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The radical programme

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ELECTION PAMPHLETS—No. 1.

BY

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THE RADICAL PROGRAMME.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

POLITICAL questions run in two main lines—*first*, CONSTITUTIONAL questions; *second*, ECONOMIC questions. In the *first* class are included those questions regarding the structure of government; and in the *second*, those regarding the functions of government in relation to the industrial and social life of the people. The art of politics consists, indeed, in the organization of the city and the state for ends common to the citizens.

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.

The most urgent constitutional question at the moment is the question of the Government of IRELAND.

The union between England and Ireland, effected in 1800, was the result, not of free choice, but of conquest. The Treaty of Union, secured by corruption, has been maintained by coercion. No measure involving merely the granting of powers of local administration will remove the grievance that the Irish feel. They must have legislative

power. They want to conduct their own affairs in their own way. The exercise of the franchise is a delusion, unless effect is given to plain messages from the polls; and the plain message which has again and again been sent by the Irish constituencies is a message demanding Home Rule. To disregard this message is to incite the Irish to rebellion. They have adopted the means provided by us to ask for what they want. Can we persist in refusing to grant it?

Another constitutional question of importance for us is the question of HOME RULE FOR SCOTLAND. Although the Scots Treaty of Union of 1707 was not the outcome, direct or indirect, of conquest, as was the Treaty of Union with Ireland, it was, like the Irish Treaty, the direct outcome of corruption. The object of the Scots Union was to secure the solidarity of Great Britain; and infamous as the means were by which the Act of Union was passed in the Scots Parliament, the solidarity of Great Britain was secured. No one would now propose to abrogate the Treaty of Union; but the time may have come when it is desirable to modify it. Scots affairs are too apt to be thrust aside in the pressure of imperial affairs, and, as ever, the quiet people are given the go-by. Some measure of legislative independence must also be granted to Scotland, should the message from the constituencies be decisively in favour of the decentralization of legislative power.

Still another constitutional question is the question of the HOUSE OF LORDS. Is it to be mended or ended? The House of Lords is the rallying ground of reactionaries. It is the last stronghold of those who resist progress. In a sense it represents the past, although its past is not very remote—only thirty-three of its patents of nobility are older than the reign of Elizabeth. Still it represents the past. If it were only possible for a second chamber to represent the future—if it were possible to have a chamber which should represent the interest of posterity against the assumed aggressive selfishness of the existing generation, there might be something to be said for it; but care for

posterity is not one of the virtues of the peerage. The House of Lords remains as it is only because it is regarded as ornamental, and because it has usually stopped short of being destructive. The long list of progressive measures which the House of Lords has either delayed, or so far prevented, is a sufficient condemnation of a body instinctively reactionary and essentially alien to the spirit of progress.

Belonging also to the order of constitutional questions, there is the question of SHORTER PARLIAMENTS. The existing Parliament affords a conspicuous example of the disadvantage of the septennial period. The general election may be expected to show how far Parliament has dragged behind public opinion during the past three or four years; yet it is in the power of the Government to block the way of all progress until July, 1893. Quinquennial, triennial, and annual Parliaments have been suggested by various schools of politicians during the past century. The arguments for a period shorter than seven years are invincible; the points of dispute lie as between one, three, and five years periods. The general argument in favour of *annual* Parliaments is the sensitiveness of so short-lived a Parliament, both collectively and as regards its members, to public opinion. It is noteworthy, however, that most of the arguments of the leading advocates of annual Parliaments—first, the Benthamites, and subsequently the Chartists, were based upon the then prevalent venality of members of Parliament. No doubt offices and titles are still dispensed to reward services in support of the Government; but no doubt also political life is much purer than it was seventy years ago; and there is less necessity for devising safeguards against a corruption which no longer exists. The arguments against annual Parliaments are the great disturbance to industry which an annual general election would cause if the people were really stirred; and the political indifference which would result from annual Parliaments if the people were not stirred. As a practical issue the question really lies between triennial

and quinquennial Parliaments. A quinquennial Parliament, which should last its full term, would be scarcely less disadvantageous than a septennial Parliament which dissolved a year before its necessary dissolution. The triennial Parliament offers, on the whole, the fewest disadvantages; and, there is little doubt, would result in stimulation of interest in politics, and in more rapid political progress than we now experience.

It is notable that during the sixty years that have elapsed since the Reform Bill of 1832, there have been just twenty Parliaments, their average duration having been three years.

Among projected ELECTORAL REFORMS, perhaps the widest in its scope is that of MANHOOD SUFFRAGE. This amounts to the simplification of the complicated system of franchises* which exists at present, to the abolition of all property qualifications, to the abolition of plural voting, and to the abolition of Parliamentary seats for representatives of the Universities. Of less extensive range than Manhood Suffrage is the "ONE MAN ONE VOTE" franchise. This involves no alteration in the system of franchises, save the prevention of plural voting. An EQUAL PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE FOR MEN AND WOMEN is the logical sequence to the extension of the municipal franchise to women. The attitude of Mr. Gladstone upon the women's suffrage question is liable to misinterpretation. Enthusiasts for the enfranchisement of women are not likely to remain under the stigma of a charge of supineness. When the demand for women suffrage is sufficiently demonstratively made, it is quite certain that the demand will be met.

Associated with this class of proposed electoral reforms is the urgently needed AMENDMENT OF THE REGISTRATION LAWS. The twelve months' residential qualification results in the disfranchisement of a large number of persons, the nature of whose employment is such as to involve comparatively frequent changes of residence. The diminution of the period of residence to three months, and even also

* There are seven different forms of franchise.

the quarterly registration of electors, as well as greater efficiency in registration, are absolutely necessary reforms.

The tendency in most countries where political life is healthily keen is towards the multiplication of parties. But the effectiveness of this multiplication of parties and the advancement of progressive ideas are seriously handicapped by the absence of a SECOND BALLOT. Many men who have general sympathy with the Liberal party, for example, despair of the efficacy of political action because there is no opportunity for seriously testing public opinion upon any questions other than those adopted by the party leaders, or upon the candidature of men other than those adopted by the caucuses. A preliminary ballot, where candidates of any shade of opinion might have an opportunity of testing the strength of the cause they represent, would, on the whole, be a great advantage, and would, in this country, probably be free from some of the disadvantages that are alleged to attach to the working out of the method in France. 'THE PAYMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RETURNING OFFICERS' EXPENSES and the PAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT are justifiable alike on historical and on modern grounds. Members of Parliament were entitled to wages, collected from the communities represented by royal writ, until the fifteenth or sixteenth century, when gradually the constituencies pled exemption from the ancient practice. The payment of members and the payment of election expenses are the necessary sequence of the extension of the franchise and of the abolition of the property qualification for Parliamentary candidates.*

Following strictly Parliamentary questions, there comes DISESTABLISHMENT, which, striking as it does at the relation of Church and State, belongs to the class of constitutional questions. If the principle of local veto were

* Members of Parliament are paid in the following countries.—Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Prussia, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Switzerland, United States, Mexico, Orange Free States; and among British possessions, Canada, Newfoundland, New Zealand, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, and Victoria.

applied here, as most of us wish to see it applied in another department, there can be little doubt of the result. The keener and more subtle and alert the intelligence of the people, the more likely they are to have varied theological opinions, and the more likely they are to reject the uniformity of a State Church. No people have been more enthusiastic advocates of religious equality than the Scots. The disestablishment of the Church in Scotland, as well as of the Church in Wales, where the conditions are analagous, cannot be deferred when a pause in the political atmosphere affords a favourable opportunity for dealing with the question. It is clear that the burdens presently borne by landowners by immemorial usage for the maintenance of the State Church ought not to be simply discharged, but that they should, as legitimate burdens, be devoted to the purposes of the community, preferably to education. It is, however, unfair to regard the question as involving merely pecuniary considerations. The disestablishment and dis-endowment of the Church of Scotland ought to be carried out in no niggardly spirit.

ECONOMIC QUESTIONS.

The *second* class of questions is the ECONOMIC; and here we pass from the structure of government to the practical working of the governmental organism. These economic-political questions may be usefully sub-divided into (*a*) those which affect the State; (*b*) those which affect the municipality; (*c*) those which affect the family; and (*d*) those which affect industry. Among those which affect (*a*) the STATE, there is the series of questions regarding ADMINISTRATION. Many ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS are needed in all the departments of governmental action. Mere age and the inevitable tendency of State offices to formalism produce inefficiency. The Dockyards, the Admiralty, the War Office, the Board of Trade, the Post Office, the Customs, and the Excise are incrustated with antiquated, expensive, and useless formalism. Every one of

them affords a field for the exercise of administrative skill in rendering them more efficient as well as less costly instruments in the public service. Associated with administrative questions is that of the REFORM OF THE POOR LAW. The system of voting in the election of Poor Law Guardians in England is open to grave abuse, and the maintenance of the poor is indifferent and wasteful, both in great Britain and in Ireland. The formation of farm colonies, after the manner of the successful colonies on the Continent, seems the most rational method of dealing with those whose inability to struggle in the competitive system has been made manifest. The labour of these unfortunates, in order to be even approximately sufficient to maintain them, must be organised, and their lives in some measure also regulated for them.

Associated with Poor Law Administration, although wider in its scope, is the question of STATE PENSIONS FOR THE AGED. It is open to question whether, *under existing conditions*, State pensions for the aged would not result in the diminution of wages. *Pensions in any case are deferred pay.* So long as to any material extent wages depend upon the cost of subsistence, as in the lower grades of labour they still do, they must at present include theoretically some provision for old age, except in so far as provision is made under the existing poor law, which also, to a certain extent, results in a reduction from wages. Since such is the case, it is evident that a national pension, above a certain age, would tend to diminish the need for saving, and therefore to lessen the amount of wages which a workman would need and would be inclined to take, even if he were able to hold out for more. It is to be admitted at once that national provision for old age is attractive; and if it could be achieved without reflex action upon earnings during years of maturity, it would be a great advantage. Any practicable scheme must, however, not only be wider than a mere addition to the poor law, but must take into account the efforts in the direction of securing provision for old age carried on for many years by means of volun-

tary organizations. The Friendly Societies, with their 4,394,000 members, £20,000,000 of funds, and their organized social life, cannot be left out of account in formulating a national scheme. If the national insurance scheme were compulsory, it would unquestionably put a stop to the growth of the Friendly Societies; if it were optional, the payment to the State would require to be less or more, or the same as that of the Friendly Societies. If the payment were less, the Societies would suffer in membership; if the payment were more the State scheme would fail; while, if it were the same as the Friendly Societies, there would be so nice a balance of monetary advantages that probably both schemes would dwindle. An optional State scheme would necessarily appeal to precisely the same class of thrifty people as the Friendly Societies appeal to. Moreover, the maintenance of social life, the cultivation of a spirit of good fellowship and mutual helpfulness which the Friendly Societies secure and which a great State scheme would do nothing to promote, are necessarily, to some extent, bound up with the "benefits" of the Societies. The social element would tend to be seriously injured if the "benefit" element were spoilt by a State scheme, whether compulsory or optional. It is surely not impracticable to devise a scheme which would render the security of the Friendly Societies' Funds absolute by State endorsement, or even to subsidize the Friendly Societies in such a way as to enlarge their usefulness, while retaining the intensity of social life, of which they have helped to preserve the continuity, in an age when many of the tendencies have been towards the breaking-up of social ties. At the same time action should be taken in the direction of amending the poor law, so as to secure the comfort in old age of all who have a claim on the community for maintenance.

An adequate system of SECONDARY AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, and a national system for the EDUCATION OF TEACHERS, to replace the existing moribund system of denominational Normal Training Colleges (the survival of

the now-abandoned denominational education), must be the next steps in educational administration.

Affecting also the State, there is the series of questions under the head of TAXATION.

It is inevitable that as the functions of the Government increase, governmental expenditure must increase also. The revenue to meet this expenditure has so far arisen only to a small extent from direct payment for governmental services; for the Post Office is practically the only enterprise of the Government which is calculated to yield a surplus of revenue over expenditure. Among projects of reform in the department of taxation, there is the EQUALISATION OF THE DEATH DUTIES. At present there are four different duties payable upon inheritance. These are the Probate, Legacy, Succession, and Estate Duties. Personal property (cash, moveables, &c.) is charged with Probate, Legacy, and Estate Duty, while real property (land, &c.) is charged with Succession and Estate Duties alone. The result is that real property is charged only from one-half to one-third of the death duties recoverable from personal property of the same value. The equalisation of the death duties will doubtless be the first step, for Mr. Gladstone has for long been anxious to effect this; but a GRADUATED DEATH DUTY must be the next step. Under such a scheme of taxation the large estates would contribute a much larger amount to the national revenue than they do now; and such a provision would tend to prevent the admittedly "mischievous accumulation of property in few hands." Among other taxation schemes which have received the sanction of the highest authorities is the scheme for a GRADUATED INCOME TAX. Whether the principle of sacrifice or that of benefits received be taken as the principle of taxation, the Graduated Income Tax is by far the most equitable. The question of the TAXATION OF LAND VALUES has been thrust into prominence within the past few years. Income from landed property is at present liable to Income Tax; but the proposal is that a special Land Tax be imposed upon

the value of land as annually determined. This tax might be imposed for national or for municipal purposes. The central idea is not that landowners do not bear a fair share, directly or indirectly, in national and municipal taxation, although this also is held by some; but that the increase in the value of land ought to belong to the community, and that special taxation is the simplest means of securing for the community this increasing value. The special point of attack is, however, the apparent escape of the ground landlord from local taxation. It has been the custom, in granting feus for an annual payment, for the superior to contract himself out of the obligation to pay local taxes. The possibility of devising a method which would prevent the landlord from thus contracting himself out of his obligation to contribute to local taxation must soon engage the attention of Parliament, and any scheme which will effect the object aimed at must necessarily secure the support of those who advocate radical reform in methods of taxation.

The NATIONALIZATION OF THE LAND, or rather the RESUMPTION OF STATE OWNERSHIP OF LAND has not, as yet, entered fully into the domain of practical politics. The advocacy of a policy of confiscation cannot be seriously entertained. Even if it could be carried out, it would inevitably lead to indescribable confusion and reaction. It is now, however, practically unquestioned that State ownership of land in a country like ours is not only advisable from the point of view of social well-being, but is practicable from the point of view of administration. The remaining question is one of finance. The conversion of existing rents into perpetual annuities would almost certainly turn out to be a financial blunder of the first magnitude; and even any conceivable amount of compensation might involve an annual payment, which alterations in the value of money might render ruinous to every one but the fortunate holders of land consols. If the expediency of nationalizing the land be admitted, the means of doing so without direct compensation will, no doubt, emerge. It might be arranged, for example, on the terminable lease principle. Since land held

under lease for ninety-nine years is saleable in the market for nearly half the duration of the lease at the same price as it would fetch if it were freehold land, no injustice would be done to existing holders of land, or even to their immediate descendants by the intimation that, say in the year 2000, or at an earlier period, on actuarial valuation, the land should revert to the nation. If such an arrangement had been made in the year 1800, the resumption to take place in 1900, no party in the State would have now viewed the prospect of State ownership of land with apprehension. A hundred years is a mere speck in the life of a nation. A change which, if immediately operative, might produce grave disturbance, might be projected forward with the certainty that the other elements in the national life would adapt themselves to the new conditions ere they came into effect.

The RESUMPTION OF STATE OWNERSHIP OF MINERALS rests upon substantially the same basis as the resumption of State land ownership, indeed it is necessarily involved in this. Short of complete resumption, however, it is proposed to impose a SPECIAL TAX UPON MINERAL RENTS OR ROYALTIES. This tax may be applied to local or national purposes, or to both. The arguments for the special taxation of mineral rents are the same as those for the taxation of land rents, with the added consideration that the exploitation of the mineral resources of a country are necessarily an exhausting exploitation. Sooner or later our coal will give out. The special taxation of mineral rents would be a means of securing for the nation a larger portion of the annual production from a source of national wealth which cannot continue to be indefinitely productive. The actual amount of the mineral rents, royalties, wayleaves, &c., in the United Kingdom, has never been precisely determined; but the royalties alone are estimated to amount approximately to £6,000,000 annually.

The policy of Indirect Taxation has for many years been abandoned by this country. The survivals of the system whose collapse followed the repeal of the corn

laws are the BREAKFAST TABLE DUTIES. The duties on tea, coffee, and cocoa amount altogether to under five millions. The sole attempt to justify the maintenance of the breakfast table duties is to regard them as a species of income tax upon small incomes; but one of the essential principles of taxation is violated in the tea tax—for its imposition involves a charge upon the people immensely higher than the produce of the tax. It is to be hoped that the next Liberal budget will get rid of the breakfast table duties as unnecessary and irritating items in the revenue.

From projects of reforms connected with state administration and taxation, we pass to similar projects connected with (*b*) the MUNICIPALITY. Those who remember the spirit and general tenor of MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION twenty-five years ago, and compare these with the spirit and tenor of municipal legislation now, will find a startling difference. The tendency of nearly all municipal legislation up till about 1870 was opposed to municipal enterprise. Public services of all kinds, monopolistic in their nature, were allowed to fall into the hands of private individuals and joint stock companies. The municipalities were supine, and statesmen were theoretically opposed to do at public expense and by public servants what they conceived might be as well done by private enterprise. Thus the supply of water, gas, the means of transport, and other public services, in their very nature the subjects of monopolies, came in many of the great towns to be owned and managed by joint stock companies. Private enterprise had its day, but at last the tide turned, and public enterprise, as regards public services, decisively took its place.*

Municipal debt is counterbalanced by municipal property. The gain in finance and in life has been incalculable. The doctrines of the Manchester school, involving the policy of non-interference, have been abandoned.

* Glasgow was among the earliest in the field. The water supply had been taken over from private companies by the Corporation in 1856, gas followed in 1869 and in 1891, land purchase and city improvement in 1865, municipal lodging-houses and dwelling-houses from 1871 onwards, tramway lines in 1870, and tramway transport and electric lighting in 1892.

The further extension of municipal functions is only a question of time. A general Act to empower municipalities to acquire land and conduct any affairs† under simple authorization by the Board of Trade, after public announcement and evidence upon the scope of their intentions, is much needed. The cost of special Parliamentary Bills for municipal affairs is enormous, and much of it is entirely unnecessary.‡

POWERS FOR THE COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF LAND FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES are urgently needed by municipalities, if they are to be saved from the extortion of urban landlords, and if the city is to be saved from constriction by the suburban landowners. Associated also with municipal administration is the reform of the LICENSING LAWS. The LOCAL VETO ON THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC has already acquired so great a hold upon the public mind that its passage in the next Parliament can hardly be matter of doubt.

The chief point for discussion in the question of MUNICIPAL TAXATION, is the incidence of taxation as regards ground landlord, property owner, and occupier. At present the ground landlord escapes local taxation, excepting in so far as he may be held to receive a less annual amount for his land in respect of his freedom from liability to the imposition of local taxes. A direct retrospective tax upon feu duties and ground annuals would necessarily fall to be paid by the owner of these; although where the landowner had a practical monopoly it would be possible, unless he were prevented by extremely careful provisions in the taxing Act, to contract himself out of his liability as he does at present. It is well fully to face the probable consequences of the imposition of a special tax upon land value. Such a tax might tend to reduce the capital value of land, as the tax might be regarded as liable to increase. If also a tax were leviable upon a valuation

† The amendment of the Tramways Act, 1870, to permit Corporations to run carriages on their own tramway lines, is one of the most urgently needed reforms.

‡ Since 1864, Glasgow has spent £268,851 in Parliamentary expenses. Nicol: Statistics of Glasgow, 1892, p. 174.

of unoccupied ground, this would tend, in the case of weak holders, to throw such ground into the market, and so for a time depress the price of land. Taken by itself, it might, however, tend to throw the ownership of urban ground especially, into the hands of strong holders, wealthy companies, trusts, and the like, unless there were a visible tendency towards the ultimate absorption of the whole increment in value, in which case there would necessarily be a wholesale clearing out of investors from property in land, and a consequent demand for investment in other forms. There is no doubt that this would produce an extensive change in the distribution of wealth; it would probably tend in the direction of its greater equalization, although this is a speculative question upon which it would not be fitting to enter here.

Among economic questions affecting the (c) FAMILY are necessary reforms in the Marriage Laws, especially those of England. The costliness and useless formality of the preliminaries to marriage in England are fruitful of much mischief. The simplification of these preliminaries is urgently demanded by those who are aware of the difficulties experienced by working men in relation to the legal formalities of marriage. Connected also with this are much needed reforms in the LAWS OF DIVORCE in the direction of rendering divorce less costly, and in rendering valid the marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

Associated also with the family is the question of how to deal with JUVENILE OFFENDERS and HABITUAL DRUNKARDS. A general Act for Scotland, dealing with this department of criminal law, ought clearly to be passed. Habitual drunkards, who are already costly to the community and injurious to their families, ought to be confined in asylums where they could be specially treated for alcoholism. Children under fourteen years of age ought by no means to be sent to prison. While the existing system of industrial schools is in many ways defective, they at least should form an alternative to the jail, with its indelible evil influences.

The most important of the class of economic-political questions which affect INDUSTRY is the question of REDUCTION OF THE HOURS OF LABOUR. Even the most reactionary would not now repeal the Factory Acts. They have not resulted in diminution of wages nor in quantity of production, and have resulted in visible improvement in the physique of the people. The question is as to the extension over the whole field of industry of the principle underlying the Factory Acts, viz., regard for human life as life. It was not to be expected that workers in factories alone were to be participators in the movement for the reduction of the hours of labour. The movement has spread widely, and ere long must result in a general measure or series of measures dealing with different industries in a discriminating and practical spirit. Among industrial questions of importance is the proposed AMENDMENT OF THE CONSPIRACY ACT OF 1875. Although the law on picketing has been laid down in that Act, and has subsequently been confirmed by the Superior Courts, there have been some contradictory decisions which render it necessary to make the law clearer, and to make it quite plain that picketing without violence is a perfectly legal proceeding. 'THE EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT has been largely ineffectual through the power which it leaves to employers to contract themselves out of the provisions of the Act. It is clear that if it is to be effectual at all, it must be made compulsory.

While all of these projects should be considered by electors in an intelligent and critical spirit, the general body of the electorate must see it to be their duty, as well as the interest and well-being of the people at large, to support whatever seems likely to give the people increased power over their own affairs, and whatever tends to make more efficient the working of the organisation of government, both national and municipal.

RADICAL PROJECTS. CONSTITUTIONAL.

- † Ireland—Home Rule. Scotland—Home Rule.
Parliament—† Reform of House of Lords.
† Electoral Reforms. Shorter Parliaments.
Amended Registration Laws. Second Ballot.
Payment of Election Expenses. Manhood Suffrage.
Payment of Members. Womanhood Suffrage.
† Church and State—Disestablishment.

ECONOMIC.

ADMINISTRATION.

- National*—Administrative Reforms in Army and Navy.
Adequate Provision for Secondary and Technical
Education.
Poor Law Reform. Secondary Education.
Municipal—† Powers to Purchase Land Compulsorily.
Powers to Run Tramways—Amendment of
Tramways Act, 1870.
Powers to erect Suburban Industrial Villages.
Powers to establish Agricultural and Industrial
Rural Communities.
† Local Veto upon Liquor Traffic.
Industrial—Compulsory Employers' Liability.
Amendment of Law of Conspiracy.
† Extension of Factory Acts.
Shortening the Hours of Labour—"A Practical
Eight Hours Day."

TAXATION.

- National*—† Special Taxation of Feu Duties and Ground Rents.
Special Taxation of Mineral Royalties.
† Equalization of Death Duties.
Graduated Income Tax.
Free Breakfast Table.
Municipal—† Municipal Taxation of Land Values.
Assessment of City Improvement Rates upon
Owners, arranged differentially according to
proximity of property to improved district.

The items marked † form part of the Newcastle Programme.

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