

the slave oligarchy half a century ago—a base for aggression and a fortress of defense.

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 Wednesday, Dec. 19, 1906.

The Single Tax in Scotland.

In Great Britain a parliamentary committee has just reported favorably on a measure for the introduction of the single tax in the municipalities of Scotland (pp. 60, 367, 491). As has been heretofore reported in these columns, one of the leading issues in the parliamentary elections (vol. viii, p. 748) was the question of land values taxation. Although an overwhelming majority elected to the House of Commons was pledged to measures for the taxation of land values generally, other measures, notably the education bill, have so engrossed the time and energies of Parliament that no Ministerial bill on land values taxation has yet been introduced. But a municipal bill for Scotland, substantially the same as that which has been several times introduced and voted on (vol. viii, p. 72), has been put forward by private members speaking for Scottish municipalities. This bill was brought to the attention of the Ministry on the 26th of last February by a Parliamentary deputation (vol. viii, p. 838), and on that occasion the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in asking for time, said:

I suppose we are all agreed that, as a preliminary step, there should be a separate assessment (valuation) of site (land) values. . . . We (the Ministry) desire to have time to carefully consider the best way of giving effect to the principles I have enunciated. . . . I believe we shall arrive at a more satisfactory and more permanent result if we allow ourselves a little time and patience for the consideration of this problem, than if we were to introduce a comparatively small and piecemeal instalment of the reform we all desire.

This was understood to mean that the Ministry could not see their way clear to dealing with the question at the first session. The Municipal Councils, however, were not satisfied, and the Scottish bill was brought in on one of the days set apart for the introduction of bills by private members. On the 23rd of March it was carried on second reading by a majority of 258. By prolonging discussion the opposition had so far blocked it as to prevent its going to committee in regular order, something that could not have happened to a Ministerial bill; but the Ministry at once appointed a select committee, with the Solicitor General for Scotland as chairman, and this committee has been taking evidence at intervals ever since. It reported last week, and as we

are advised by cable the report is extremely favorable.

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A principal defect of the bill, from the single tax point of view, is said to be its limitation to municipal taxation. But this defect is only academic. It was necessitated, moreover, by the fact that only the Municipal Councils could be induced to act in concert, the County Councils being largely under the control of territorial landlords, and some even of the Liberal members of Parliament refusing to vote for the taxation of rural land values. The passage of the bill by so large a majority on second reading is reported to have fairly roused the landed classes of Scotland. They have organized and are spending thousands of dollars to discredit it. Several Scottish dukes and other great landlords are among the financial supporters of this organization, which describes its purpose to be the turning of "the question out of the arena of practical politics." The five railway companies of Scotland joined the landlords and sent the manager of the North British Railway Company to the select committee to testify against the bill. The Church of Scotland, also, engaged in the agitation on the side of the landlords. Of course this agitation has reacted upon public sentiment favorably to the reform.

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British Politics

The education bill (p. 372) continues to be the especial subject of contention between the two Houses of Parliament. On the 13th the Commons were reported as having rejected at midnight, after an all day debate, the amendments of the Lords by a vote of 416 to 107. The final scene is said to have been one of intense excitement. Nevertheless when the bill reached the Lords again on the 17th, the Earl of Crewe, Lord President of the Council, announced that though the Government was not prepared to sacrifice the main principles of the bill, concessions of a substantial character would be made. It is now thought that the bill can be saved.

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As already stated in these columns (p. 752), the London County Council elections, to be held next March, are of great significance. The Moderates, or Municipal Reformers, who represent the private utility companies, and whose victories at the recent Borough elections were widely heralded as indicating a reactionary municipal movement, were at that time announced as intending to work hard to secure at the County Council elections next March the election of Councillors pledged to oppose the program of the present Progressive Council, which includes a municipally owned electric supply for all London. The Progressives include also in their program the taxation of land values as a measure of rate relief. The Progressive campaign opened with a crowded and enthusiastic meeting at Holborn Town Hall on the 7th. The London Tribune of the 8th warns against the monopoly menaces of the Moderates, and asserts its belief that now the great opportunity of the Progressives has come:

To-day, with a Government in power which is anxious only to second its efforts, and a contingent in the House of Commons which at last represents progressive Lon-

don, the opportunity for an unhampered advance has arrived. It can be hindered only by a reaction in London itself. The chance of a generation has come, and no Londoner who realizes what clean and democratic government means in a city menaced by so many appetites, or what opportunities of social service are at the command of the party which dominates the next Council, will hesitate for one moment in his duty. . . . The inaction of the Council would be the opportunity for all the restless interests with a monopoly to acquire or a privilege to perpetuate. Three years of Moderate rule might mean stagnation in all the activities which are slowly transforming the mean streets and the decaying slums, but it would leave as its permanent memorial monopolies which could be re-purchased for the common good in some future period of sanity and alertness only at a ruinous cost of debt. . . . It would mean the dominance of a party which holds the interests of the ground landlord, of the promoter of private tramways, of electric trusts, and, one must add, of the supporter of clerical schools above the interests of the citizen and the consumer. . . . There remains the test question of the Council's scheme for supplying electric power. It is hardly possible to devise an alternative which will not in the end burden London with a monopoly as costly and tyrannical as the old water companies. There is no reason why the scheme should not be run at a large profit, as similar schemes in Breslau and Munich already are. The real hope of further economy rests rather with Parliament than with the Council. It can be achieved only by a unification of authority and an equalization of burdens. But a Parliament bused in giving to municipalities larger powers and greater freedom, devising for them the means of dealing with housing, education, and public health, will labor in vain unless the municipality itself is controlled by men whose first thought is of their duty to their city and their obligation to those whose hopes of health, education, and comfort depend so largely on their work.

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The Transvaal to Have Constitutional Government.

A constitution for the Transvaal, debated in the English Parliament at the end of July (p. 418), was issued on the 12th, with the approval of the King and the English Government, and became immediately effective. The constitution provides for a legislative assembly consisting of sixty-nine salaried members elected for a period of five years. Voters, and not population, are taken as a basis of the distribution of seats in the new assembly, and as a result of applying this principle the Rand gets thirty-four seats, Pretoria six, and the rest of the Transvaal twenty-nine. The franchise is given to every male of 21 years of age who has resided in the Transvaal for six months, and is not an officer or soldier of the British garrison.

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The Congo Free State to Be Annexed by Belgium.

King Leopold's bequest to Belgium of his sovereign rights in the Congo Free State (p. 871) was accepted for the nation by the Chamber of Deputies of the Belgian Parliament on the 14th, by a vote of 127 to 30. The next step proposed is the annexation by Belgium of the Free State, after obtaining a full statement of its financial obligations. This annexation has been optional with Belgium since 1900, under the Convention of 1890. In accepting the King's bequest Belgium has guaranteed to maintain the crown lands intact, and to respect existing concessions, including those lately granted to Amer-

icans. That the King is trying to shift the burden, and escape the odium attaching to the alleged misgovernment of the Congo, has been hinted at.

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The Dissolution of the Reichstag.

On the 1st the consideration of the German colonial policy in South Africa came before the Reichstag. Courageous members of the Socialist party, including Mr. Bebel and Mr. Roeren, related horrible details of the inhumanities practiced by the colonial government, and recorded bitter protests against the continuance of such methods. On the 3d the committee on appropriations reported its rejection of the government's request for a supplementary item of \$7,530,000, to be used in defraying the expenses of the African campaign, offering only \$2,500,000. At present there are 12,000 troops in the colony. The Kaiser was willing to bring 4,000 of them home, but a majority in the Reichstag on the 13th, 178 to 168, refused to vote more supplies than would be needed to keep 2,500 men in the colony. It is claimed that the colony could not defend itself against the native races with so small a contingent. The vote divided on different lines than the debate, the Clericals, called the Center, composed of the Catholics standing solidly together, voting against the Kaiser; and the Socialists and Radicals voting largely with him. Immediately upon the result of the vote becoming known, the Chancellor, Prince von Buelow, arose and read an imperial decree dissolving the Reichstag. The astonishment and excitement which followed were not confined to the Reichstag itself, and great political confusion is reported. The elections for the next Reichstag must take place, under the laws of the Empire, within sixty days, and the new session must open within ninety days. It was officially announced on the 15th that the new elections would take place on January 25.

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The French Separation Law in Operation.

The law separating church and state in France has gone into effect with but little of the dreaded violence. In many parishes, both in Paris and in the interior, Catholic laymen have come forward and fled the necessary declarations for the holding of services in their parish churches (p. 872). Cardinal Richard is reported as approving of this move, on the ground that the Pope's prohibitions in the matter only apply to the priests. Violent demonstrations against the Vatican on the part of Italians sympathizing with the step being taken by the French Republic, were reported from Rome on the 16th.

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Revolution in Russian Poland Finally Suppressed.

The revolutionary movement in Russian Poland which seems to have smoldered for more than a year (vol. viii, pp. 580, 613), is at last reported as stamped out, at a terrible cost to the Polish people, the number of victims being estimated as in the thousands. Business is said to have become stagnant, and the trades and industries are bankrupt. But the Poles have not lost heart, and are busy organizing for the coming Douma elections. Party differences are reported as forgotten, and the na-