

come, but hopes and expectations which might never be realized. They were injuring everybody who possessed land, and frightening everybody who wanted to purchase it. Henry George, said he, with great emphasis on the "Henry," held that the possession of land was robbery. That was perfectly logical. But his great namesake, Lloyd George, was not acting on any clear and consistent principle. Among the replies to Balfour's speech was one by Winston Churchill, which is described as effective and brilliant. He poured a stream of ridicule and argument on the reasons given by Mr. Balfour for opposition to the tax on undeveloped land. The Ministry, he said, did not regard land as private property in the strict sense of that word; and the Opposition, who were constantly demanding larger expenditure, were not in a condition to resist these proposals for taxation. A reputation for patriotism was surely cheaply earned, he argued, by clamoring for ships that were not wanted, to be built by money which was to come from other people. In the course of the debate on the 4th, Lord Robert Cecil made for the land owners the plea that though they are rich they are a small and powerless class and should be gently dealt with in the matter of taxation; to which Sir Charles Dilke retorted, amid laughter and cheers, that this "powerless class" controlled exclusively one House and possessed no inconsiderable influence in the other. Lloyd George answered his critics on the same night, reminding them that their own party in Germany, the Conservative party there, had proposed to meet the German increase of expenditure by a tax on the unearned increment of land, to which the Conservative party in England were so strenuously objecting. On the 5th a Labor party member, Philip Snowden, who is a socialist, replied to the Conservative denunciations of the budget as socialistic, by explaining socialism, and saying that while the budget did not go far enough he was satisfied with it as far as it went. Mr. Snowden was followed by the Prime Minister, to whom Austen Chamberlain replied, after which closure of general debate was carried on motion of Lloyd George, by a majority of 107, as was reported last week by cable. The Labor party and the Irish Nationalists voted with the Conservatives against closure. Since this closure of general debate the items of the budget have been under daily consideration.

* *

The British Labor Party.

Reports by mail clarify the dispatches from London of several weeks ago (p. 396) to the effect that the Independent Labor party had adopted socialist resolutions and that Keir Hardie and others had consequently resigned from the administrative council of the party. We gather the facts from the London Labour Leader of April 16.

The 17th annual conference of the party had met at Edinburgh on the 10th of April. J. Ramsay Macdonald, M. P., presided. On the 12th, Mr. Grayson, the suspended Socialist member of Parliament (vol. xi, p. 712), moved to refer back a clause in the report of the national administrative council, as reflecting unjustly upon him. His motion was carried by 217 to 194. In consequence of this vote all the members of the council resigned and refused re-election. J. Ramsay Macdonald was the first to declare their purpose. He said he had been entrusted with a painful duty by the national administrative council, who after a meeting had instructed him to make a statement to the conference. They had had a trying time, he said, for the last twelve months owing to the growth of a movement of irresponsibility in the party. It was an impossibilist movement, unfair to the Parliamentary members of the party. Speaking for himself, and of his own determination, he absolutely declined to associate himself with the spirit of irresponsibility, its modes of expression, and its methods of bringing about socialism. For his colleagues and himself he said that the incidents in that movement which made it definite were referred to in the paragraphs of the report which the conference referred back. It was not the decision to refer back the paragraphs that had made the national administrative council take the action they had taken. It was the source and antecedents of that event that had to be considered. The national administrative council understood that the conference thought to establish peace. Honestly they believed that, but the gateway through which they approached peace was in the form of a vote of censure upon those who were carrying out the party's policy. The conference did not mean that, but a straight censure would have been more self-respecting and more respectful to the members of the national administrative council. He had therefore to announce that the four national members of the administrative council—Mr. Keir Hardie, M. P.; Mr. Philip Snowden, M. P.; Mr. Bruce Glasier, and himself—did not see their way to remain members of the council during the next twelve months. As private members of the party they would spend all the energies they could spare in building up the party upon its old lines and in seeing that the Independent Labor party at the end of the coming year would be much truer to its first faith in spirit and in method than it had been during the last twelve months.

*

The offensive action was reversed and a resolution of confidence with a request that the resignations be withdrawn was adopted. In response to this action Mr. Hardie said that they had been regarded as limpets clinging to the rock of office. Members present and a section of the Socialist

press had put forward that statement. He declared also that towards the end of last year the biggest effort was made to sever the Labor party alliance and to disrupt the Independent Labor party; and that Grayson was being used by others who were more unscrupulous than himself. Mr. Hardie stated further that they had to consider if they were officially to put the machinery of the party at the disposal of those who would carry disruptive tactics right through the party. The trouble with Grayson, he explained, was that success had come to him too easily, and that he was surrounded by malign influences which would ruin his career. Grayson, Hyndman, and Blatchford, he continued, had refused to appear on the same platform with him, and the fact had gone abroad that he had lost the confidence of the movement. Self-respect demanded that a stand should be made. He valued the opinion expressed by the conference. He would like it sent down to all the branches, especially to those where there was that small, snarling, semi-disruptive element. They must fight that down, and if need be fight it out. With his colleagues he was going to test the question whether the Independent Labor party was to stand for the consolidation of the working-class movement, or whether, departing from the lines of sanity, they should follow some chimera called socialism and unity, spoken of by men who did not understand socialism and were alien to its very spirit. After a conference between all the members of the council they reported back their united decision to remain out of the council for the coming year. Speaking for them, Mr. Macdonald said that while they were glad that the delegates had expressed their opinion as they had expressed it, his colleagues and himself were unanimously of opinion that the matter they had been discussing was deep-seated, and must be definitely cleared up. As officials they were tied up in defending the policy of the party. It looked as if they were defending their own ideas and wishes. That gave rise to a suspicion strong enough to be uncomfortable for them, and they desired to defend the policy as members of the rank and file until the party had definitely made up their minds how they were to go. If they decided to support the irresponsible policy he could not associate himself with it. His colleagues and himself felt they were doing the best thing for the party and themselves. There was no ill feeling in their minds. There would be no slackening in their support to the party. For the sake of the party and their own self-respect they desired freedom for the next twelve months at least.

+

The action of Macdonald, Hardie, Snowden and Glasier relates to a conflict of policies within the party rather than to any particular episode. It is a phase of the controversy within the party which

is inspired by the Social Democratic Federation under the leadership of Hyndman. Referring to this faction after the conference, Mr. Snowden said:

For the last six months I have been firmly convinced that the best thing that could happen to the Independent Labor party would be for the dissentients to leave the party, or, if they won't go of their own accord, then they must choose between being driven out of the party or conforming to its policy and its methods. There is little hope of their doing the latter, for, as Keir Hardie said at the conference, the men who are creating the mischief are alien to the very spirit of unity and of socialism. The Independent Labor party is no place for them. The Independent Labor party is for sane and sober socialists and has no use for frothy demagogues who make up for their entire lack of constructive ability by an extensive vocabulary, and who consider a pre-advertised display of sympathy with the poor to be of more value than years of hard work in their service. The national members of the council could not possibly remain in office after the conference had refused to uphold their action in enforcing discipline, and after it had decisively sided with disruption and disloyalty. It is true that when the conference saw the full significance of its action it tried to make amends. But it was too late. The very fact that the conference could commit such an indiscretion showed that it needed some discipline which would bring it back to a sense of responsibility. The main cause of the present dissension is that the loyal members of the party have not asserted themselves sufficiently. They have allowed the firebrands too much rope and tar. The national council members took the drastic step of resigning and refusing to accept the apologies and the contrition of the conference because it was felt that the time had come when the disruptionists must be dealt with; and they can only be dealt with in the branches. When the old and experienced members of the party realize that the movement is in a critical state, and that drastic action is needed, and that such action must be taken by them, we shall soon see things put right.

* *

The Tariff in Congress.

The Senate still has the tariff bill (p. 466) under consideration and some of the debates of the week have been disturbed by further collisions between "stand pat" and "revisionist" Republicans. Questions of glassware and tea tariffs were most conspicuous on the 11th; and, incidentally, the influence of tariffs upon prices. Senators Scott and Hale argued that the present high retail prices of protected goods have no relation to the tariff. In support of this argument Senator Lodge instanced tea as a commodity which comes into the country at only 16 cents a pound, and yet is retailed for 60 cents. In response Senator McLaurin asserted that a tariff of 10 cents a pound on tea would increase the price to that extent; and Senator Tillman asked: "Why do you Republicans deny that the tariff increases the price, when you have been