

to the profound significance of the political situation in Great Britain to which they have been oblivious (p. 937) for more than half a year. A New York World dispatch of the 30th from London describes the outlook in these words:

To-day the storm center in Great Britain presents a political cyclone. The frantic efforts made by protectionist Tories to defeat the Budget prove they are fully alive to the fact that when it becomes a law it will be much more difficult for any succeeding Government to carry through the protectionist scheme of passing on the burden of taxation from the banking accounts of the rich to the bread and meat multitude. This is the real issue on which this momentous general election will be fought in January, for, whether the Budget goes through or is rejected by the House of Lords, an appeal to the country is certain after the holidays. Party feeling has already attained a pitch of savage bitterness. The Tories calculate the general election will result in such reduction of the Liberal majority that the Liberals will be wholly dependent upon the Irish vote, and that in these circumstances King Edward will refuse to give Asquith *carte blanche* for creating the new peers necessary to force the Budget through the House of Lords, and that a further crisis will then follow, with another appeal to the country, on which the Tories hope to come in victorious. If this Tory calculation is falsified, they will have risked everything and lost, as with the Lords' veto power limited their greatest weapon will be broken.

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In the House of Commons the Prime Minister announced on the 27th that on Nov. 5 he would move for the rejection entire of the House of Lords' amendments to the Irish land bill (p. 923). He also stated that the House of Commons would adjourn on Nov. 5 until Nov. 23. During the adjournment of the lower House the Budget will be in the hands of the Lords.

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British Land Clubs.

Largely through rural England, but especially in Kent, what are called "Land Club Leagues" are being formed for the purpose of obtaining for the people country homes and land and to aid the revival of country life. The first general meeting of the League of these land clubs was held at the House of Commons on the 27th under a call of delegates for the adoption of a constitution and consideration of the following program:

To restore our people to the land, the first step to be taken is a complete valuation of the land of England. Rates and taxes must be placed on the land in accordance with the capital value given to it by the growth of population and the industry of the people. Power must be given to local authorities to take land needed for all public purposes at a price based on the valuation. On every parish and urban district must be placed the duty of providing homes and land needed for the people, and also

where required, village halls, reading rooms, and playgrounds. To secure that the cultivators of the soil, especially where grouped into co-operative societies, receive fair treatment in the sale of their produce, the restrictions on markets should be abolished, existing markets should be linked up with new markets wherever required, together with a complete system of collecting depots in the rural districts. Railways and canals must be nationalized, and road motor services arranged for transport. To improve the position of the laborer, a legal minimum wage must be enacted so as to enforce the fundamental principle that the worker has the first claim on the fruits of his labor.

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Land Values Taxation in Germany.

The Imperial government of Germany asked the governments of the federated States on the 27th to hasten their reports concerning the introduction of unearned increment land tax (p. 682), coupling this request with the explanation that the government will allow the municipalities a rebate for five years of the average amount raised by the unearned increment tax during the period of its operation. The Conservatives in the Reichstag, although to a great extent representing land-owning interests, are reported by Associated Press dispatches, to be willing that an unearned increment tax be imposed, because such a tax must rest heavily upon land owners and speculators in the cities, but lightly on land owners in the country districts, where values increase slowly or, as in some instances, depreciate. The measure is expected to raise \$5,000,000 annually and is possible of great expansion.

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More Land Values Taxation in Australia.

The efforts of the Australian State of Victoria (vol. x, p. 827), long frustrated (vol. xi, p. 718), to introduce in that State the land values tax now in successful operation in the sister State of New South Wales (vol. x, p. 386; vol. xi, p. 636; vol. xii, pp. 138, 199, 470, 990) were revived in August last, according to official documents just at hand, through the introduction by the Victorian Prime Minister, W. A. Watt, of a land-values taxation bill.

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As stated by the bill itself, "the object of this bill is to impose a progressive tax upon the unimproved value of land," which is defined in the bill to be "the sum which the owner's estate or interest therein if unincumbered by any mortgage or other charge thereon, might be expected to realize at the time of valuation if offered for sale on such reasonable terms and conditions as a bona fide seller might be expected to require and assuming that the actual improvements thereon (if any) had not been made." Upon

this value the progressive taxes proposed by the bill are as follows, stated in the bill in terms of the pound sterling, but here translated into dollars at the rate of \$5.00 to the £1:

\$2,500 to \$12,500, 2 mills per \$1.
\$12,500 to \$25,000, 3 mills per \$1.
\$25,000 to \$50,000, 4 mills per \$1.
\$50,000 to \$75,000, 4½ mills per \$1.
\$75,000 to \$100,000, 5 mills per \$1.
\$100,000 to \$125,000, 5½ mills per \$1.
\$125,000 to \$150,000, 6 mills per \$1.
\$150,000 to \$175,000, 6½ mills per \$1.
\$175,000 to \$200,000, 7 mills per \$1.
\$200,000 to \$225,000, 7½ mills per \$1.
\$225,000 to \$250,000, 8 mills per \$1.
\$250,000 to \$300,000, 9 mills per \$1.
\$350,000 to upwards, 12 mills per \$1.

The minimum tax proposed by the bill is 2s 6d, equal to about 62 cents; and the following exemptions are made:

To owners of land values of less than \$2,500, a total exemption; to owners of land values under \$12,500 an exemption on \$2,500 thereof; to owners of land values above \$12,500, the \$2,500 exemption diminishes at the rate of \$5 of the exemption for every \$10 of the excess in value, so as to leave no exemption on land values exceeding \$17,500. On land owners who do not reside in the State of Victoria the tax rates are increased 50 per cent.

In advocating his bill on second reading, August 31, the Prime Minister said:

This bill seeks to impose a progressive tax upon unimproved land values, first of all with the object of promoting conditions favorable to more extensive agricultural settlement, and, secondly, with the object of raising additional revenue to meet the approaching shortage in customs returns from the Commonwealth.

In seeking to place in this bill, as we do, such conditions upon the holders of land as will induce them to put it to a higher productive use or sell it to those who will use it to better advantage, the Government are animated by the conviction that a man who holds land out of use, or in comparative idleness, while others are searching for acres to cultivate, is opposed to the progressive development of the State. We are also desirous of putting a fair share of the charges of government upon the soil of Victoria, and of restoring to society some portion of that increment which the expenditure and enterprise of the State, and the consequent settlement of population, have created. This bill, therefore, I claim, rests upon the sure foundation of public necessity and public justice.

When proposals of this kind are in the air or before Parliament we often hear the argument that a tax on land is unfair, because it singles out one class of men and one class of interest for taxation. My answer is a frank admission that it does, but I see ample justification for it. I want honorable members to look at the holder of land in town and country in his relations to the rest of the community. Every land-holder derives many general and

many special benefits from society and government. As to his general benefits we can say that he shares those in common with the rest of the community, and pays for them, as a general taxpayer, when he pays on his consumption through the customs house or on his profits through the income tax office. This is in return for good government, which gives protection to his life and liberty, as it does to the rest of us. But the real property-owner, the owner of real estate, enjoys many special benefits for which he should make special returns to the State. He is specially indebted to society for the protection which its good government affords to his property. Land values—we are clear on this point, no one will dispute it—are highest in countries where government is stable and protective. Here is the argument in another form. What would the value of agricultural land in Victoria be in these days of keen international competition in staple products if the State did not mesh the country with roads and railways and other facilities for transportation and trade? Every advance in civilization and in the scientific development of production and exchange promotes, perceptibly or imperceptibly, but surely the interests of the land-holder.

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Disorders in Greece.

The army and navy of the little modern kingdom of Greece (p. 825) have never been brought up to modern European standards of efficiency, partly because of the national poverty, and partly apparently, from lack of executive ability on the part of the military leaders. The younger officers in both branches of defense, organized as the Military League, have lately made violent protests, coupled with demands for the removal of the Crown Prince Constantine from the position of commander in chief of the army. On October 15 the Chamber of Deputies abolished the right of the sons of the King to hold military commands. Earlier in the same day King George, grasping the situation, persuaded his sons—Constantine, George, Nicholas and Christopher—to resign their commissions. The Military League then demanded further, on the 27th, the enactment within twenty-four hours of an ordinance suspending all promotions for five years, the abolition of the post of Rear Admiral heretofore held by Prince George, together with two vice admirals and fifteen positions of lesser rank. A compromise offered by the Premier was refused, and thirty naval officers retired to the Island of Salamis, where they seized the arsenal. On the 29th a little battle was fought, between the insurgents in a flotilla of torpedo boats, headed by Lieutenant Tibaldos, and government forces, in the historic seas by the Island of Salamis, where in B. C. 480 Themistocles defeated the Persians. The insurgents were worsted, with but small bloodshed, on that day and again on the 30th; their force melted away, and the arsenal surrendered. The Military League has disowned Tibaldos.