

awakening, for about 1850 the Court of Final Appeal decided that they were merely tenants at will, who could be ejected without notice or compensation! Ultimately, after long and bitter agitation, an arrangement was made that the landlord's title should be recognized, and that the tenants should surrender their tenant right interests but retain their buildings on lease from 1859. An act of Parliament was obtained for this purpose. The town of Huddersfield today has a population of 110,005, and every inch of soil upon which it stands is owned by J. F. Ramsden, who in the form of ground rent levies upon it a yearly tribute so regulated that every man, woman and child pays to him an average tax of \$8. The municipal budget last year was £174,425, so that the land owners' tax is actually \$27,875 in excess of the sum demanded for municipal services! Small wonder the Tory party representing the big land owners considers it a crime to suggest any change in conditions so ideal to the one man who counts in their eyes, and who is paying a mere nominal tax to the Government until the new valuation of land will come into force.

[See current volume, pages 673, 678, 697, 701.]



The Land Question in Argentina.

Since our report on the proceedings in Argentina for the valuation of land for taxation, the valuation for the capital and the national territories has been completed. Owners were required to declare the value of their property, improvement values separately from land values, under penalty of a fine of 2 per cent. They were consequently expeditious and the valuation was made in two months. Subsequently, at the opening of the Argentina Congress on the 7th of June, President Saenz Peña, in his official speech (corresponding in character to our President's message) informed the Congress with reference to financial affairs, as he is reported in English by the Buenos Aires Standard of June 8:

Without ignoring the resistance with which charges are always received, I consider it necessary to create an impost which some nations have adopted with success and whose absence does not indicate the equity that should be established among us. I refer to the impost upon the valuation of property when such does not proceed from private effort or work but from the collective effort. All necessities of life and all industries, as well as the work of man which assures him moderate profits, are taxed, but not the enrichment obtained without personal effort but by the action of the community, which rewards without merit of its own that which is constituted by the work of all. It is necessary then to amend so notorious a privilege; and while within our institutional regime, Federal legislation can reach the capital and the national territories only, it should be applied to the regions which favor it, in order to fill local necessities and in particular public works. I propose to present to you in the present sessions a bill which I hope will merit your support.

[See current volume, page 469.]

Proportional Representation for France.

A belated news dispatch tells of the adoption on the 10th of July by the French Chamber of Deputies, of a Ministerial electoral reform bill, by 339 to 217, which provides, according to the Toronto Globe of July 12th—

first, for abolition of the system of small constituencies, originally established in 1876 (whereby each elector votes for one Deputy only), and for a return to the system of list voting (whereby each elector votes for as many Deputies as the entire Department has to elect); second, for a system whereby, after the poll is taken, the total number of actual voters in the Department will be divided by the number of seats to be filled, in order to obtain the electoral quotient. Each list of candidates will obtain as many seats as the number of times the electoral quotient goes into the total number of votes cast for that list. For the disposal of the remaining seats the different electoral lists in the Department may be pooled. If after the pooled lists have obtained seats some still remain, they will be given to the list or group of lists having more than half the total number of votes cast, unless they already possess a majority of the total number of seats.

The passage of the bill is regarded as a triumph for the Premier, Raymond Poincaré. A large section of the Radical and Socialist Radical groups which form an important part of his majority, having opposed the measure, the Premier was obliged to exert his utmost diplomacy and the largest spirit of compromise to attain the result. Strong opposition is expected in the Senate. The first official intimation of this was through an open letter addressed by Senator Georges Clemenceau, formerly the Premier, to the present Premier, and published on the 29th, in which Senator Clemenceau assails the Poincaré measure as hostile to the principle of majority rule, which he describes as the foundation of the French republic. It is expected that the bill will come under discussion in the Senate during the autumn session of the French Parliament.



Proportional Representation in Tasmania.

Recent State elections in the Australian State of Tasmania, were conducted under what is known as the Hare-Clark system of proportional representation, the so-called "Droop quota" being used. The State was divided into 5 electorates, corresponding with the 5 Federal electorates which return one member each to the House of Representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament. For the purposes of the State Assembly each of these electorates returns 6 Assemblymen. The result of the election was the return of 14 Labor members, 15 Liberals (Government), and 1 independent Liberal. This is the second time the whole State of Tasmania has been similarly polled for the Assembly. [See vol. xii, p. 610.]