

formed on November 16, 1911, with Dr. Ed. Lauterburg of Thun as President and F. Trefzer as Vice-President. In an address to the young Liberals of Bern a few nights previously, Dr. Lauterburg had named "as one of the real causes of the high cost of living" "the rise in the value of land, and private speculation therein," and had announced as remedy the progressive land tax. From this land tax he foresees the following results:

(1.) The large landowners would be induced to give up their surplus land.

(2.) The landless could more easily obtain land; upon the cheaper land cheaper products could be grown and cheaper and better dwellings be built.

(3.) Interest on mortgages would be lower.

(4.) The capital hitherto tied up in land would be offered to industry on cheaper terms.

(5.) Consequently the employers could raise wages and would be obliged to do so, else the laborer would work with home machinery on his own land or would cultivate his own land.

(6.) Following upon the increased land taxes, the taxes on incomes—which burden industry and especially one class of citizens, the wage-earners—could be diminished and at last abolished. The man who owned no land, or only a little, or mortgaged, land, need pay little or no taxes.

(7.) Purchasing power would increase, and this would work advantage to husbandry, trade and commerce.

The new Association for Tax Reform asserts as its working principle that "every man has the same right to the use of the earth's surface, the source of all material good," and "seeks to realize this right by bringing about legislation which shall withdraw the land—originally the property of all the people—from private speculation and make it again accessible to the whole people." It therefore demands that "ground rent, the unearned income from land monopoly, shall be appropriated no longer by private individuals but by the community and the state." The Association therefore asks, first, a valuation of all Swiss land at its true market price exclusive of improvements, and second, the gradually increasing taxation of ground rent along with abolition of the taxes on the products of labor.



Persia Being Assimilated.

The province of Azerbaijan in the northwest of Persia, bordering on Turkish territory, is rapidly passing into the occupation of Russian troops, according to dispatches of the 19th. A Russian court martial at Tabriz has been busy sentencing Persian Constitutionalist to death or exile. Several Constitutionalist have been sent from Resht to the Russian penal colonies in Siberia. Andrasian, the principal Persian Armenian in Tabriz, has been hanged on the charge of complicity in the recent fighting. Appeals from the Armenian archbishop of Ispahan and from various influential bodies against this execution, have been ignored.

The late American Treasurer-General of Persia, W. Morgan Shuster, made a statement at Vienna on the 20th, while on his way from Teheran to Paris, in which he declared:

The net result of the British and Russian action in Persia renders a nation which was making progress toward peace and order and was building up its finances for the establishment of a constitutional government, a land of chaos and anarchy, without prestige among its own people, and, in addition, has meant the sacrifice of hundreds of innocent lives. . . .

The Russian and British legations are the real governing forces in Persia. They are acting through a directory of seven Persians in order to avoid international responsibility, but morally they are responsible for the destruction of Persian nationality, when it gave promise of establishing a stable constitutional government.

The seven men who nominally are governing Persia are without character or reputation. They do not command the slightest respect of their countrymen and would not exist a day without the protection of the Russian and British legations.

Russian forces and influences are steadily advancing southward and unless there is a break in the present trend of events the realization of Russia's dream of a warm water port is a matter of only a few years. Great Britain will then be confronted with a living Russo-Indian frontier problem. . . .

The most regrettable feature of Persia's dismemberment is the fact that it might have been entirely prevented had Great Britain frankly objected, at the beginning, to Russia's flagrant violation of the Anglo-Russian agreement, commencing with her claim last summer of the right to veto appointments of Persian officials, and culminating in the dispatch of her army into Persia on the false pretext that a Persian official had printed a pamphlet criticising Russia's previous actions in Persia.



China.

The expected abdication of the little Emperor, an edict for which was said to be all ready for promulgation on the 17th, has not come off—the more warlike of the Manchu princes having prevailed in the Imperial councils. In the expectation of an abdication the following circular appeal for recognition was sent out on the 19th by the provisional Republican government at Nanking, to the governments at Washington, Tokio, London, Paris, Berlin and St. Petersburg:

The Manchu government having entered into negotiations with the Republic of China for the purpose of abdicating its entire sovereign rights, powers and privileges, we fervently pray for recognition in order to avoid a disastrous interregnum.

WANG CHUNG WEI.

Foreign Minister.

On the same day the following demands were telegraphed by the Republican government to the Imperial Premier, Yuan Shi Kai, at Peking:

1. The abdication of the throne and the surrender of the sovereign powers are demanded.

2. No Manchu may participate in the provisional government of China.

3. The capital of the provisional government cannot be established at Peking.

4. Premier Yuan Shi Kai cannot participate in the provisional government of China until the Republic has been recognized by the foreign powers and the country has been restored to peace and harmony.

The action was due to Premier Yuan Shi Kai's demand that Dr. Sun Yat Sen resign the presidency, permitting Yuan Shi Kai to exercise sovereign powers until the national convention which is to be called to decide on the form of government of China shall have reached a conclusion. On the 22nd President Sun Yat Sen made a statement for the Republicans in which he announced that—

Similar terms will never be offered again to the Manchus unless these are accepted. To disarm and send back to bondage the whole people of this country it is now too late. We never will submit to the dictation of the Manchus or of Yuan Shi-Kai. The republican movement is now represented by fifteen Provinces. Three hundred and fifty million people in China are heart and soul with the Republic and are implacably opposed to Manchu rule. The three remaining Provinces, Ho-Nan, Shan-Tung and Chi-Li, are certainly our adherents. The Chinese troops in the Imperial army who are now supposed to be loyal to Yuan Shi-Kai are really Republicans and will join us at the proper time. We control all the treaty ports except Tien-Tsin and Nu-Chwang, which are ice bound. The Republic, in fact, is protecting the vast majority of foreigners and foreign property. Why then should not the foreign Powers promptly recognize the Republic? This question is already being asked by the people of China, while the dread of foreign intervention, which is invited by certain persons in Peking, hangs like a pall over the country and over natives and foreigners alike. The foreign powers, especially the United States, have always spoken of their friendship for China. We pledge good will and the observance of all treaties made by and with the Manchus. We will discharge every obligation of the open door in China.

[See current volume, page 62.]



The tremendous political convulsion through which China has been passing has left in obscurity news in regard to its terrible economic condition. Owing to the devastating floods in the Yang-tse Valley and in the Province of Hunan last summer, and also to failures of crops, with the exception of one year only, since 1906, in the great Hwai region, there are said to be at the present time 3,750,000 of the Chinese starving to death. An appeal is being made through the Red Cross for aid from America. [See vol. xiv, page 957.]



The New Zealand Elections.

News about non-sensational matters in Aus-

tralia is slow in reaching this country, and the returns from the Parliamentary elections of December 7th are only now at hand. These are necessarily incomplete. In only 42 out of the 75 constituencies did any candidate get a majority over all. Consequently there must be second elections in 33 constituencies between the two highest candidates at the first elections. The Opposition has thus far gained 4 seats at the expense of the party in power in the last Parliament—the Liberals. What may be the effect of the second elections can only be conjectured, but the reported indications are that the Liberal majority of the last Parliament will have vanished in the next one, and that neither the old Liberals nor the old Opposition will have a working majority. In that event the opportunity of the Hon. George Fowlds will occur. Although not elected at the first election in his constituency, his election was expected at the second; and as in resigning from the Cabinet last September in order to have greater freedom to advocate land values taxation, he announced that whenever a truly democratic party arose, strong enough to form a ministry, it would have his whole-souled support, a collapse of both Liberals and Opposition would not unlikely result in his call to higher service. [See vol. xiv, pages 1100, 1294.]



Land Tenure in Northern Nigeria.

News from the civilizations of interior Africa travels slowly, but in time it spreads. By "The Land and Native Rights Proclamation" of the British government, which went into effect in Northern Nigeria more than a year ago, January 1, 1911, the land tenure policy of that country was established in accordance with the recommendations of the Colonial Office Committee of which Josiah C. Wedgwood,* M. P., the British Single-taxer, was an active member. A full account of that committee and its work will be found in volume xiii of *The Public* at pages 580 to 583. According to the *London Times*, as quoted by *London Land Values* of December, 1911, this policy is—

not a measure of land nationalization, because land nationalization means state control of the land and all that is done upon it. What this measure does is to provide for the communalizing of the communal value of the land, leaving the occupier full control over the use of land and full benefit for his private enterprise upon it, with payment of rent to the community to which the land belongs, instead of to a landlord. The individual's right to all that is due to individual work and expenditure, but not to the communal value, is secured. No freehold can creep in and no monopoly profit can be made out of the land. The "holding up" of land for speculative purposes is, in effect, penalized, while the man who is industrious is not made to pay more as the outcome

*See *The Public*, volume xiii, pp. 580, 653.