
PRESS OPINIONS

Industrial England Has Spoken.

The (London) Nation (Lib.), Jan. 22.—Protection, as the Prime Minister well said, will never stand against the fixed decision of the productive energies of the nation. The Tories may think that it makes a good trump card. But it is a losing one. Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Bradford, Newcastle, have settled that bit of English history for ever.

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The British Verdict Against Protection.

The (New York) Journal of Commerce, January 31.—The failure of the Unionist party to make any substantial impression on the manufacturing constituencies of England and Scotland ought to sound the knell of the Protectionist movement in Great Britain. Circumstances favored the cause of what has been miscalled "Tariff Reform" as they are not likely to do again. The industrial depression on which the Unionists traded so freely is coming to an end and the foreign trade of Great Britain is resuming its normal proportions. The policy of fiscal change found its advocates among the wealthy landlords and some of the manufacturers of the country. It appealed to rural constituencies where the taxation of food was purged of its odium by the certainty that it would advance the price of home-grown grain.

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Special Interest vs. Public Welfare.

The Outlook (New York), January 29.—The political issue in Great Britain and that in America are in form very different but in essentials alike—the issue between special privilege and the popular welfare. In Great Britain the question is: Shall wealth pay a larger proportion of the expense of government than it has paid in the past? In America are two questions: Shall the public domain pass into private hands to be administered for private benefit, or remain the property of the public, subject to its control and administered for its benefit? and, Shall public corporations, especially public service corporations, be administered under the supervision of the government and with regard to the welfare of the people? In both countries there is the same contention: That the land and its contents, like the air, the sunlight, the seas, and the navigable rivers, belong to the public. In America the public is attempting to retain its control and ownership of lands which it has not already alienated. In Great Britain it is attempting to impose on such lands a rent in the form of a land tax.

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The Single Issue of the British Elections.

The (London) Daily News (Lib.), Jan. 29.—This has been an extraordinary election, and the wonder is, all things considered, not that the Liberal Party should have lost seats, but that it should have succeeded in keeping the dominant issue really dominant, and have secured its majority on that issue. For the Government and its supporters there was, and is, one supreme question before the country; but

that question it has been the whole business of the Opposition to evade and to confuse. . . . The essential point is here. Battle was accepted by the Government on the issue of the Lords' veto; the Lords themselves claimed to stand or fall by the judgment of the nation upon the Budget which they rejected. Upon the judgment of the nation they are condemned. By the admission of the Opposition press the Budget is approved and is destined to go through. The Tory dilemma is, therefore, twofold. On the one hand, nothing but a most decisive vote against the Budget could have been quoted as a justification of the action of the Lords; on the other hand, nothing but an overpowering majority for Protection could have made it possible for the Opposition to assert that the country preferred Tariff Reform to the Budget. No matter how the result of the election is regarded, nothing can alter the fact that the majority has declared against the House of Lords, and in doing so has given the Prime Minister the mandate for which he asked. What before the election was the dominant issue is now the immediate and the only issue; and with respect to the Government's action there is room for neither doubt nor hesitation.

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The Rebuff to the Peers.

G. K. Chesterton in the (London) Daily News (Lib.), Jan. 22.—It must be ringingly emphasized that this is not an ordinary election, in which even defeat and victory are a matter of degree. If the Lords do not win completely, then they lose completely. And that for this simple reason, that their exceptional action could only be justified if it were exceptionally popular. We might argue whether the Second Chamber should strain its powers to appeal to a wronged or misrepresented people. But we all agree that the Second Chamber should not strain its powers to appeal to a moderately contented or indifferent people. We all agree that the Peers should not throw out an ordinary Budget; and it is quite plain now that in the popular opinion this is a quite ordinary Budget. Therefore I say a man must admit that the Lords have been thrown back, even if he thinks that Tariff Reform has been thrust forward. For that is exactly the difference between making an ordinary claim and making a claim to violate a system. If I walk along the street saying that the King is longing to see me, I may be believed or not. But if I knock down a policeman and break into Buckingham Palace, then it becomes a very vital question whether the King does want to see me or not. If he rushes out with open arms and falls on my neck, exclaiming that he would sacrifice twenty policemen to such a meeting, then my eccentricity has justified itself. But if (as is only too probable) a certain coldness is perceptible in his courtesy, then, beyond question, I am put to shame. Just so beyond question the Peers have been put to shame. They have broken into the people's house, claiming an irregular invitation; and it is quite clear that the people did not particularly want to see them.

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The Right of Boycott.

Fulton County (N. Y.) Democrat, January 27.—It is difficult to comprehend how a defender of the widespread boycott of meats—an exercise of punitive