

elections take place in some of the constituencies on the 15th of the present month, in others on the 17th and 18th, in others a little later, and so on through the month; and it may be that the earlier elections will be so emphatic, one way or the other, as to indicate far in advance of the final voting, which way the country is going.

L. F. P.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

OPTIMISM FROM SAN FRANCISCO.

Extracts from a Private Letter Dated January 1.

Honestly, my friend, I think you are too pessimistic about men who don't see all that you see. I'm bad enough, goodness knows, but I think you are worse than I am. Everything in this world is a growth. Even men must grow after they have grown to be men. Yes, I know; we want the single tax, but mankind must evolve into the single tax—must grow into it. To wake up some morning and find the single tax in full operation would be to see a miracle, a violation of natural law; and there never was such a thing since Time began his chores. Omnipotence can't make a two-year old colt in ten minutes because Omniscience won't stand for such a thing. Don't you see that if it were otherwise, we would wake up some morning and find plutocracy substituted for the single tax while we were asleep; that the forces of injustice would work a few miracles for themselves?

Here we've just had an election in San Francisco, to issue bonds to take and rebuild a street car line to be owned and operated by the city. Said a single taxer to me some three weeks ago:

"What yer want to vote those bonds for? Don't you know municipal ownership and operation will increase the value of real estate, and the land-lords will get the whole benefit?"

"Yes," I replied; "I know that; but don't you know that the Cat becomes more visible as the value of land is increased?"

So he voted for the bonds.

Only last week a very prominent man in San Francisco suddenly woke up and made a strong public plea for that issue of bonds. For years he has been opposed to public ownership. He was brought to his near senses when the street car monopoly plastered the billboards with posters advising the people to vote against the bonds.

I know I am too impatient with men who don't see things, as an astronomer would doubtless be impatient with me because the only constellation I ever could see is the Dipper. All the rest of the animals are invisible to me.

I have been hungry for the single tax since 1883, and now, after twenty-six years, I am astonished at the growth of the single tax idea. I became an initiative and referendum crank in 1888; I wanted it "right away and immediately if not sooner." I am amazed when I think of its growth in this country. Moreover, the growth of these things is cumulative, accelerative, like a freight car running down hill. There is no force that can stop the growth of the single tax. We can help the growth,

but we can't create it full-grown. However mature a boy may be at eighteen, he can't jump from eighteen to twenty-one.

There is no more news to come from anywhere until we hear from England. But, think of San Francisco—the Graft City—voting by 3 to 1 to go into public ownership of street railroads! Brace up, friend! Is not that something? Isn't that a step towards the single tax? One better step would be free transportation over the road, because it would boost land-values and rent in a straight line through the city. Cheer up, dear heart, cease your wretched repining—you'll be an angel by-and-by.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, January 18, 1910.

The Parliamentary Elections in Great Britain.

As this Public goes to press it is believed that the Liberals, with the co-operation of the Irish Nationalists and the Labor party, will command a majority in the new House of Commons (p. 34). The issues have been four: Support of the Budget with its taxation of land values; the abrogation of all claim to veto power on the part of the House of Lords; and home rule for Ireland, as the Government (Liberal) issues. And the adoption of the principle of protection ("tariff reform") as a method of raising revenue, as the constructive Unionist (Conservative) issue.

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Never in the memory of men now living has an election in Great Britain been so hotly contested. The Chicago Record-Herald tells of three million posters of the German "bogey" having been issued by one newspaper office alone, and two million showing John Bull pushing a duke off his land, by another syndicate. T. P. O'Connor, cabling to the Chicago Tribune on the 16th, said: "Amorphous, cynical, cosmopolitan London remains fairly cool during even this historic election. But it is exceptional. In all other parts of the country the heather is on fire. Everybody realizes the tremendous issues that are at stake, and popular passion is aroused to an extent unknown for a generation—indeed, unprecedented in the life of any living man. It is the challenge of the House of Lords which submerges all other issues. So much is this the case and so advantageous is this line of battle that the Tories are doing their best to avoid the issue. They are

running off to every other issue they can invent." Mr. Balfour and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain issued a joint manifesto on the 14th, asserting that—

Tariff reform will not increase the cost of living of the working classes nor the proportion of taxation paid by them, but it will enable us to reduce the present taxes on articles of working class consumption and develop our trade with British dominions beyond the seas.

Mr. Lloyd George, in a final message, said:

I hope the British electors will stand by the privileges nobly won by our ancestors and refuse to barter either the freedom of our institutions or commerce for the mess of thin pottage offered by the protectionists.

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It was clearly understood by all parties alike that the extraordinary Government majority in the last Parliament could not be maintained in the new Parliament, but a working majority was hoped for and counted on by the Liberals, while the Unionists claimed to be confident of a landslide their way. The old Parliament was composed as follows:

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|----------------------------|-----|
| Ministerialists— | |
| Liberals | 365 |
| Labor | 53 |
| Nationalists | 81 |
| Socialist | 1 |
| — | |
| Total | 500 |
| Opposition— | |
| Unionists | 168 |
| — | |
| Ministerial majority | 332 |

Elections began on the 14th, to continue until the 29th. The following summary of the results to date appeared in the American papers of the 19th:

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|--------------------------|-----|
| Ministerialists— | |
| Liberals | 98 |
| Laborites | 19 |
| Nationalists | 28 |
| — | |
| Total | 145 |
| Opposition— | |
| Unionists | 120 |
| Laborites | 1 |
| — | |
| Total | 121 |
| Unionist gains | 51 |
| Liberal gains | 9 |
| — | |
| Net Unionist gains..... | 42 |
| Still to be elected..... | 431 |

The editor of *The Public* has cabled news of the reelection of Josiah C. Wedgwood, former president of the League for the Taxation of Land Values, and member for Newcastle-under-Lyme in the last Parliament; of John H. Whitley, member for Halifax since 1900; and of William P. Byles, member for Salford in the last Parliament.

From the press dispatches we learn that Philip Snowden was re-elected as a Liberal; Sir John Gorst, L. G. Chiozza Money, the free trader, and Will Crooks, the labor leader, were defeated; A. J. Balfour and Walter H. Long, Unionists, obtained increased majorities; John Burns lessened his majority as a Labor member, but won by a good margin; Augustine Birrell and C. E. Hobhouse, of the ministry, were re-elected, also Dr. T. J. Macnamara, who has long been prominent in land values taxation propaganda. Joseph Chamberlain, Unionist leader, and John Redmond, Irish Nationalist leader, were returned unopposed. Winston Churchill and T. P. O'Connor were returned with increased majorities.

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That the suffragettes at this crisis have found cold comfort from the Conservatives to whom they fled in their hatred of the Liberals, is to be inferred from mail news. Mr. Balfour is reported to have declared his party to be deeply divided upon woman suffrage, and that these divisions showed "no signs of diminution." He had therefore put it outside the Unionist program, according to the *London Nation*. "He said nothing of his personal opinions," continues the *Nation*, "but we believe that they have ceased to be friendly to the movement. For the moment, therefore, this great cause stands, by the folly of one section of its adherents, arrested, subject only to the way of progress opened, or half-opened, by the Prime Minister. Now that all the hopes of Tory aid on which the suffragettes counted have disappeared, only one line of rational action remains, that, namely, of filling the new Parliament with the largest possible number of suffragists."

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A private cable dispatch of the 12th states that in Winston Churchill's speech of the evening before he said:

Land reform and free trade stand together; they stood together with Henry George and with Richard Cobden, and they stand together in the Liberal policy.

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Lewis H. Berens of the League for the Taxation of Land Values, wrote on the 5th: "Rushed off our feet with election work; sending out millions of leaflets." John Orr wrote that their League had had orders on one day for 356,000 leaflets and "Land Songs." John Paul wrote on the 24th that the League was helping in placarding London, and that "we are having illuminated shows at some forty different busy crossings, bearing the legend, 'Down with the Lords, and Tax Land Values.'" Mr. Paul says:

Tell the kindred spirits on your side that no man can overestimate the magnitude of the political crisis here. The cause of liberty and progress is going to

score a victory over not merely political opponents, but a victory over the deeper and more insidious forces that induce and maintain the hell of poverty. The fight rages round the land question and our solution of the problem. The "Conspiracy of Silence" is forever broken, and it remains for us here in the next few years to acquire an even greater influence in the political arena—in parliamentary circles, and outside—than we have hitherto wielded. This election can only take us a part of the way, and for what's to come, well, the land is far and wide and our people must soon be preparing for the next bold advance.

Henry George, Jr., wrote from London on the 1st: "Our people here are almost drunk with enthusiasm. All signs point to a great victory." In an interview in Reynolds's Newspaper of the 2nd, Mr. George is reported as saying:

What challenges my attention at once in this struggle is the audacity with which the landlord party distorts facts about Protectionism in the United States. A certain Peer, for instance, is reported to have said upon his recent return from New York that he did not see an idle man in America. This shows he could not have looked far. If he had put a two line advertisement in any of the New York dailies offering employment to, say, a carpenter, he would have had ten out-of-work applicants coming to his door. If he had advertised for a competent salesman or clerk, or for a skilled girl typist, he would have been amazed and heart-sick to find how many he would have had to turn away. In Chicago, St. Louis, Omaha, San Francisco—any of the cities, and in fact in any of the towns and villages—he would have found on looking relatively the same condition of things.

The editor of The Public spoke with others at a political meeting at Middlewich, Cheshire, on the 5th in the interest of John F. Brunner, son of Sir John Brunner, who has been himself in Parliament for twenty-five years. Mr. Post reports that the meeting was "touch and go on the land question," and that they wanted to hear about the "protective prosperity" of the United States. The enthusiasm of the meeting seems to have been boundless.

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The President Sends a Conservation Message to Congress.

A special message on the conservation of the nation's natural resources was sent by the President to the lower house of Congress on the 14th. The President urged the validation by Congress of the withdrawals of special lands from the operation of existing statutes, already made by the Secretary of the Interior and the President, and the authorization of temporary withdrawals in the future by the Secretary of the Interior of lands which in his judgment need special legislative action for their proper disposition. The President proposed the handling of agricultural lands as such, with reservation for other disposition of "the treasure of coal, oil, asphaltum, natural gas,

and phosphate contained therein. This may be best accomplished by separating the right to mine from the title to the surface, giving the necessary use of so much of the latter as may be required for the extraction of the deposits. The surface might be disposed of as agricultural land under the general agricultural statutes, while the coal or other minerals could be disposed of by lease on a royalty basis, with provisions requiring a certain amount of development each year, and in order to prevent the use and cession of such lands with others of similar character so as to constitute a monopoly forbidden by law the lease should contain suitable provision subjecting to forfeiture the interest of persons participating in such monopoly. Such law should apply to Alaska as well as to the United States." The disposal of water sites to private owners it was admitted might create water monopoly. "Many water power sites have come under absolute ownership and may drift into one ownership, so that all the water power under private ownership shall be a monopoly." "If, however," the President continues, "the water power sites now owned by the government—and there are enough of them—shall be disposed of to private persons for the investment of their capital in such a way as to prevent their union for purposes of monopoly with other water power sites, and under conditions that shall limit the right of use not to exceed fifty years, with proper means for determining a reasonable graduated rental, it would seem entirely possible to prevent the absorption of these most useful lands by a power monopoly. As long as the government retains control and can prevent their improper union with other plants competition must be maintained and prices kept reasonable." Issuances of bonds for irrigation not to exceed \$30,000,000, was recommended for the completion and extension of projects now under way. The maintenance of forests and reforestation was urged. But an apparent indifference to the value of "comparatively small timbered areas" is revealed in the recommendation for such areas "that the acts of June 3, 1878, should be repealed and a law enacted for the disposition of the timber at public sale, the lands after the removal of the timber to be subjected to appropriations under the agricultural or mineral lands laws." Advance with the Lakes-to-the-Gulf Waterway plans was advised to be contingent upon substantial results from the Ohio River improvements.

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Bills for the various recommendations of the message were to have been submitted simultaneously with the message. But Congressman F. W. Mondell, of Wyoming, chairman of the Public Lands committee, refused to introduce them except "by request," which was not satisfactory to the President, and they were returned to the White House.