

Lewis C. Ball, C. P. Gardner, W. O. Potter and Frank W. Burton.

+ +

Report of Land Grabbing in Alaska.

The following dispatch from Denver, under date of August 12, was published in the Chicago Examiner (Hearst) on the 13th:

Scores of the wealthiest men in the United States from New York to the Pacific coast are to be arrested by special agents of the General Land Office, who have unearthed the greatest land grabbing scandal ever brought to light in America. It is claimed that 75 per cent of the coal entries made in Alaska prior to May 28, 1908, are fraudulent and that some of the greatest financial men as well as railroads and other corporations have resorted to a new trick in securing dummy entries. Men from the slums of Seattle, Butte, Denver and Chicago were approached by lawyers, who signed or allowed their attorneys to sign applications for coal lands in Alaska, which were turned over to the coal barons. Those accused are attempting to cover up, it is claimed, and political, social and financial pressure has been brought to bear on the government officials to stay prosecution. Investigations will be begun by the government next month in Seattle and hearings will be held in at least fifteen cities in the United States, extending from coast to coast. Commissioner Dennett expressed the conviction that at least 500 fraudulent entries comprising 300,000 acres of land will be canceled. Secretary Richard A. Ballinger of the Interior Department and Commissioner Dennett have evidence tending to show that 300 entries have been fraudulently made through dummies living in Seattle, Butte, Chicago, Denver, New York and other cities. The investigation has been under way for four years. All coal entries in Alaska have been under suspension during the past four years pending the outcome of the investigation. It is necessary to begin action soon because in some of the cases the statute of limitations will make prosecution impossible next spring. Several of the best men under the direction of M. D. McEniry, chief of the field division of Colorado, have been hurried to Alaska to secure further evidence. Several railroad companies owned in New York, Boston and Philadelphia are now attempting to delay prosecution, hoping to secure favorable legislation during the next session of Congress. Six large coal corporations are involved.

General press dispatches of the 15th allude to the above with this statement:

The Interior Department makes no denial of the fact that hundreds of coal land cases in Alaska are awaiting the attention of the land office on suspicion of fraud. In fact, there is a firm belief in the Department that fully 75 per cent of the entries now pending there will be canceled on the ground that "dummies" have been used and because of illegal efforts of individuals to combine. Three hundred and fifty land office agents and inspectors are now scattered over the country, taking depositions and arranging to compel the land grabbers to let go.

+ +

The British Land Question.

Parliament still drags on with its all night

sessions discussing the financial bill (p. 779), the Tory members filibustering for delay, and the Ministers unable to agree to a strict closure—two or three of them threatening to resign if the others force it. But a modification of the House rules has been secured which enables the chairman to place some limitations upon the obstructionists. Consequently, Lloyd-George is making steady progress.

+

In his cable letter of the 14th, appearing in the Chicago Tribune of the 15th, T. P. O'Connor, M. P., says that Lloyd-George—

and the other Liberal ministers have builded better than they knew in the land clauses of the Budget, which have made an appeal to the popular imagination, to hopes, true or false, but certainly magnificent, and, above all, to the long pent anger of the masses against the ground landlords in the towns, who have treated the industrious storekeepers so harshly. The result is that the land clauses of the budget are received with an outburst of popular enthusiasm, as if Lloyd-George preached a new evangel of humanity. This enthusiasm has been maintained by a feverishly active campaign in the country, every cabinet minister going on the stump and making the land clauses their sole topic. Lloyd-George's own speeches and Winston Churchill's even more fiery harangues have lashed democracy into a fury. This campaign is greatly assisted by the incredibly stupid speeches of the dukes and other great landlords, who cause equal indignation, scorn, and defiance by bewailing their poverty and threatening to cut off their charities to the hospitals and the old work people. Finally the Liberals are enormously assisted by the division in the Tory ranks which Lord Northcliffe's attacks [Northcliffe owns the London Times] on Balfour and the other Tory leaders reveal. The protectionists have looked on, silent, suspicious, and almost openly rebellious, while Balfour has detracted from tariff reform [protection] by making his attack on the budget wholly negative. In private caucuses, the protectionists bitterly protest against this policy and demand tariff reform as the first plank in the Tory platform and as a distinct and openly avowed alternative to Lloyd-George's budget.

+

In connection with this great Parliamentary contest, there is being widely circulated and liberally signed throughout Great Britain, the following commendation of the pending financial bill by business men:

The finance bill now being discussed in Parliament offers an important measure of freedom to the business men of the country. They have long felt and expressed the desire for relief from the growing burden of rates on business premises, factories, machinery and dwelling houses. To secure this, even in the slightest degree, a new basis of assessment is necessary, and by providing for the valuation of land apart from the improvements made by private companies or individuals, the bill furnishes this basis.

So far from inflicting any burden on enterprise or