

committee approve. The direct effect of its adoption will apparently be to effect a complete redistribution of the burden of rating. The indirect effect will be to stimulate buildings and improvements, to bring more building land into the market, to lower rents, and to diminish overcrowding. To what extent the burden of rating would be redistributed by the adoption of the new standard must, it is apparent, be a matter of conjecture, inasmuch as no reliable data exists from which to form a just estimate of the value of land in Scotland apart from the buildings and improvements upon it. It seems to the committee, therefore, to be absolutely essential before the proposed new standard is adopted that such a valuation be made.

The question to which prominent attention was directed in the evidence was, whether to make such a valuation is reasonably practicable. The committee adopted the view that a considerable expenditure of time and money will be incurred in making the valuation for the first time, but as the amount and character of the aid required would vary in different burghs, depending not only on the number and character of the returns, but also on the skill and experience of the assessor, they consider that the question of additional assistance ought to be left to the discretion of each local authority. Whilst placing on record the opinion that in making the valuation regard must be paid to every restriction validly imposed on the ground and legally binding at the date of the valuation, they say that it should not be forgotten that the restrictions usually found in the title deeds of the property in Scotland are such that, although they may sometimes diminish its selling value, nevertheless they materially conduce to the amenity of the district and to the health of the community. Such restrictions seldom benefit the owner, qua owner, although they may enhance the value of neighboring land, the valuation of which will be accordingly increased, and the rating correspondingly heightened. The committee, therefore, reject the view that restrictions validly imposed on land, even if they tend to diminish its selling value, should either be disregarded or separately valued, and a rate imposed in respect of this value on the person maintaining the restriction. Consequently if a valuation such as the committee recommend be made, regard should be paid to restrictions validly imposed upon the land. . . .

Proceeding to summarize their conclusions, the committee express the view that the new standard of rating, based upon the yearly value of land apart from the buildings and improvements upon it, is sound and would prove advantageous; that to set it up by estimating the value of land apart from buildings is practicable, that in making the valuation regard must be had to all restrictions validly imposed on the land and to recent expenditure in preparing it for use, that exemptions such as are proposed in the bill are proper, but that to these exemptions ought to be added railways, canals, docks, piers, and harbors; that so far as both occupiers and owners are concerned the new standard of rating should be substituted for the present standard, and that within the category of owners ought to be included the owners of feu-duties whensoever created. The committee therefore recommend that the bill referred to them be not proceeded with, that a measure be introduced making provision for a valuation of land in both burghs and counties of Scotland apart from the buildings and erections upon it, and that no assessment be determined upon until the amount of that valuation is known and considered.

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British Politics.

The education bill, the subject of ten months' debate, was finally killed in the House of Lords on the 19th, by a vote of 132 to 52, through the Lords' insistence upon retaining their amendments rejected by the Commons (p. 895). In a speech in

the Commons on the 20th, the Premier, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, repudiated the claims of the Peers to lecture the Commons, and stated that the government would withdraw the measure. Of the constitutional phase of the situation he said:

Is the general election and its results to go for nothing? It is intolerable that the second chamber, while one party is in power, shall be its willing servant, and when that party is emphatically condemned by the country it shall still be able to thwart and distort the policy which the electors approved. It may be necessary to submit for the moment, but neither the resources of the British constitution nor of the House of Commons are wholly exhausted yet. A way must and will be found whereby the will of the people, expressed through their elected representatives in the House of Commons, will be made to prevail.

According to the dispatches these declarations were received with prolonged cheering.

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Parliament was prorogued on the 21st for the holiday recess, to meet again February 2.

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James Bryce, Chief Secretary for Ireland, has been appointed Ambassador at Washington, to succeed Sir Mortimer Durand. Mr. Bryce, it is said, will come here as a commoner, and will be the first plain citizen to represent his country at Washington. Mr. Bryce is widely and favorably known in America as the author of "The Holy Roman Empire," and "The American Commonwealth."

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A Protest Against the Congo Horrors.

An open letter protesting against the conditions in the Congo Free State (pp. 871, 896) was addressed on the 25th, by a number of prominent citizens of New York, to the Secretary of State, Mr. Elihu Root. Among the signers of the letter were the Revs. Lyman Abbott, Henry Mottet, Wilford L. Robbins, George William Knox, Charles H. Parkhurst, John P. Peters, William R. Richards, Anson P. Atterbury and Percy S. Grant, and Messrs. William Jay Schiefelin, William H. Douglas, Charles A. Schieren, Spencer Trask, George Haven Putnam, Everett P. Wheeler, Robert C. Ogden, J. Pierpont Morgan, D. Willis James, R. Fulton Cutting, J. Cleveland Cady and W. J. Havemeyer. The portions of the letter given in the press were as follows:

Over a year has passed since the report of the Commissioners chosen by the chief Executive and virtual owner of the Congo to investigate conditions in that state was published. In spite of their natural desire to give all possible credit to their Sovereign, the Commissioners felt constrained to report the existence of measures and practices of flagrant inhumanity.

Among these measures and practices are the following:

1. The exaction of a labor tax so oppressive that many natives on whom it falls have little if any freedom.
2. Appropriation of land to such an extent that the natives are practically prisoners within their own territory.
3. The employment under authority of the government as sentries of cruel, brutish blacks, chosen from hostile tribes, who murder, pillage and attack the people for whose protection the government is avowedly established.
4. The abuse of the natives by white representatives of officially recognized companies.
5. The binding of little children to years of labor at

uncertain wages by contracts they do not understand and even more serious maltreatment of children supposedly under the immediate care of the government.

6. Great injustice in the administration of the courts, so that the natives dread the name of Boma, the place where the judicial system is centralized.

7. The sending out of punitive expeditions not for the purpose of establishing peace and order but for the purpose of terrifying the natives into paying a tax which, as administered, even the Commissioners regard as inhuman.

It is to be remembered that these are not charges brought against the Congo government, but findings of the Commission which was appointed by the chief Executive of the government to investigate and report on the facts. Acting upon these findings, a second commission, also appointed by the King, has recommended measures of reform.

No steps have been taken to adopt them. There is no evidence that the Congo government is undertaking seriously to remedy these evils. The powers which created the Congo government have clearly a right to call that government to account. Inasmuch as the United States gave their moral support to the establishment of the Congo government they are justified in giving their moral support to any undertaking to secure conditions in the Congo that will not disgrace civilization. We wish to assure you that for any measure you may adopt in order to give the powers such moral support of the United States, you will have our earnest and urgent approval.

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French Separation Law Amended.

The law separating church and state in France, which went into final effect on the 11th (p. 896), was amended in the Chamber of Deputies on the 21st, the bill of amendment having a majority of 413 against 166. The dispatches fail to state the character of the amendments, but their general tenor seems to be in the direction of creating new methods for working out the separation law, made necessary by the refusal of the church authorities, acting under orders from the Pope, to co-operate in the original arrangements.

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Universal Suffrage in Austria.

At the close of a remarkable sitting of the Upper House of the Austrian Parliament, on the 21st, lasting from 11 o'clock in the morning until 11:30 at night, the universal suffrage bill passed that House by a large majority. Only fifteen members voted for the principle of plural franchise, which was combatted by the Premier, Baron von Beck, who made an eloquent plea for universal equal suffrage. The Upper House also adopted the bill limiting to 180 the number of life members of that House, appointed by the Emperor. Of the movement for universal suffrage in Austria (p. 30), the Chicago Record-Herald says that it "is the by-product of the struggle in Hungary between the Nationalists and the non-Magyar elements. The government offered Hungary universal suffrage in the belief that that the masses were loyal to the Crown, and would support the union between Austria and Hungary. That offer, however, compelled the making of a similar one to the lower classes of Austria. Within a short time, therefore, Hungary as well as Austria will have universal suffrage as a fundamental feature of her constitution."

The Russian Elections.

It was reported in October (p. 704) that the elections for the next Douma (p. 896) would come off on December 30; but a ukase, issued on the 21st, set February 19 for the elections, except for those in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Siberia, the dates for which have not been given out. Announcements of disfranchisements and disabilities which will restrict the breadth and cripple the strength of the new Douma seem to be on the increase. Dispatches of the 22d stated that Professor Paul M. Milukoff, president of the Constitutional Democrats, who had been slated for the floor leader of the party in the new Douma, has been declared ineligible for election, for lack of proper residence qualification. Professor Serge A. Mourmtsoff, President of the last Lower House, and a number of other former members, have been debarred, not only from standing as candidates, but even from voting in the elections. Moreover, administrative measures against the Constitutional Democrats are being sharpened instead of relaxed, as the date of the elections draws near. They are not permitted to hold meetings, and printing establishments have been forbidden, under very severe penalties, to publish their literature.

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Progress of the Initiative and Referendum Movement.

Six States are reported to have adopted, at the recent election, some form or to have taken some step toward the adoption of the initiative and referendum (p. 800). They were Massachusetts, Maine, Delaware, Michigan, Montana and Oklahoma. In Montana only, however, was the form adopted decisive. The Montana form was an amendment to the State constitution. This was the same as the Oregon amendment, except that it had been so doctored in the legislature as to exclude constitutional amendments and amendments to special laws, and to prohibit any initiative except upon petitions signed not only by the requisite percentage in the aggregate, but also such percentage in two-fifths of the counties. The adoption of the initiative and referendum amendment is the result of the efforts of the Montana State Federation of Labor, which inaugurated the movement four years ago by inducing the conventions of both political parties to submit the amendment. The Federation followed this by stimulating the local unions to secure pledges from legislative candidates to support the amendment, and from voters to vote only for candidates making that pledge. The work was effective in obtaining the passage of the amendment in the lower house of the legislature; but, although a majority was obtained in the senate, it failed there to get the requisite two-thirds. But the people had been educated on the subject, and at the next election not only did both conventions approve the measure, but all the candidates vied with one another in supporting it. The next legislature consequently submitted it, though with the limitations noted above; and at the recent elections it was carried by a vote of six to one—36,374 for the measure, and 6,616 against it. This vote was 70 per cent. of the total vote cast for candidates at the same election. There was a pronounced affirmative majority in every county.