterly hopeless district, especially on the part of the poorer parties. For contesting a seat in Parliament is very expensive. The candidate must contribute not only his own campaign expenses, but his pro rata share of the public expense of holding the election, and it costs him from \$5,000 up. Often a party will think it necessary for tactical reasons to contest a hopeless district, in which case it will pay the expense out of party funds unless an ambitious man of means volunteers for the sacrifice; but many of the election returns since the 14th have been from uncontested districts.

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Since the 14th, every day but Sundays has been a polling day in some district or other—and not in one only, but in many scattered ones—until now 524 seats out of a total of 670 have been filled.

The complete result will be known to readers of The Public by cable before this letter appears in print; but the contest has advanced far enough to furnish indications of the final result sufficient for a judgment upon the significance of the probable outcome.

With the first pollings, the Liberals were encouraged. Although adverse reports came in from London and some other points, these districts had been Tory before the Liberal landslide of 1906, and reaction had been anticipated by the Liberals.

Taken as a whole, the returns of the first three or four days indicated a small plurality of Liberals over Tories. Later pollings, however, pointed to the necessity of a Liberal-Labor coalition in order to make an anti-Tory plurality, and immediately Liberal and Labor returns were bunched in the reports as virtually one at the present crisis. And when the returns from the counties (in contradistinction to boroughs, although borough landowners vote at the county elections)—when these began to come in, the Liberals found it necessary to look forward to a Liberal-Labor-Irish coalition in order to hold the Tories in a minority.

This view of the matter became pronounced on the 21st, when it appeared that the Tories had won 81 seats from Liberal and Labor, and that the Lib-

erals and Labors together had won only 11 from them, leaving a net gain of 70 to the Tories. This left the Tories to win only 16 seats in order to have just a majority of the House if they could establish an understanding with the 83 votes of the Irish party.

At that time the distribution of members elected was as follows:

Tories .....	185
Liberals .....	160
Tory plurality.....	25
Liberals and Labor.....	190
Tories (as above).....	185
Liberal and Labor plurality.....	5
Liberals, Labor and Irish.....	248
Tories (as above).....	185
Progressive majority.....	63

It is significant that the Liberal newspapers were fully in the habit by the 21st of counting the three parties—Liberal, Labor and Irish—as engaged in one progressive movement and interdependent. The significance is that the disappointing results which then threatened to deprive the Liberals of an independent majority while holding the Tories in a minority, were forcing the Liberals farther forward along the radical road. As these results have not been much improved by the subsequent elections down to and including the 24th, the outlook for a coalition of all progressive forces for home rule and social reform has not been impaired.

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Up to the 24th, including the reports for that day, the results were as follows:

Liberals .....	203
Labor .....	83
Liberals and Labor.....	236
Tories .....	220
Liberal and Labor plurality over Tory.....	16
Irish .....	68
Majority to date against Tories.....	84

The popular vote to date (including the "outvotes," who vote outside of their place of domicile on the basis of property, and are almost solidly Tory) is as follows, in comparison with the Liberal landslide vote of 1906:

	1910.	1906.
Liberal .....	2,165,519	2,049,963
Labor .....	440,842	400,459
Tory .....	2,370,319	1,766,472

Without therefore counting the popular vote in Ireland, of which I find no computation, and notwithstanding the enormous "outvote" for the Tories, the Liberals and Labors together have at present a popular majority of 236,042 over the Tories.

A comparison of the seats goes to show that the indications of the pollings up to the 21st were verified by those that followed up to the 25th. The Liberal, the Labor, and the Irish parties must therefore co-operate in the next House of Commons in order to check the power of the House of Lords, and thereby to clear the way for progressive legislation, or the country will be thrown back into another more heated and more doubtful contest. In that event, should a Tory government manage to get a majority, as the present elections indicate that it might, the power of

the House of Lords would probably be strengthened and perpetuated by a reformation of the Lords on their own initiative through a law limiting their numbers. This would entrench their veto power over progressive legislation against every assault short of violent revolution. For no progressive ministry would then be able to "swamp" the House of Lords by appointments of new peers when the Lords were revolutionary as they were last Fall. Great Britain would in that event be under a single-chamber government whenever progressives were in the majority in the Commons; and the single chamber would be, not the House elected by the people, but a House composed hereditarily of the sons of their fathers—"the first of the litter," as these arrogant fellows quote Lloyd George, with indignation at his presumption in applying to "his betters" the kind of language that they themselves apply to their "inferiors."

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How much further the coalition of the Liberal, the Irish and the Labor parties in the next Parliament may go cannot be predicted. But as to Liberals and Labors there seems to be now for the most part a sympathetic community of interest, general spirit and immediate purpose.

In no instance has any Liberal contested a Labor district officially. In one or two districts, Liberals have done this, but they have been out of sympathy with and unsupported by their own party, and have been badly beaten. Keir Hardie's district is an instance. There are two seats there. The Liberals nominated one candidate only, and the Labor party nominated only Mr. Hardie. The official Liberal polled about 15,000 votes, and Mr. Hardie about 13,000, while the Liberal who opposed Mr. Hardie unofficially had only about 3,000.

In several Liberal districts, Labor candidates insisted upon making contests, in consequence of which the Tories have snatched several seats away from the radical side. These triangular contests were made as a rule by socialists of the "impossibilist" type. They were not encouraged by the Labor party, and with perhaps a dozen exceptions alluded to above they have not helped the reactionary elements, for the Liberal has won even in the triangular contest in all but about a dozen of the districts where these contests have occurred.

An instance of failure to produce their natural effect of electing Tories and shielding privilege in the hour of its peril is furnished by Victor Grayson's experience as a third candidate in a Liberal district. At a by-election during the last Parliament, Mr. Grayson had made a triangular contest and defeated a Liberal; but at the election the other day the Liberal had a vote of 4,741, and the Tory only 3,750, while Mr. Grayson came in third with 3,149. It was Mr. Grayson who was suspended from the House in October, 1908, by unanimous vote (vol. xi, p. 712) because he insisted, while participating in Parliamentary methods, upon resorting to unparliamentary tactics.

There seems to be every reason to believe, then, that there will be cordial co-operation between the Labor party and the Liberals in the next Parliament for primary progressive legislation, both political and economic. And all the more so because the Liberal

membership is strongly tinged with radicalism. It is recruited largely from radicals, and a large number of its members who do not rank as radicals have radical tendencies. Even those who are still whiggish will probably have to yield to the inevitable or get out of the way.

Among the strong radical Liberals re-elected are Josiah C. Wedgwood,\* a thorough-going disciple of Henry George, who had much influence in his party in the last House and will have more in this. Mr. Wedgwood is proud of the fact that he fought for his seat distinctly as a Henry George advocate, and that Henry George, Jr., spoke for him in his campaign. J. H. Whitley,† a second whip in the last House and also a devoted disciple of Henry George, is another of the radical Liberals re-elected. Many more are more or less advanced advocates of the taxation of land values, and consequently in harmony with the Labor party on all the economic questions now at issue.

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On most of these questions the Irish party also may be counted upon. Mr. Asquith is committed to put forward the Irish home rule demand—home rule in local affairs as well as Imperial representation in Imperial affairs—if the House calls for it. The House cannot call for it without a coalition of Irish, Labor and Liberal members; but with that coalition they can. No coalition of the Tories with the Irish on that proposition is humanly possible. For the Tories to grant Irish home rule such as the Irish would accept would destroy the Tories with their constituents.

Nor is it very likely that a union of Liberals, Labors and Irish for throttling the Lords' veto and securing Irish home rule would stop short of putting through the Budget, with its land clauses at any rate unimpaired. And such a coalition might well go on to a reform of the present absurdly unfair electoral laws with their property qualifications, sex distinctions and plural voting.

While, then, official Liberals—those who care only for the name of party success—may feel the shock of a victory so moderate as to tend to force coalition of all the progressive elements, there is nothing for progressives in any of the three parties to deplore. A more radical attitude is necessary to the Liberals now, as the advances of the Budget were necessary to them a year and a half ago. The Tory protection appeals to workingmen would have placed the Tories in power at this election but for the radicalism with reference to land value taxation in the Budget; and it is quite clear that those clauses alone have met the protection appeals and kept the Tories out of power at these elections. With the prospective relations, then, of parties in the next House of Commons it is reasonable to believe that the organizations for the promotion of land value taxation, which have been doing tremendously effective work in England and Scotland in this campaign, and have probably saved the day, will be more influential than ever in the councils of the Liberal party.

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I say that the work of the land value taxers—their

\*See last week's Public, page 104.

†See last week's Public, page 102.

work of education on platforms and through print and by organization, which Joseph Fels has backed without stint,—has probably saved the day. But the wonder is that the day could have been saved by anything whatever.

The "outvoter," as landowners in constituencies in which they do not live are called, has carried many a one of these elections for the Tories against the majority of the inhabitants.

The "publican"—poor hired or mortgaged liquor distributor for great breweries and distilleries, which own his license, and his liquor selling site—has played his part for the Tories and, as is fairly believed, with other arguments than sweet reasonableness.

The agricultural landlord has frightened his tenant, and the tenant has frightened his laborers, into voting Tory; for the ballot here, though said to be secret, is not felt to be altogether so by dependent voters.

Added to the affiliation of landlords, clergy (English Roman Catholic as well as Anglican) and the liquor interest, for the purpose of influencing the elections in favor of perpetuating feudalism, the Tories threw into the campaign, shrewdly enough, the "tariff reform" or protection issue, with old-fashioned American appeals to the workingmen, and highly colored stories of high wages and plenty of work in the United States. This was Joseph Chamberlain's wily contribution. Wherever it was met with the land question boldly, showing that the taxation of land values and not the taxation of imports is the remedy for disemployment, the effect has been satisfactory. Only in districts where plural voting, landlord intimidation, or "penniless plute" influences prevail, has a straight out land value tax fight as yet encountered defeat.

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Among the radicals who have been elected, and who are more or less in sympathy with Mr. Wedgwood and Mr. Whitley, and like those two are altogether so with the Lloyd George policy, are Mr. Wm. P. Byles, a brother-in-law of Mr. A. Kenyon Maynard, recently of the Northwestern University Settlement in Chicago, and Colonel James W. Greig, a brother-in-law of Judge Edward Osgood Brown of Chicago. Colonel Greig has made himself popular with the land value taxationists of Glasgow. Dundas White, another leader for land value taxation, who made a fine radical record in the recent Parliament, comes up for re-election here to-morrow.

One of the defeats of the land value taxationists was in Mid-Norfolk, where W. P. Lester made the contest. So strong was the combined landlord, liquor and clerical influence there that he could hardly get a hearing; and when his defeat was announced he was savagely attacked by a mob. So savage was this attack, notwithstanding his defeat, that his campaign manager believes he would have been killed had he been elected. This district was carried by a Liberal in the landslide of 1906 by only 27, and Mr. Lester lost it by less than 300.

Another, and the only other notable instance of defeat of a pronounced land-taxer candidate up to the present date, was at Southport—a combination constituency of brummagem aristocrats, penniless plutes, agricultural landlords and farm laborers—

where Baron De Forest, a wealthy aristocrat in station but a fundamental democrat in sentiment, made an aggressively radical campaign. He lost by 7,218 to 7,637, an adverse majority of 419, in a district that went Liberal by about 200 in the landslide of 1906, but which is normally a pronounced Tory district.

In his campaign, however, Baron De Forest announced his purpose, come what might at that election, of going forward in the fight he had entered upon for the rights of the people. His position may be inferred from this quotation from his election address, the point he especially emphasized in his speeches: "Unemployment can only be mitigated by giving the people access to the land. Freedom to produce is the logical complement of freedom to exchange. When industry is freed from the shackles of land monopoly, increased employment and higher wages must inevitably follow. The taxation of land values is the means to attain this result."

Baron De Forest (whose title, by the way, is originally continental, but is borne in England by special license granted by Queen Victoria, and who himself is an intimate friend of Winston Churchill) made a sensation over a local land dispute in his campaign. A pamphlet had been issued by his authority giving an expert's estimate of the value of the undeveloped building land in his Parliamentary district. It disclosed 10,069 acres of such land, of a value of \$35,425,800 (on a moderate rental basis), and capable of yielding \$80,000 a year in taxes at the low rate proposed by the Budget. It now pays nothing in taxes. The other side challenged Baron De Forest to make an offer of even so much as \$2,500,000 for this land. Then they issued a poster declaring that the land in question was not worth more than \$2,925,000. Promptly Baron De Forest, refusing to quibble over the difference between the two sums, made a formal offer (as he was well known to be financially able to do) of the latter sum for the freehold of the land specified in his pamphlet, he to pay down 10 per cent in cash immediately upon acceptance of his offer. This offer remained open until the close of the polls, and there was no restriction as to time even after the close. It is understood to be still open. But there has been no acceptance.

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To understand the party situation as a matter of election results, one must consider the political complexion of the House of Commons heretofore, and I tabulate it from 1885, when the franchise had been last extended:

Year.	Liberals.	Tories.	Irish.	Labor.
1885 .....	334	250	86	..
1892 .....	274	315	81	..
1895 .....	177	411	82	..
1900 .....	186	402	82	..
1906 .....	376	157	85	54
1910 (to Jan. 24) .....	203	220	68	33

From the above table it will be seen that there are now 524 seats filled; that the Tories are 17 ahead of the Liberals, and 16 behind Liberal and Labor together; and that the Irish hold the balance of power as they did under Gladstone in 1892 when he carried an Irish home rule bill through the Commons with their votes.

But the important question now is what will be

done when the elections are all over and Parliament assembles, as it will about the middle of February. It may not get into working order before the early days of March. But not long after that time, perhaps before, the significance of the election results will begin to become concrete.

Opinions here differ as to what will be done. Presumably, since the Tories are in the minority, the King will ask Mr. Asquith, the Liberal leader, to form a cabinet. As Mr. Asquith has declared that the Liberals will not take governmental responsibility unless assured that the Lords shall no longer baffle progressive legislation, he will doubtless require the necessary assurances before undertaking to form a cabinet.

These might be given in one of three ways: the King could appoint about 500 new peers, nominated by Mr. Asquith, thereby "swamping" the present majority in the House of Lords; or he might summon to Parliament only such Lords as Mr. Asquith names; or he might prevail upon the Lords to acquiesce in Mr. Asquith's demand for a modification of the Lords' veto. If he does undertake to form a cabinet, it may be safely assumed that one or another of those assurances has been given him.

If somebody else is named to form a ministry, it may be assumed that the King has refused to accede to Asquith's conditions. In that case, Mr. Balfour would probably be the person called into form a cabinet. He might decline, on the ground that he could not control a majority; or he might accept, with a view to being voted down in the Commons and going to the country for a new general election to be held at once; or he might come to an understanding with the Irish party to give him a majority. The latter is what William O'Brien (Irish, Tory and marplot) would like, but it is not what John Redmond, the real Irish leader, would like. It probably could not be done without a concession of complete home rule to the Irish, and this it is inconceivable that the Tories would assent to, for it would be party suicide.

Should Mr. Asquith take up the job of forming a cabinet, the Budget would probably be adopted by the Commons at once, under strict closure, and sent up to the Lords, and the general belief is that they would adopt it unchanged. But they would do so, if they did it at all, on the ground that they had referred it to the people, and the people had approved it. As this would leave them free to take the same course with any future Budget, the Commons would thereby be divested of control over the national purse strings, and the House of Lords would be able at any time to turn out of power a party it did not like, by simply "referring" its Budget to popular vote.

Precisely that is what Mr. Asquith, with the Liberals and Labor men and the Irish behind him, insists that the Lords must not be permitted to do. It may be expected, therefore, if Mr. Asquith does form a cabinet, that he will very soon take up the Campbell-Bannerman resolution, and, passing it through the Commons, send it to the Lords.

The Campbell-Bannerman resolution provides (1) that if the Lords reject a measure of any kind adopted by the Commons, a conference of the two Houses shall be had; that (2) if the conference fails to agree, the measure may be voted upon a second time by the Commons, and if it is again adopted a second

conference shall be held; and that (3) if the second conference fails to agree and the Commons adopt the measure a third time, it shall be law notwithstanding the opposition of the Lords.

It is as near a certainty as anything in the future can be, that under these circumstances the Bannerman resolution would be adopted in the Commons by the joint vote of Liberals, Labor and Irish. It is also as certain that it would be adopted by the Lords (either through "swamping" appointments, preferential summonses, or a "coming down" of the Lordly coon), for it is unthinkable that Asquith would undertake to form a cabinet without assurances from the King guaranteeing acquiescence by the House of Lords in his demands regarding the veto claims of that non-representative body.

Should an Asquith ministry hold a progressive majority in the New House of Commons together until the completion of this much of the progressive program, it is reasonably believed that the next general elections would be far off, and that meanwhile much reform legislation would be enacted. Such legislation would probably include a reapportionment of seats, a reformation of the franchise so as to extend voting rights and abolish "outvoter" privileges, and a full measure of home rule in home affairs for Ireland.

But if Asquith is baffled at the outset, early elections would be the probable result—perhaps long before summer. And this is what all the Interests over here are now praying for.

L. F. P.

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## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

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### ABOLITION OF POVERTY.

Morrison, Tenn., Jan. 29, 1910.

Twenty odd years ago Father McGlynn of New York organized the Anti-Poverty Society. It held enthusiastic meetings. It attracted much attention. But it did not abolish poverty. Its enthusiasm and efforts seemed wasted. But it was not so. Words of truth are immortal. The word of the Lord does not return to him void, but like the rain, does good in the world.

For three years, in a feeble way, but the best I could, I have been calling attention to God's promise in Deuteronomy, 15: 4-5: "There shall be no poor with thee." Like all God's promises, it is conditional. The condition is national obedience to the principles of political justice revealed in the Law of Moses. Individual obedience to the Bible will abolish the poverty that springs from individual wrong-doing; and national obedience will destroy the economic or involuntary poverty that springs from national sinning. I have been much encouraged during the last months; for the sneers that formerly met my assertion that Christ had promised to abolish poverty, have ceased. And this week my heart sings for joy, for I read in the Outlook of January 29, on page 246, the following words from Lloyd George, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer:

"This is a War Budget. It is for raising money to wage implacable warfare against poverty and squalidness. I cannot help hoping and believing that before this generation has passed away we shall have