

## THE PEOPLE v. THE PEERS.

Sir,—The action of the House of Lords in rejecting the Education Bill and the Plural Voting Bill, and in mangling and mutilating various other measures, renders it imperative that the long outstanding account between the people and this House of Hereditary Wreckers shall be settled once and for all. The House of Lords' Veto must be abolished, and the Non-Representative Chamber must be deprived of all power to interfere with the House of Commons in its task of carrying out the will of the people. But it would be folly to appeal to the country on the cry "Down with the House of Lords," (1) until the Government have, by sending up a number of other radical measures, not only "filled up the cup of iniquity" of the House of Lords, but made as clear as possible the issue of—"the People v. the Peers;" and (2) until the Government have established beyond doubt their own good faith and earnestness of purpose by carrying the great, beneficent, and far-reaching financial reforms with which the Non-Representative Chamber has no right to interfere.

What might be done in this direction is indicated on the Budget Plebiscite Post Card enclosed, for which I trust you may be able to find space in your valuable paper. The post card reads as follows:—

## "THE BASIS OF A REAL DEMOCRATIC BUDGET.

I.—Levy the 4s. Land Tax upon the values of to-day (£200,000,000 a year according to the Financial Reform Almanack), thus realising £40,000,000 a year.

II.—Repeal the Doles Act, saving a further £3,000,000.

III.—Apportion this £43,000,000 a year as under:—

(a) Payment of Members and of Election Expenses, ...	£1,000,000
(b) Repeal of the Breakfast Table Duties, ... ..	11,250,000
(c) Old Age Pensions, ... ..	25,000,000
(d) 2d. off the Income Tax, ... ..	5,000,000
Present yield of Land Tax, ... ..	750,000

"A Bill should also be passed to empower local authorities in town and country to rate land values, thus enabling them to relieve the homes and the industries of the people of the existing rate burden of £54,000,000 a year.

"N.B.—'The Lords block the way'—except for Financial Reforms. Witness their impotence in the case of the Death Duties Budget of 1894, in which Sir William Harcourt made a beginning of taxing the landlords."

If all who are in favour of the radical fiscal reforms here enumerated would only spend a penny or two in "post-carding" the Premier, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and their member on the question, we should soon "get a move on," and such enthusiasm would be aroused as would make the task of tackling the Lords one of no great difficulty or danger.

I would point out that in addition to providing the funds for Old age Pensions, etc., etc., the levying of the 4s. land tax upon the actual present value of the land would force idle land into use, and thus find remunerative employment for all idle but willing hands.

On receipt of 2d. in stamps, I shall have much pleasure in forwarding to any of your readers 10 of the Budget Plebiscite Post Cards mentioned above, also a leaflet demonstrating in detail that the Lords have no power to interfere with financial reforms.—I am, yours faithfully,

FRED. SKIRROW.

59 Fell Lane, Keighley.

## THE SPECIAL LITERATURE FUND.

According to *The Public* (Chicago, U.S.A.), "The Story of my Dictatorship" has recently been translated into Spanish, and is now being well circulated in South America. Our first supply of 5000 copies is now exhausted; a second issue of 5000 has been printed, and is now being rapidly sold. Some of our active co-workers have well seconded our efforts, but much yet remains to be done, for every bookseller has not yet stocked and displayed the book. So we would appeal to all our friends not to wait to see what others are doing, but to do something themselves. Every little helps, and there never was a time when the circulation of our literature would be more helpful. Those having any personal acquaintance with wholesale distributors or retail booksellers can with but little trouble and no risk render us incalculable service.

Contributions already acknowledged, ...	£107	2	0
Andrew Scott, ... ..	0	10	6
Iconoclast, ... ..	0	5	0
Leo. Hahnemann, ... ..	0	5	0
M'Guigan's Election Committee (Portsmouth),	0	10	0
	£108	12	6

L. H. BERENS, *Hon. Treasurer.*

## News of the Movement.

A German correspondent writes:—In the last number of *Deutsche Volkstimme* is an article by Adolf Damaschke, who is standing for election to the Reichstag. He shows how the troubles in German South-West Africa are due to land monopoly. More than one-third of the territory belongs to six companies, which are under the influence of English speculators. How little these companies do for the colonisation of the country is shown by the fact that the greatest of all, the "South-West African Company," holding the most valuable mining rights, has brought into the country in all four employes—one white and three coloured. The way in which this company secured for itself the sole mining rights in Ovamboland is very significant. This company had managed to get from the German Colonial Office the sole right of building railways—the "right," not the duty. Ten years ago (1897) revolts broke out, and a railway from the port to the capital became necessary. The company flatly refused to the German Government to build the railway! When the German Government itself laid the rails, the English company forbade the use of steam, and the mighty German Empire was forced to move the cars by means of—donkeys, to the great amusement of Englishmen and natives alike. At last South-West African Company allowed the use of locomotives, but not till they had squeezed out of the Colonial Office the sole mining rights in the whole of Ovamboland.

New South Wales.  
A 20 per cent. Municipal Rate.

MUNICIPALITIES TO RATE LAND VALUES UP TO 2D. IN THE £.—Mr. J. R. Firth, of Sydney, New South Wales, writes, December 15th, 1906:—

The Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council have now agreed on the final form the Local Government Extension Bill shall take, and its enactment this year is, therefore, now assured. It applies to all existing municipalities (with the exception of the City of Sydney). It makes a rate of 1d. in the £ on unimproved land values mandatory, and allows Municipal Councils to rate on unimproved land values up to 2d. in the £. No exemptions of any description. It means a great advance in municipal government in this State, and is, next to our Shires Act, the greatest triumph Henry George's New South Wales followers have yet achieved.