

NEWS—FOREIGN.

GREAT BRITAIN.

TWO OR THREE YEARS MUST ELAPSE BEFORE LAND VALUATION IS AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT—LIBERALS WIN IN BY-ELECTIONS—TWO NEW SINGLE TAXERS IN PARLIAMENT—DISAPPOINTING SPEECH OF LLOYD GEORGE.

From a Single Taxer's point of view little of vital importance has taken place in the political arena since I wrote my last letter for the REVIEW. From recent reports it is to be feared that at least two or three years must elapse before the valuation of land—as provided for in the Budget of 1909-10—is completed. In that case it is difficult to see what the Government can do to promote the Taxation of Land Values in the meantime. Even if it continues in power till the valuation is completed its term of office will have so nearly expired that it is almost too much to expect that it will still have the strength and vigor to carry a real democratic measure for Rating or Taxing Land Values.

What is considered by many of our friends as the very dilatory manner in which the valuation is being carried out will no doubt give great satisfaction to our opponents, who are counting on a swing of the pendulum at the next election returning the Tories to power. In that event we may expect a land purchase scheme and possibly a measure of tariff reform (protection) as among the very first measures the Tories will introduce.

During the past few weeks we have had many rumors about another dissolution of Parliament and a general election. This idea is scouted by T. P. O'Connor and many others who may be safely considered competent to judge. The opposition press and leaders differ widely on the subject, and judging by recent election results there is nothing to indicate that the Tories have the remotest chance of being successful at the polls, and therefore nothing to gain by forcing a dissolution, even were they given the power to do so.

Saturday, July 8th saw the close of a series of by-elections which might almost

be called a miniature general election. It is gratifying to report that the Government supporters were highly successful, thus proving that the Liberal party still enjoys the confidence of the electors. In this respect the party in office holds what may be said to be an unusual position, for, generally speaking, Government majorities melt away from the time their ranks are broken by resignations, death, or other causes. Amongst those who won seats at these by-elections were Dr. Dundas White and Baron de Forest. Dr. White for personal reasons refused to stand at the general election six months ago, and so it was with great delight that Single Taxers all over Great Britain and Ireland heard of his entry into the fight in the Tradeston division of Glasgow, where in spite of the Labor and Socialist vote being neutral or against him, he won by a majority of 1,086 votes in a poll of 6,652. He took his seat on Monday, July 10th, and today the announcement is made that he has been appointed private secretary to the secretary for Scotland (unpaid). With the return of Dr. White to the House of Commons the ranks of Single Taxers are greatly strengthened.

In West Ham where Mr. Masterman, a member of the Government, had been unseated owing to the carelessness of his election agent, another keen land reformer was elected in the person of Baron De Forest. The writer has a vivid recollection of the fight made by this gentleman not long ago for a seat on the London County Council. In that fight the complaint among his supporters was that they could not get him to discuss County Council affairs. The candidate would give a promise to talk purely London politics, and he would open up all right, but before long he would be hammering away at the iniquities of land monopoly. I well remember hearing a man say that the Baron went tearing around his constituency with "Progress and Poverty" in one pocket, and "The Condition of Labor" in another, and that all he could talk about was the gospel of Henry George. Now that he is in Parliament, it is to be hoped that he may show the same energy where it will be so useful at this juncture.

As was to be expected, the Parliament

Bill for destroying the veto powers of the House of Lords has met with anything but a friendly reception from our lordly legislators. There are many shrewd men in the House of Lords whose whole powers—combined with those of Mr. Balfour and his colleagues in the Commons—have been devoted to finding ways and means of frustrating the effects of the Government to make the House of the People's representatives supreme. With Mr. Asquith at the helm there is little danger of the Government being entrapped by either Mr. Balfour or Lord Lansdowne or any of their colleagues. The calm, quiet, easy manner in which Mr. Asquith faces up to and deals with the opposition shows him to be a great Parliamentary tactician, and a strong leader of men. Given such a leader backed by public opinion one feels that as yet there is little to fear from the opposition.

For many long years now the school-master has been at work, and with the spread of knowledge the people are at last awakening to the fact that as John Bright so well put it:

"Crowns, coronets, mitres, military display, the pomp of war, wide colonies, and a huge Empire are, in my view, all trifles light as air and not worth considering unless with them you can have a fair share of comfort, contentment and happiness among the great body of the people."

It is just the lack of a "fair share of comfort" in the midst of great abundance which is creating that divine discontent which may lead to results of a far-reaching and beneficent character within the next few years.

I am just back from Mid-Norfolk where twice in a twelve-month our friend, Mr. W. R. Lester, was the Liberal standard bearer in the two last general elections. It is not yet two years since Mr. Lester paid his first visit to this purely agricultural division, where prior to that time the people were quite ignorant of the proposals for taxing land values. Today it is the question of land values which calls forth the enthusiasm of these agricultural laborers who are working for wages ranging from 12s. to 15s. a week. It is just as true today as when Burns wrote that:

"Hundreds labor to support
A haughty lordling's pride."

But there is hope for the future. The people are beginning to smile at the pretensions of these "haughty lordlings," and before many days are over we expect to hear that the Parliament Bill has passed, and that once and for all their legislative power has been destroyed. This will be the beginning of a putting forth of more democratic measures by the legislative machinery, which for generations has been too largely controlled by those of whom Mr. Jos. Chamberlain said, "They toil not, neither do they spin." With the passage of the Parliament Bill we expect some measure of electoral reform which will at least abolish plural voting and may very possibly include votes for women.

Home Rule for Ireland is a measure that one hopes to see placed on the statute book within a very short time after the Parliament Bill receives the Royal assent. This granting of self-government to Ireland means much to the democracy of this country, for it will clear the decks of an obstacle which has long blocked the way to reform legislation. Payment of Members of Parliament is another measure to which the Government is now committed, while at the moment Lloyd George has charge of a Bill which is to provide State insurance against sickness and unemployment. The full title is:

"A bill to provide for insurance against loss of health and for the prevention and cure of sickness, and for insurance against unemployment."

In his enthusiasm for this bill Mr. Lloyd George appears to have completely lost his head, for at Birmingham on June 10th., he made a speech of which many a smaller man might be heartily ashamed. In this speech he took the case of a brewer's horse, and showed how it was well fed and cared for, and how in case of sickness it was left at home a day, not merely as a matter of humanity, but of good business. He also took the case of a machine and showed how it is oiled and overhauled to keep it in good condition, and then he said:

"How much better is man than a ma-

chine? He may be better, but he is not better off, poor fellow. I will tell you the trouble. There is no one there who has a sense of responsibility to look after him. It is nobody's concern to see that that wonderfully delicate piece of machinery is all right, is fit. A man owns the machine or he owns the horse. If they break down they are costly to replace. I will tell you what is wanted in this country, and in many others—you want to cultivate in the State a sense of proprietorship over these workers. They are the greatest asset of any kind. After all, work implies skill. We talk about unskilled labor. Let any man who is here and accustomed to wield the pen try his hand for a day at the pick. He will start by saying "This is unskilled labor." He will end by being completely disillusioned in half an hour—yea, less. There is the trained suppleness, the discipline of the eye, and you accustom the body to it. There is no unskilled business. And all that training, covering years, is wealth, national wealth, and yet we waste it with a recklessness, with an unconcern, with an unintelligence which simply baffles anybody who sits down to consider the problem for five minutes. There is too little heed paid in our industrial organization to the physical and mental efficiency of the worker. That is the soul of the problem."

Talk like this shakes one's faith in the Chancellor. It makes one feel that with deep human sympathy for the oppressed, and only a very superficial view of what land monopoly is, and what it involves, there is never any telling what he may do next. It is certain that however many measures of this kind the Government may pass, there can be no relief of that economic pressure which keeps the people down. Many friends will become tired of such measures while the oppressed are not likely to be attracted to or held by the Liberal party. The leading article in the July issue of *Land Values* is devoted to a criticism of the insurance bill with special reference to the Chancellor's unwise talk about the necessity of "cultivating in the State a sense of proprietorship over these workers." Politically there is, I think, one danger at the moment, and that is that

the Government may waste its strength in passing measures which at best can only palliate and which may not even do that. Lloyd George's insurance scheme was received with a great chorus of approval from all parties, and by some people was regarded as a great political move. In my judgment it has weakened rather than strengthened the position of the Government. The Parliament Bill is still being considered by the House of Lords where it is being subjected to many amendments which the Government will have no alternative to reject. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Morley and Lord Haldane have displayed great energy and ability in defending the Bill, which is expected to be back in the Commons by July 20th, when the crisis will have been reached. Personally I have faith in Mr. Asquith and fully expect that when the final struggle comes he will justify the judgment of those who have all along given him their confidence and support.

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DENMARK.

The great truth put forward by Henry George is going forward to its triumph in our little country. Many things have worked together for its progress. But the financial policies of the changing ministries and the crying injustice of people vainly seeking work are the chief reasons why our movement is gaining ground.

Our last real land taxes were to be repealed in twenty-five years by the law that went into effect in 1904. In place of the old land taxes we got something like you have in the United States, that taxes land and improvements. There was imposed at this time an income tax. As these laws are coming into effect the general dissatisfaction with them is outspoken. The small farmer can see that he is taxed more heavily in proportion to his holding than the big landowner. Business men and merchants are coming to see the same thing.

The Henry George League held a big meeting recently in Copenhagen. A pamphlet on land value taxation was sent