

## 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, August 24, 1909.

### Adoption of the Land Clauses of the British Budget.

The land clauses of the British financial bill (p. 800) were completed in committee of the whole of the House of Commons on the 21st, and the House took its first recess of the present session, adjourning for a week. Upon reassembling, the committee of the whole will go to work upon the remaining clauses of the bill, and when that is done, the bill in its entirety will be adopted by the Commons in formal session, whereupon it will go to the House of Lords.

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As finally formulated by the committee of the whole in the Commons, some alterations in the bill as originally presented by the Ministry had been made. The more important changes were as follows: (1) the cost of valuing all the lands of the Kingdom has been transferred from the land owners to the Imperial exchequer; (2) the land of friendly societies is granted special exemptions; (3) appeals from decisions of the valuation commission are allowed; and (4) the proposed tax upon the capital value of mineral deposits is withdrawn and a tax on actual royalties and rents of mines substituted for it. But the principle of land-value taxation is preserved, and there has been no yielding on the part of the Ministry in their demand for an Imperial valuation of all land to be followed by frequent revaluations.

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The profound significance of the land clauses in the budget, just adopted in committee of the whole, may be inferred from the attacks that have been made upon them by the Tory organs. The subjoined quotations from the leading editorial in the London Daily Telegraph of the 10th tells the story with more than verbal eloquence. It is a comment upon the reception Mr. Asquith gave to a deputation from the great popular demonstration at Hyde Park, July 24 (p. 727), attended by 500,000 people, 200,000 of whom had marched in procession to the place with society banners. There were 12 speaking platforms, arranged in an extended semi-circle, in order to accommodate the immense crowd of people; and among the speak-

ers at the different platforms were R. L. Outhwaite, Rev. Stewart Headlam, Mrs. Ramsay Macdonald, E. G. Hemmerde, M. P., James Busby, Joseph Fels, Joseph Martin, K. C., Hon. Mrs. Wedgwood, Hon. Mrs. Bertrand Russell, John Hodge, M. P., W. P. Byles, M. P., John Paul, Miss Sybella Gurney, Alex. MacKendrick, Percy Alden, M. P., Edward McHugh, Fred Skirrow, D. M. Edwards, Thos. F. Walker, J. P., Lord Lyveden, Sir Richard Stapley, Sir William Bruce, Sir Henry Colton, T. P. Ritzema, J. P., Rev. Fleming Williams, J. Hyder, Mrs. Conybear and Rt. Hon. Thomas Lough, M. P. Of the 12 platforms, 9 were supported by organizations and presided over by representatives of the organizations respectively, as follows: London Liberal Federation, W. H. Dickinson, M. P.; Land Law Reform Association, Jas. Rowlands, M. P.; London Society of Compositors, C. W. Bowerman, M. P.; United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, J. C. Wedgwood, M. P.; Trades Union Congress, Harry Gosling, L. C. C. (London County Council); Labor Party, Keir Hardie, M. P.; Women's Liberal Federation, Miss Florence Balfour; National Liberal Club, Capt. The Hon. Fitzroy Hemphill, L. C. C.; and Land Nationalization Society, Aneurin Williams, J. P. The other chairmen were N. W. Hubbard, J. P., Dr. John Clifford, and Alfred Mond, M. P. On the 9th the deputation appointed by this meeting for the purpose of presenting the resolutions to the ministry, appeared before the Prime Minister, headed by James Rowlands, M. P., of the Land Law Reform Association. After explaining that the deputation was perhaps the most representative of any deputation which had had the privilege of being received by the Prime Minister, Mr. Rowlands handed Mr. Asquith a copy of the resolution, which was in the following terms:

That this meeting heartily welcomes the important provisions contained in the budget for taxing monopolies and socially created wealth, and particularly for securing a complete valuation of all land in the United Kingdom, holding this to be essential to any policy of land and social reform. It further hopes that the Government will firmly resist any mutilation of their proposals dictated by selfish interests, and will seek an early opportunity for so extending them as to secure the best use of the land, which must result in increased employment, better housing for the people, and greater prosperity for our national industries.

The reply of Mr. Asquith, as reported by the London Times of the 10th, was as follows:

When my friend Mr. Rowlands suggested that I should have the pleasure and privilege of receiving you here this afternoon I confess that I was tempted to put to him the question—What useful purpose can our meeting together serve? But when I found from him that your object was not that we should have an interchange of compliments and speeches—because I think that in these matters we are all at

one—but that you should have the opportunity of showing to me, as representing the Government, what I shall be very glad vicariously to show to my colleagues—namely, the extremely representative character, the exceptionally representative character, of the great demonstration which was held the other day, and the importance, therefore, that is to be attached to the resolution which, after due consideration and free deliberation on the part of the framers, was, I understand, unanimously carried at that enormous gathering—when, I say, it was pointed out to me that that was your object, I may say I was only too glad to have the opportunity of receiving personally from you the resolution which my friend Mr. Rowlands has just handed to me. So far as I know there is no proposition in that resolution—I have been reading it through—to which I should do anything but express my own individual assent, and I have no reason to think that there is any proposition in it from which any of my colleagues dissent. I can assure you that it will give me extreme pleasure to communicate it to them, and it will receive from them, as it will from myself, grateful, respectful, and sympathetic consideration.

The thanks of the deputation were expressed to the Prime Minister by Josiah C. Wedgwood, M. P., who is a lineal descendant of the founder of the Wedgwood potteries and himself one of that world famous industrial concern. As noted above he had presided on one of the platforms at the Hyde Park meeting as chairman of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values.

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It was with reference to the meeting of the Hyde Park deputation with the Prime Minister on the 9th that the London Daily Telegraph, in its editorial of the 10th, referred to above, disclosed the Tory understanding of the land clauses of that budget. The editorial is very long, but its significant parts are as follows:

We are getting on when the chosen representatives of the gospel according to Henry George are received, not with rebuke, but almost with benediction, by the Prime Minister of England. . . . The deputation was one of rabid land-taxers, who included such extreme enthusiasts for the total confiscation of land as Mr. Wedgwood, M. P. That gentleman recently declared at the banquet in honor of Mr. Henry George, junior, that the true author of the budget was not Mr. Lloyd-George but Mr. Henry George, senior. For a quarter of a century since a celebrated volume of sophistical rhetoric was first produced land nationalization has been the pet doctrine of all the wild-cat elements of the radical party. These gentlemen know nothing whatever of the soil except that they want it. More or less in this spirit a pro-budget demonstration was held in Hyde Park towards the end of July. The gathering was not particularly impressive, either in extent or in composition. It was the ordinary assemblage of the converted. The platforms were like a choice anthology of all the rarest political blossoms that even radicalism can supply. . . . But among all these hot gossellers on that occasion all other strange forms of faddism

which they worship at other times were lost in the conviction that, so far as private ownership of the soil is concerned, property is robbery, and that landlords in a lump are bad. Under the influence of this sweet enthusiasm, the landtaxers passed a resolution of portentous size and prodigious comprehensiveness. And it was solemnly carried to the Prime Minister and urgently pressed upon his attention by the deputation which waited upon him yesterday. . . . Mr. Asquith knew very well that the real motive power behind those who waited upon him was belief in the doctrine of land nationalization. He must have been fully conscious that the deputation included prominent apostles of the whole creed of confiscation as expounded in "Progress and Poverty." He must have been aware that some, at least, among those he saw before him support Lloyd-Georgism avowedly because it leads to full Henry Georgism. . . . Mr. Asquith was apparently afraid to speak what must be his real mind, and, accordingly, we had the astonishing spectacle yesterday of the Prime Minister of England tolerating the advocacy of Henry Georgism in his presence. . . . There is, unfortunately, more in all this than meets the eye. It is notorious that ministers until recently were violently divided upon the land clauses. What we have to reckon with are the methods and consequences of a remarkable surrender. A few weeks ago the semi-official organ of the Ministerial press was hoisting signals of distress. They were very wisely shown. They have been very foolishly hauled down; but, indeed, there is every evidence that Mr. Lloyd-George and Mr. Churchill forcibly pulled them down. The moderates protested against the darling idea of the land nationalizers—the compilation of a new Domesday Book. But the moderates were beaten, and they submitted. . . . The proposal for a general valuation, . . . will lay, and is meant to lay, a basis for land nationalization. What did Mr. Henry George say? He recommended gradual seizure of the whole soil by the method of progressive taxation. . . . That was the principle tacitly represented by the deputation who waited upon Mr. Asquith yesterday. That was the principle which the Prime Minister of England allowed to pass unrebuked.

In the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, a liberal paper, there was an editorial on the 7th which seems to account for what the Daily Telegraph alludes to in hinting that Lloyd-George and Churchill have forcibly brought the moderates of the ministry over to this budget move towards Henry Georgism. The significant statement of the Liverpool paper is that it has "been discovered with extraordinary suddenness" that "the land taxes, notwithstanding all that Unionist orators have said about them, all the threats of the wealthy that if passed they would ruin landowners and abstract indispensable capital from commerce, are popular."

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A correspondent who has just returned from England writes that he is surprised at the little attention the American papers give to the British budget excitement. "Everybody there," he says, "is discussing it, and the unanimity with which

the nobility, plutocracy, stock jobbers and promoters generally line up against the land clauses is an object lesson."

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#### A Capitalists' War.

The Spanish war in Morocco, which has been so unpopular in Spain as to provoke revolution (pp. 730, 753, 780), is, as we have already reported (p. 730), a promoters' war. Mail advices enlarge upon this. The Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury of the 31st says:

The fighting that has taken place is in the Riff country behind Melilla. In this mountainous district there are iron and lead mines, and two companies, one wholly Spanish and the other French with a Spanish chairman, have secured concessions to work mines there, and have laid down a short railway and incurred other expenditure in pursuit of their enterprise. Unfortunately for them, their concessions have been obtained from a local tribesman named El Roghi, who does not appear to have had any authority to enter into such transactions. Who or what El Roghi is appears to be a mystery. One thing certain is that he has failed to protect the enterprising concessionaires against the indignant Moorish population, who resented their presence in the country, and four Spanish navvies were killed. A sort of war has followed. It is not a war between Spain and Morocco, for the Sultan of Morocco himself is hostile to El Roghi. The Spanish expedition aims simply at protecting the rights of the two companies that have been pushing their way into the mineral district. There are not, so far as present information goes, any national interests to be vindicated by Spain, but only those of two commercial undertakings, one of which is not Spanish, but French. Thus far the fighting has evidently gone very seriously against the Spanish forces. The killed and wounded are numbered by thousands, and the heavy loss of officers suggests that the troops have not had much heart in the fighting. Many of the killed are from Barcelona, and the whole city is in revolt against the "war," as well it may be. When Lord Rosebery prophesied that the democracy might in future play an important part in restraining nations from entering into wars, he did so in the belief that the enormous cost of armaments would bring about a revolt against militarism in general. But here we have a democracy in revolt against the Spanish government, not because of financial cost, but because lives are being sacrificed in hostilities for which there is no national or justifiable call.

With the weakening of his influence through belief that he had sold the Riff region to the Spaniards, El Roghi was reported on the 17th to have suffered defeat at the hands of the Sultan of Morocco, against whom he was in revolt; and on the 18th he was reported to have been captured. According to the courier who brought the news to Tangier the Sultan had announced that he himself would complete the chastisement the Riffians were inflicting on the Spanish. Dispatches from Madrid indicate that the fighting in Morocco continues to be severe. The bitter complaints at the time of the

outbreaks at Barcelona and Madrid, that the rich could escape conscription by the payment of \$300 (p. 753), are to be met by changes in the conscription law, according to the Prime Minister, Mr. Maura. In an interview he is quoted as saying: "We are changing the conscription law so that it cannot in future be said the rich escape responsibility of serving their country in the field. A duke or marquis in the future will take his place in the ranks alongside a workman. The only privilege he will be allowed is to live outside the barracks."

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Twenty-five of the revolutionary prisoners in the Montjuich fortress at Barcelona, were shot on the 12th. Revolutionary agitation continues in and near Barcelona. The gendarmes lost five men in a fierce fight with revolutionaries in a suburb of Barcelona on the 13th. In connection with the movement to stamp out revolutionary tendencies the Government has closed ninety-four lay schools and teaching centers.

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#### The Powers Coerce Crete.

Great Britain, Russia, France and Italy, the guarantors of Turkish suzerainty over Crete (p. 801), have sent two warships each to overawe the little island which has been seeking a transference of allegiance to Greece. The warships anchored in the harbor of Canea on the 17th. Marines were landed on the 18th, and the Greek flag which had been raised three weeks previously over the fort of Canea, was shot down. On the 19th the inhabitants of Canea, under arms, again raised the Greek flag, in the presence of a squad of militia who were powerless to prevent it. But later the government hauled the flag down. The Powers demand that a written guarantee be given that the Greek flag will not be again hoisted after the departure of the international squadron.

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#### China's Advance Toward Constitutionalism.

It may be remembered that three years ago rumors of approaching constitutionalism came from China (vol. ix, p. 511), followed by announcements of Imperial edicts looking to the establishment of a constitutional form of government in a period set at ten years (vol. ix, pp. 537, 777, 1066; vol. x, p. 537; vol. xi, pp. 540, 708). Advance seems to have outstripped the ten years' program, for a dispatch from Peking under date of the 23rd states that the government has given orders that it be supplied with estimates for the construction of an Imperial assembly hall, to occupy the site of the ancient hall of examinations. The rules to govern the first National Assembly of China also are being drafted.