

the slave oligarchy half a century ago—a base for aggression and a fortress of defense.

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 Wednesday, Dec. 19, 1906.

The Single Tax in Scotland.

In Great Britain a parliamentary committee has just reported favorably on a measure for the introduction of the single tax in the municipalities of Scotland (pp. 60, 367, 491). As has been heretofore reported in these columns, one of the leading issues in the parliamentary elections (vol. viii, p. 748) was the question of land values taxation. Although an overwhelming majority elected to the House of Commons was pledged to measures for the taxation of land values generally, other measures, notably the education bill, have so engrossed the time and energies of Parliament that no Ministerial bill on land values taxation has yet been introduced. But a municipal bill for Scotland, substantially the same as that which has been several times introduced and voted on (vol. viii, p. 72), has been put forward by private members speaking for Scottish municipalities. This bill was brought to the attention of the Ministry on the 26th of last February by a Parliamentary deputation (vol. viii, p. 838), and on that occasion the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in asking for time, said:

I suppose we are all agreed that, as a preliminary step, there should be a separate assessment (valuation) of site (land) values. . . . We (the Ministry) desire to have time to carefully consider the best way of giving effect to the principles I have enunciated. . . . I believe we shall arrive at a more satisfactory and more permanent result if we allow ourselves a little time and patience for the consideration of this problem, than if we were to introduce a comparatively small and piecemeal instalment of the reform we all desire.

This was understood to mean that the Ministry could not see their way clear to dealing with the question at the first session. The Municipal Councils, however, were not satisfied, and the Scottish bill was brought in on one of the days set apart for the introduction of bills by private members. On the 23rd of March it was carried on second reading by a majority of 258. By prolonging discussion the opposition had so far blocked it as to prevent its going to committee in regular order, something that could not have happened to a Ministerial bill; but the Ministry at once appointed a select committee, with the Solicitor General for Scotland as chairman, and this committee has been taking evidence at intervals ever since. It reported last week, and as we

are advised by cable the report is extremely favorable.

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A principal defect of the bill, from the single tax point of view, is said to be its limitation to municipal taxation. But this defect is only academic. It was necessitated, moreover, by the fact that only the Municipal Councils could be induced to act in concert, the County Councils being largely under the control of territorial landlords, and some even of the Liberal members of Parliament refusing to vote for the taxation of rural land values. The passage of the bill by so large a majority on second reading is reported to have fairly roused the landed classes of Scotland. They have organized and are spending thousands of dollars to discredit it. Several Scottish dukes and other great landlords are among the financial supporters of this organization, which describes its purpose to be the turning of "the question out of the arena of practical politics." The five railway companies of Scotland joined the landlords and sent the manager of the North British Railway Company to the select committee to testify against the bill. The Church of Scotland, also, engaged in the agitation on the side of the landlords. Of course this agitation has reacted upon public sentiment favorably to the reform.

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British Politics

The education bill (p. 372) continues to be the especial subject of contention between the two Houses of Parliament. On the 13th the Commons were reported as having rejected at midnight, after an all day debate, the amendments of the Lords by a vote of 416 to 107. The final scene is said to have been one of intense excitement. Nevertheless when the bill reached the Lords again on the 17th, the Earl of Crewe, Lord President of the Council, announced that though the Government was not prepared to sacrifice the main principles of the bill, concessions of a substantial character would be made. It is now thought that the bill can be saved.

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As already stated in these columns (p. 752), the London County Council elections, to be held next March, are of great significance. The Moderates, or Municipal Reformers, who represent the private utility companies, and whose victories at the recent Borough elections were widely heralded as indicating a reactionary municipal movement, were at that time announced as intending to work hard to secure at the County Council elections next March the election of Councillors pledged to oppose the program of the present Progressive Council, which includes a municipally owned electric supply for all London. The Progressives include also in their program the taxation of land values as a measure of rate relief. The Progressive campaign opened with a crowded and enthusiastic meeting at Holborn Town Hall on the 7th. The London Tribune of the 8th warns against the monopoly menaces of the Moderates, and asserts its belief that now the great opportunity of the Progressives has come:

To-day, with a Government in power which is anxious only to second its efforts, and a contingent in the House of Commons which at last represents progressive Lon-