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MINERAL TAXATION.

No impost can be fairer in principle nor more justifiable on sound economic grounds than a tax on the profits of minerals and other natural resources.

which belong to the people by virtue of their right of eminent domain. It is natural, of course, that those who are to be assessed should enter objection, but in the case of the Cobalt mine owners and the others interested in the mining industry, the protest seems to have been both premature and belated.

add as that may be. Premature, because evidently they had not been taken to understand the true nature of the government proposal, and belated, because, although the initiative of the government has been canvassed for a considerable time, only at the eleventh hour has any formal complaint been offered.

Hon. Mr. Cochrane has given ample evidence of his desire to meet all reasonable suggestions, and of the government's desire that no protest be thrown in the way of mining enterprise in its earlier and non-paying stages. When its capacity is proved and its working becomes profitable, then a graded scale will come into force, the heavier impost falling on the larger money makers. To argue that a system of taxation of this kind can affect mineral development does not appear a tenable contention. Let us consider the mining industries are certain to suffer far more from an overload of speculative profits. Excessive speculation is the real bane of the working company, and every practical miner who wishes to bear a hand in the actual operation of the Cobalt, or any other mineral field should not only welcome a policy which would eliminate the element of speculative profit, but urge its formulation upon the government.

In the imposition of the tax Mr. Cochrane shows also an anxious desire to allow all the proper expenses of working. The regulations have been carefully framed and in accordance with his intention he will doubtless be prepared to consider and concede any amendment necessary to achieve that object. As The World indicated yesterday, concessions will also be made in favor of the iron industries in which Eastern Ontario is immediately concerned. The claims of the consumers of natural gas for domestic and manufacturing purposes will also be anticipated, by met by means of rebates. There is therefore no ground for any accusation that the government is not prepared to attach due weight to all representations made by the interests directly or indirectly connected with the proposed taxation. And not only will the provincial exchequer benefit, but the investing public will be in some measure protected from "wild cat" propositions. The elimination of this class of speculations may injure the speculators that travel in the wake of genuine mineral discovery, but it will assist legitimate mining enterprise. This is alone sufficient to justify careful government regulation and a reasonable contribution to the revenues of the province.

LONDON AND MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

Great efforts are being made by the opponents of municipal ownership to show that the result of the London County Council elections means a condemnation of that principle as applied to public service monopolies. As a simple matter of fact the issue in the elections did not turn on this point at all, since both the defeated Progressives and the victorious Municipal Reformers are committed to public ownership and operation of this kind. The World recently quoted from a speech delivered by Mr. R. A. Robinson, leader of the Municipal Reform party, delivered at a meeting of the late council, in which he especially declared that there was no intention whatever to let the street railways pass from the hands of

the council and especially so because there were now on a paying basis.

Speaking at a meeting held at Wandsworth, in support of the Municipal Reform candidates, Mr. Robinson again made the municipal reform position clear. He is reported by The Morning Post, itself a supporter of the Municipal Reform party, to have said "that he and his colleagues very much objected to the misrepresentations and mis-statements to which they were subjected. It was actually said that they were in favor of doing away with open spaces and of building over the parks. He wished to see the streets widened, their policy to sell or lease the trams (street railways). Mr. Robinson ought to know better. IT HAD BEEN THE SETTLED POLICY OF THE COUNCIL ON BOTH SIDES FOR YEARS THAT THEY SHOULD WORK THE TRAMS, IF THAT WORK WERE UNDERTAKEN WITH CARE AND WITNESS EXTRAORDINANCE. IT OUGHT TO SUCCEED MUCH BETTER THAN NOW."

Later on in the same address Mr. Robinson showed that what the municipal reformers were opposing was municipal trading on lines which brought it into competition with ordinary private business. This, as The World has repeatedly explained, is a conviction held by many public men in Britain who strongly support municipal ownership and operation of monopolies and it is a safe and sound proposition. Mr. Robinson condemned competitive municipal trading on the ground that it was risky and was taking the money which the ratepayer was obliged to pay and using it against his will, perhaps competing against him in his own line of business. This, he said, was neither fair nor to the advantage of the community. "They were not," he continued, "against proper municipal enterprise. Where there was a monopoly given by act of parliament, it was proper for the municipality to undertake the work, or exercise control over those who undertook it."

In the light of these emphatic declarations by the leader of the Municipal Reform party, World readers can judge for themselves regarding the attempts made to read into its success at the polls a condemnation of the principle of public ownership and operation of monopolies. Much of the press matter sent across the Atlantic comes indeed is not infrequently hostile to public ownership. As Mr. Robinson said in the same speech: "The real issue in the election, however, was one of finance and rates. London's rates and debts had grown enormously, and the elector now had a great opportunity of putting a check and a limit on that expenditure, and that without starving the public services or stinting education. The 'debts' or the 'capital' invested in a remunerative public enterprise adds nothing to the burden carried by the community. It is the unremunerative debt which creates the burden, and much of this in the case of British municipalities has been compelled by the requirements of the central government. Here and in the limitation of municipal enterprise to proper public services lies the justification for the municipal reform campaign and to represent it as directed against public ownership and operation of monopolies is directly contrary to truth."

TRANSVAAL AFFAIRS.

Mr. Winston Churchill stated the other day that General Botha, the first premier of the Transvaal, would not attend the colonial conference. But for the work attending the initiation of a parliamentary regime, this intimation might be open to a more sinister construction than fairness requires meantime to be placed upon it when the constitution now put upon its trial was the subject of debate in the Imperial parliament. The under secretary for the colonies indicated that the result of the first general election would probably leave the British residents with a slight numerical lead. This forecast has, however, proved ungrounded, and would to all appearances have been so, although the labor party and other British elements had not joined forces with the Boers. As it is the latter command a straight majority in the elected chamber, and the wisdom of granting full responsible, as well as representative, government is thus subject to a crucial and decisive test.

No doubt the present form of the constitution provides certain checks upon the action of General Botha's government. The second chamber is meantime a nominated body with a British preponderance, but before another general election occurs, it must be reconstituted on an elective basis. Then the Imperial government has reserved the right to control all legislative and administrative acts affecting the black population—a precaution rendered necessary by the records of the treatment extended towards the natives by the Boers in their unfettered days—and has also limited the right to sanction eastern colored immigration. General Botha has declared himself not to be hostile to the Rand mining industries, although his lieutenant, Mr. Smuts, is known to be a bitter opponent of Chinese coolie labor, and it is not likely, therefore, any immediate cause of disagreement will occur over this question. Nevertheless, the situation is not free from anxiety, since everything depends on the attitude of the Boers' majority and the capacity of the premier and his government to formulate a broad, fair and loyal policy. It is unquestionable

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP LEAGUE.

I approve the formation of a public ownership league and am prepared to give the movement my earnest and personal support.

Name

Address

A good turn-out is expected at the St. George's Hall meeting on Saturday night to organize a Public Ownership League in South Toronto. It is hoped that two other local leagues will be got on their feet in Toronto next week.

Many have sent in their names to the organization committee. These will be assigned to the secretary of the local league, who will be in the meantime the public, who wish the movement success, are requested to send in their names to The World and they will reach the secretary.

Toronto Globe: "A public ownership league in Toronto will serve a useful purpose in curbing enfranchised corporations as well as in promoting needed extension of municipal authority."

One good work that can be done by those who are financially interested in the Hamilton Herald, is to disseminate truth and correct the carefully concocted falsehoods and half-truths circulated by interested parties on the subject of public ownership and management of public utilities. The Herald continues:

It is obvious that this principle must be disliked, and is sure to be opposed by those who are financially interested in public service corporations. It is to their interest that the belief should be spread that public management of such services is almost necessarily wasteful and incompetent, and is usually dishonest. They are sure to foster this belief, and to have in existence some organization to counteract these influences and in behalf of the general public, see to it that the case for public ownership is fairly and fully presented.

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At present, the favorite theme of the public ownership "knockers" is the alleged extravagance of two or three English municipalities in "municipal trading" enterprises. Certain members of the London County Council are triumphantly pointed to as evidence of the incompetency of public management. For example, some of the most extravagant comments are those made on the failure of the London County Council's steamboat enterprise to pay its way, but in a recent speech the Right Hon. John Burns boldly assumed the chief responsibility for the enterprise, declared that he was proud of his work, and predicted that in another year or two the Thames steamboat service will be a source of profit to the municipal government as well as a great convenience to the public. Even privately managed public services frequently fail to pay for themselves in the first year or two, and it is hardly fair to denounce publicly-managed service as a failure if it doesn't pay from the start.

However, there is no denying that some of the charges of extravagance, imprudence and incompetency against English municipal authorities are well founded. It is no doubt true that in some cases they have launched public service projects which might, better have been left to private enterprise. But it is equally true that the general principle of public ownership and management of genuine public utilities because some municipal corporations have made any number of mistaken applications of the principle. It would be to condemn private enterprise because of the business failures recorded in Bradstreet's.

Such a yard would render it impossible for housekeepers within a considerable distance around it to have white linen on her clothesline. It would smelt its coal gas with its smoke and odor, and by this early fulfillment of the pledge to grant full and free self-government, the Imperial authorities have done all that is possible to retrieve and confirm confidence. A confederation of the British South African states seems to be imperatively required in the interests of both British and Dutch, and it cannot come too soon.

RAILWAY YARDS IN DON VALLEY.

Editor World: It is not easy to understand why the cessation by the city authorities to the C.N.R. Company of that part of the Don Valley north of the Winchester-street bridge should not have been better ventilated among the citizens and the interests of the city more or less interested, but especially those who occupy the residential districts close to the east and west of that part of the Don Valley. The matter is such as every ratepayer in Toronto should be acquainted with, and in which he should have a voice, involving as it does the converting of a much-favored resort in land set apart as park land into a railway yard, and the nuisance, the effect of which would be to depreciate the value of real estate in the vicinity in a great degree, to make residence in such parts extremely undesirable, and to deprive the thousands, who resort to Riverside Park and its vicinity, of opportunities for recreation which the district under discussion now furnishes to hundreds and thousands during suitable seasons.

The matter under discussion is the fact that overtures have been made to the city authorities for the acquisition by the C.N.R. of the railway yard north of the "right-of-way" thru the above district as an entrance into the city. To that the city is entitled under the statute; but, together with that, it is proposed that at least 300 feet at the wider end of this district should become the property of the railroad corporation, and for what purpose? Not simply as a "right-of-way," for that would require only 60 feet at the outside, even for a double-track, but the statute is generous to a fault, speaks of 100 feet. For what purpose, then, without doubt, for yards similar to those for which Little York is used by the G.T.R., which corporation has been so considerate to our citizens as to keep such objectionable features in railroad yards at a safe distance from the homes of Toronto life. But not so the C.N.R., which has been, little by little, securing options to the north of the city limits at Bloor-street, until it has already covered over 100 acres for yard purposes. And now, forthwith! not satisfied with what it has gained, but with possible extensions to the north or northeast for necessary utilities, it seeks to thrust its contract of concession against the use of such for anything beyond the passage of trains in transit.

Let it have a "right-of-way," but let the city guard its contract of concession against the use of such for anything beyond the passage of trains in transit.

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