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GENERAL ELECTION TO BE FOUGHT IN FRANCE

No Outstanding Questions for Election—Personal Factor the Chief

Paris, April 18.—The general election which will take place on April 21, with second ballots where necessary, on May 8, is exciting remarkably little bustle or noise, or, indeed, controversy of any kind. Unless the unexpected happens between now and April 24, there can apparently be nothing to rouse the electorate. There is no party system in the English sense in France. There are nuances, and there are groups of which the most ardent are the extremes. Right and the extreme left, the so-called United Socialists. The right, in so far as it is Royalist, is a diminished and diminishing quantity, and on the other day the Dreyfusards, who were weakened by the furious quarrel which has broken out between the "Camelot" of the Dreyfusards and the Action Française, and the resigned aristocratic wing of the Orleanists represented by the Gaullists. As reported the other day the Dreyfusards received representatives of the Gaullists at Seville and cautiously, yet with sufficient clearness, condemned the noisy agitation of the Camelot. On every possible occasion in the course of demonstrations against the Republic at the street corners of Paris and of the provincial cities. The organ, the Action Française, has replied by the most virulent attacks upon the Gaullists and its proprietor and director, M. Arthur Meyer, has even accused him of being a traitor to the Republic. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the Royalists will lose to Republican candidates several of the seats which they still retain in Normandy, for example, once a Royalist stronghold, where they are already reduced to two deputies. In any case they do not count for political purposes save as a small parliamentary party with a few speakers of eloquence and ability who on occasion can focus the criticism of the Chamber and give it polemical point. As for the Socialist extreme left, M. Bismarck observed the other day, led by a premier who proceeded from the Socialist ranks, and he has from the Socialist extreme left, M. Bismarck and M. Viviani, who are declared Socialists. Effective polemics on the part of M. Bismarck and his immediate followers are in the circumstances difficult, and although the Socialist parliamentary party may not be diminished by the election, it is not likely to be very materially increased.

M. Briand

France is being governed by an essentially bourgeois cabinet and parliament. Majority groups are often condemned by writers of moderate opinions as the party organization as being extreme and demagogic. Yet in the circumstances of the day and the attitude of the majority is really moderate, and its policy is really great tact, moderation, and circumspection. M. Briand, who is undoubtedly the most skilled advocate of the day and who is appealing on business questions to a jury of business men. Not that the prime minister does not

commend all the forensic arts of the special pleader. But he also possesses the rare clarity of vision, and he is eminently the man of the hour, who eschews superfluous fireworks, and is manifestly working with a single eye to the prosperity and contentment of the country. In listening to his speeches in the chamber or on the platform one becomes convinced that he has succeeded in divesting himself of all personal vanity and self-consciousness, and that the glow pervading his measured eloquence is generated from the reasoned convictions of the republican patriot, which he interprets more affectively than any other spokesman of the majority. A French republican who wants to live in peace under the republic, to harass no one, and to be harassed by none, to go to church or stay at home if he pleases, to enjoy the most favorable conditions for the prosecution of his private business, and at the same time to feel that something is being done to ameliorate the lot of his less favored fellow-citizens—such an one constantly feels that his sentiments are extremely expressed by M. Briand; and the comment that is most frequently heard is, "Just what I was myself thinking." At the same time M. Briand is a hard worker and has surrounded himself wherever he went with hard workers. The execution of the Separation Law was a herculean task which on the whole he accomplished with conspicuous success and with the minimum of friction. That labor has settled his nerves for those conflicts and emergencies of the day with which he has constantly to deal as premier, and his capacity and resource were strikingly revealed during the period of the recent disastrous floods, when he placed himself beyond attack or criticism by the promptness and success of his measures.

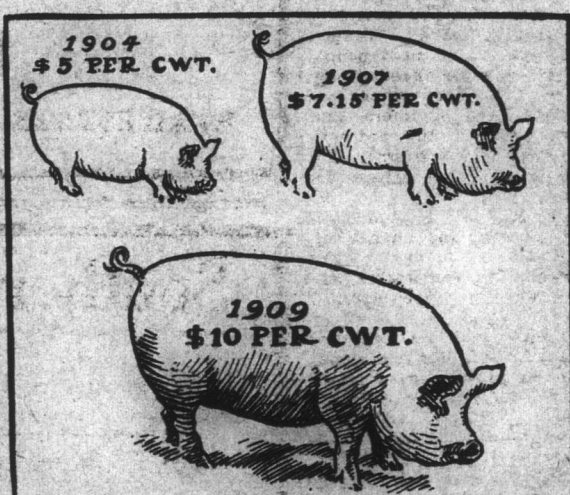
There is of course the malodorous Dreyfus case. But here, too, M. Briand

has disarmed his enemies by being able to point quietly to the fact that it was he who as minister of justice put his finger upon the plaque-spot and instituted a system of judicial examination and revision of the liquidators' accounts by which sooner or later the delinquents were sure to be brought to book. His record was quite clear. The nation saw at once that it was he who had spread the net in which these birds of prey were finally caught. The premier had no need to blow his own trumpet, and indeed, when the moment had foreseen arrived, he achieved a great increase of reputation without lifting a finger. Like Moliere on a famous occasion, when his calculations with regard to the successful development of an encompassing movement provided exact to the minute, he might have exclaimed, "Es stimmt!"—"Just so," or "Precisely."

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How prices have increased for the hog raiser

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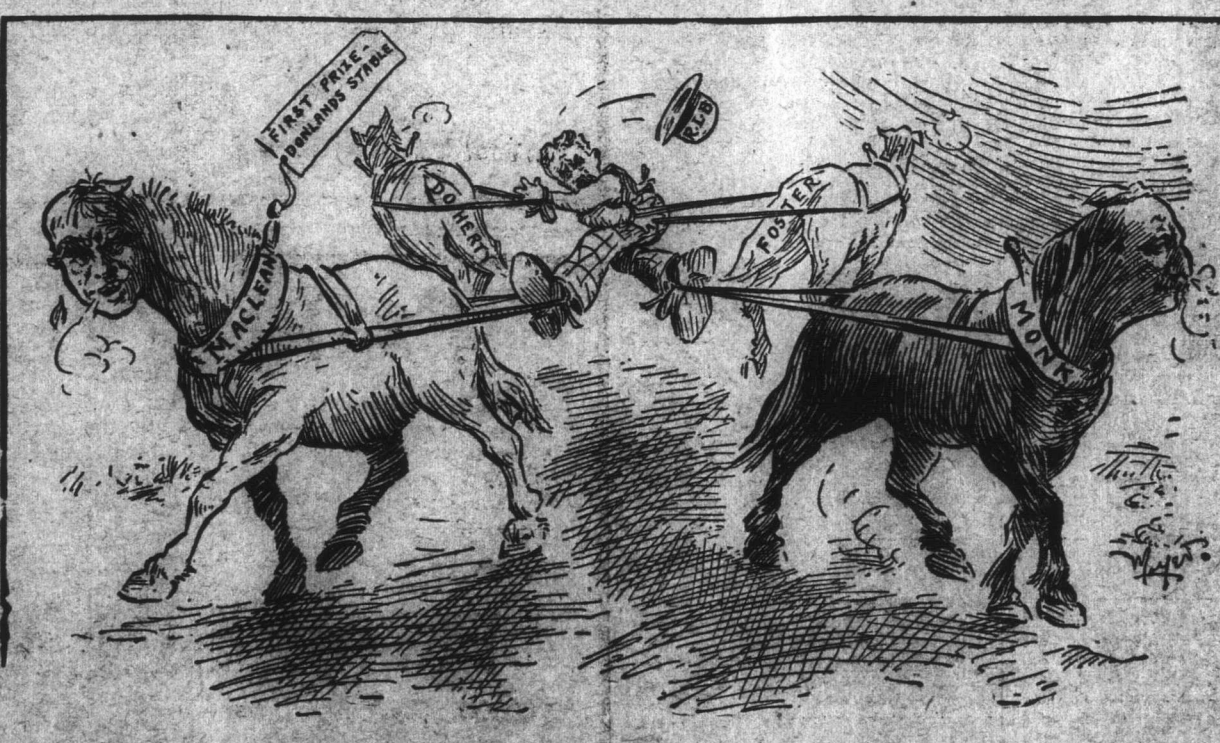
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