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The call, made on the 5th by Messrs. Wolmarans and Wessels, envoys from the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, upon Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, and their interview on the same day with John Hay, Secretary of State of the United States, furnish abundant reason for inquiry and some cause for serious reflection.

The South African Republic, as anyone may learn who will only take the pains to refer to page 939 of that excellent British publication, "The Statesman's Year Book," for 1898, was recognized by Great Britain in 1852, under the name of the "Transvaal," as an independent state. In 1877 it "was annexed by the British government," but after a war for independence in 1880, "a treaty of peace was signed, March 21, 1881," under which "self-government was restored to the Transvaal so far as regards internal affairs, the control and management of external affairs being reserved to Her Majesty as suzerain." This reservation was modified by another treaty, "signed in London, February 27, 1884, ratified by the Volksraad, August 8," by which the name was changed to "the South African Republic and the British suzerainty restricted to control of foreign relations." Though the full sovereignty which had been wrested from it was not thereby restored to the South African Republic, Great Britain acknowledged its international status to the extent of receiving from it a consul general at London and sending to it a diplomatic agent, while the United States did so by maintaining a consulate at Pretoria.

With reference to the Orange Free State, the same British authority says, at page 801, that "its independence was declared on February 23, 1854;" and it afterward maintained a consul general at London whom the British government recognized as such. The Orange Free State controlled not only its domestic but also all its foreign relations. It was, therefore, a sovereign power, as free and independent as Great Britain or Germany, and was everywhere so acknowledged to be.

These two states continued indisputably in this condition until the beginning of the war in South Africa, in the Fall of 1899. Since then Great Britain has overrun the territory of both, and is fighting their people still. Her military authorities have, indeed, locally proclaimed their annexation; but the British government has made no international announcement that these states are her conquests, nor has any power whatever acknowledged her sovereignty over them. Internationally speaking, their status is unchanged; and so far as President Roosevelt knows officially, their independent condition is precisely what the "Statesman's Year Book" described it as being in 1898.

This question, therefore, arises: What would the President of the United States and the Secretary of State have done in 1898 if these two republics had then accredited envoys to this government to confer upon matters of state? Would either have made it the condition of granting an interview, that the envoys must distinctly understand that they were being received as private citizens and not in an official capacity? To propound the question is to answer it. The representative character of the envoys would have been recognized, and they would have been received ap-

propriately in their official capacity. No one can doubt it.

Yet, although no known change in our international relations with these republics—republics struggling not for unachieved independence, nor to gain a previously unaccorded international recognition, but to preserve their established independence and to maintain rights to international recognition which have been formally accorded and never formally lost—though no such change has taken place, how were these envoys received by Secretary Hay and President Roosevelt? Let the Washington report of the Chicago Evening Post of the 5th, a Republican paper, answer the question:

Messrs. Wolmarans and Wessels, the Boer representatives, who came to the United States from Europe to confer with the secretary of state, . . . were received by Mr. Hay at 11 o'clock this morning. . . . It was understood distinctly that the Boers were to be received as private citizens and not in an official capacity. . . . Later in the day Messrs. Wolmarans and Wessels, accompanied by Dr. Frederick Mueller, of the Orange Free State, called at the White House. They were received by President Roosevelt in the library and remained with him about 15 minutes. They called as private citizens and not in their official capacity as Boer representatives. Mr. Roosevelt listened attentively to what they had to say, and then informed them that this government cannot and will not interfere in the struggle.

So President Roosevelt and Secretary Hay refuse that official recognition to these republics which would have been properly accorded them in 1898, notwithstanding that their formal international status has meanwhile undergone no change. They refuse them the recognition they would accord to British representatives, but to which, as matter of international comity, British representatives would be no more entitled. What does this

mean if not that the administration at Washington is committed to the British cause and against the cause of the Boer republics? What does it mean if not that the persistent refusal of our government to require Great Britain to remove its army supply post at New Orleans from our territory is a deliberate act of partisanship for Great Britain and a breach of our professed neutrality? The inference is irresistible that our government is not a neutral in this war of conquest that Great Britain is waging against the two South African Republics, but is making us an ally, no longer secret, pursuant to what Mr. Chamberlain described as "an understanding between statesmen," but an ally open and avowed.

Compare this treatment of the public envoys of these republics with the treatment just accorded a private envoy of the Emperor of Germany. We have tried to make ourselves believe that he was an envoy from the German people, and that in honoring him we have honored them. If that were true, would it not follow that in dishonoring the Boer envoys we are dishonoring the Boer people? On the other hand, if we intend no dishonor to the Boer people when we ignore the official character of their envoys, how can we pretend that we honor the Germans by fulsomely honoring the brother of their monarch? These two events do not bear comparison consistently with our professions. The only consistent explanation is that we welcome the German emperor's brother not because we love the German people but because we admire royalty, and that we ignore the South African envoys because they have no royal or imperial halo and we are indifferent to the fate of their republics.

The report of the British commission on local taxation, analyzed in these columns at page 245, came before the House of Commons on the 19th of February; and the debate, which was unusually thoughtful even for the House of Commons, appears substantially in full in the London

Times of the 20th. The specific issue was a motion by Mr. Trevelyan, a Liberal, for the second reading of a bill for enabling cities to levy site value taxes for local purposes. It was expected, as Mr. Trevelyan explained, that the first benefit to flow from this measure would be the forcing into the market of "vacant land which was ripe for building." Some further idea of the nature of the bill may be had from the following extracts from the speeches:

Mr. Holdane (Lib.)—for the bill.—The site value is something which is due not to the exertion of the owner of the land, but to the movement of the population, and is therefore a proper subject for just and equitable treatment in the way of adjusting the burdens it ought to bear.

Mr. Cripps (Con.) opposed.—The site value is taxed at present as part of the real estate. If that is so, what justification is there for putting any exceptional tax upon it. It can be justified only on this unearned increment doctrine; and if that doctrine is to prevail, a special burden might as well be put on railway stock in the case of a line deriving its prosperity from the growth of two great towns which it connects or on the interest on debentures as compared with ordinary stock.

Mr. McCrae (Lib.)—for the bill.—In Scotland at the last general election there was hardly a Unionist candidate who did not commit himself to the taxing of site values. . . It is fair and sound that a tax should be levied on land, which improves in value, and that a building, which depreciates in value, should be to that extent relieved. At present, land in this country does not bear its fair share of taxation. The great advantage of the bill comes in not only as a tax reform, but as a solution of the housing question. . . One of the main reasons that can be adduced for the proposal that land, and unused land, ought to be taxed, is that this would force more land into the market and therefore cheapen its price.

One of the principal speakers in support of the bill was Sir William Vernon Harcourt, who was chancellor of the exchequer in 1894 and retired from the leadership of the Liberal party in 1898. The bill had been introduced by Liberals, the tory ministry having refused to act, and consequently its defeat was a foregone conclusion. For in England the landed interests bear much the same relation to the party in power that trust interests bear here. But, defeated

though the bill was, the vote was significant. Though the usual ministerial majority is from 150 to 200, the majority against this bill was only 71, the vote being 158 for second reading and 229 opposed. To the principle of the measure, however, the Liberal party is now pretty thoroughly committed; and so strong was the showing in its favor in the Commons that a belief is spreading that even the Tory ministry will soon have to put forward some kind of proposal for site value taxation.

How wide the swath which this theory of taxation has cut in the Liberal party is indicated by the attitude towards it of so notable a man in politics and commerce as Sir Christopher Furniss, member of parliament for Hartlepool, and head of several business concerns. He has recently made another pronounced declaration on the subject. It appears in the Pall Mall Magazine in an article over his signature on the American commercial "invasion" of the old world. Referring to the heavy burden imposed on British industry by mining rents and royalties, he warns the parasitical landlord class in no ambiguous terms. We quote:

I am not the man to support any wild and revolutionary theories of confiscation, but the mineral rents and royalties of this country are undoubtedly excessive, and I would warn the "gentlemen of England" that property has duties as well as rights, and that if, while shirking those duties, as in the manner of local rates, they impose on trade and industry burdens grievous to be borne, which they themselves touch not with one of their little fingers, they will only have themselves to thank should such theories become more and more popular. The miners work for wages they receive; the colliery owners also earn their profits, when they get them, and those profits over a term of years will not average over five per cent. on the capital worked. If, therefore, special taxation is to be imposed upon those connected with the mining industry, it should surely be levied upon the royalty owners rather than upon the coal owners and the miners. . . .

That this is no idle threat, but the expression of a conviction regarding the question of public revenue, is made