

14.9.23
AN ECONOMIST'S LABORATORY.

In the course of a lecture to the Liberal Men's Educational Association on Wednesday, Dr. Heaton said that foreign economists regarded Australia as a huge social laboratory. Enormous experiments had been started, but no one had remained to observe the results of those experiments. As instances of that he mentioned the maternity allowance. That he continued, had been inaugurated for the purpose of reducing mortality among mothers and infants, but nobody had bothered to see whether that result had been achieved. Similarly with the Federal land tax, which had been intended to break up large estates, yet no one had bothered to enquire whether that result had been achieved.

15.9.23
ITALY, GREECE, AND THE LEAGUE.

An Open Letter to Signor Mussolini.

By Professor Darnley Naylor.

"Small nations should not be allowed to murder the representatives of a big country."—Cable, September 8, 1923.

"To Signor Mussolini.—Dear Sir—You are reported to have spoken the sentence which I quote at the head of this letter. In my comment upon it, I desire to distinguish clearly between you and the Italian people. They must not be held responsible for a situation into which you and you only have dragged them. When they have time to reflect, they will repudiate your policy, and thank the nations in council who saved them from you and from themselves; for they are descendants of Cavour, Mazzini, and Garibaldi, and England does not forget the generous struggle for liberty which lifted Italy high among the nations. Let us consider what you have done to maintain that lofty reputation. In 1919 your country became party to the League of Nations Covenant. Italy undertook to carry out the provisions of that Covenant so long as she remained a member. Article I, allows any member to withdraw upon giving two years' notice of the intention to do so, always providing that such a member performs all international obligations up to the close of these two years. You have neither given notice of withdrawal nor have you performed your international obligations. On the contrary, because your representatives were foully murdered (and here you have our hearty sympathy) you at once threw all sense of justice to the winds; you assumed the guilt of the accused, and proceeded to exact a punishment much in excess of the wrong done, even were the wrong proved against him. That the crime was committed within Greek territory is not questioned. This is the misfortune of Greece, if Greece is innocent, and to assume innocence until guilt be proved is a sound practice. But what have you done? The accused comes to you with money and abject apologies, and you are offended because he demurs at being kicked downstairs. He begs you to take him into Court, and you accuse him of evading payment for the alleged crime. You refuse submission to any Court, and prefer to act like some cowboy in Arizona. But that is not all. When the Court is about to sit, you murder some relatives of the accused. Lynch law has become unpopular outside as well. But when lynch law is applied not to the accused, but to his innocent relatives, and those living in an island which has been neutral for 60 years, we begin to wonder whether the reign of public law can ever be established in Europe.

"Would Have Made Mazzini Stare and Gasp."

"Let me repeat—I distinguish clearly between you and the Italian people. You have reached your present position because men preferred autocracy to anarchy. When the country has to choose between a Saturninus and a Sulla, wise enough to retire into privacy. You will do well by your country if you imitate his example, as least so far as international affairs are concerned. You say that a big nation is not to have its

representatives murdered by a little nation with impunity. I do not at present ask what is the measure of greatness or littleness in a nation; but I do ask whether you imply that a little nation may have its representatives murdered by a big nation with impunity. If you mean that, then you are putting forward a theory of the rights of might which would have made Mazzini stare and gasp. But I pass over this to remind you again that your country is a member of the League of Nations, that under Article XII she has promised not to go to war with any other member until the dispute has been considered for at least six months by the Council or some Court of Arbitration, and after that until three further months have elapsed. Only then, under the Covenant, can you begin hostilities with your opponent. All these promises you have wantonly broken; and it seems now that your admirers rejoice because they have dealt a deadly blow at the League, whose wholesome methods you most solemnly undertook to support. I do not think your countrymen will ultimately feel that you have raised their reputation as a justice-loving nation in the eyes of impartial public opinion. If you have been saved from further mistakes of judgment (I use a mild phrase) you have largely to thank those nations who love your country best and who grieve to see how you have misled it in this crisis.

"Humiliation Enough."

"It is not too much to say that Greece has acted with proprietary in every particular. She has admitted, with deep regret, that the murders were committed upon her own soil. To a self-respecting people that is humiliation enough. Further, she has carefully avoided all possibility of collision, and has offered every satisfaction which could be expected from any nation that repudiates the name of slave. But consider further the position of this 'little nation.' Greece has just concluded a peace of shame with Turkey. She had been fighting in a war with you late enemy. She suffered cruel reverses while she vainly hoped for assistance from those whom she thought, rightly or wrongly, to be sending succour in arms and men. She has been robbed of territory which she had acquired by usucaption and (so she imagined) with

the approval of Europe. She was helpless and bankrupt; torn with internal dissensions; and, as a last straw, burdened with a million starving refugees from Eastern Thrace and Asia Minor. As she fought bravely against the combined onset of revolution, misery, and disease, some lawless bandits committed these murders, and this was the moment you chose for launching your ultimatum. Surely it would have become the leader of a 'big people' to seize the occasion for showing judicial calm, rather than unreasoning precipitancy. How high might you have stood in the estimation of the world had you accepted your misfortune which, I say, it once again, we all deplore) with the magnanimous dignity of a Roman, and had shown yourself merciful, just because your opponent was so weak and helpless. That you may still do so is the earnest prayer of those many millions who, outside Italy, wish your country well.

True and False National Greatness.

"But you challenged a definition of a big and a little nation. Is a big nation to be defined as such according to the extent of its territory, or the number of its inhabitants, or the size of its armies and navies? National greatness is not a matter of arithmetic; rather it is defined by honourable adherence to promises, by generous conduct towards the weak, by love of justice and fair play, and by respect for law and order. In all these things Italy enjoyed an enviable reputation until you arrived to rob her, not of her trash, but of her good name. Would you have me define a great nation by example? I will do so. I name little Sweden, who gave to the whole world a fine instance of loyalty to her word in the ready acceptance of an unwelcome verdict. Do you not envy the reputation of Mr. Branting? Do not your countrymen wish, in their heart of hearts, that you had followed his precedent and they might have been able to do what Sweden did—send you back to power, confirmed in your office by the goodwill of your own countrymen, and by the admiration of every law-abiding citizen in Europe. Still, it is not too late even now, and one may hope that better counsels will prevail, and that, though the eleventh hour has struck, you may yet become not merely the saviour of your country's reputation, but the defender of international order and of public right. Believe me, the old methods are outworn. Men have grown weary of senseless hate and primal vendetta. They are sick of Alexander of Germany's downfall has not been Anders, Attilas, and Napoleons. The Jesuits in vain.

An Appeal to Reason.

"England is and always has been your friend; now she risks your enmity rather than sacrifice the hope of setting up reason and justice in international relations. Our English poet, who loved Italy with a passionate love, wrote that peace hath her victories no less renowned than war, and (for he knew Greek) by 'no less' he meant 'much more.' In the end, you would be the gainer through helping Europe out of anarchy; but if you prefer the glamour of a momentary success to the permanent satisfaction which restraint and moderation would afford, then you will go down to history as one who, like Galba, was by common consent equal to empire, had he never been emperor, and you will enjoy the doubtful honour of having opened the sluices which may sweep away the remnants of European civilization. Your country gave a home to one delicate spirit, whom we exiled because he loved freedom and justice and idealism. At this hour Shelley calls to you. Listen to his voice:—

O cease! must hate and death return?
Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy!
The world is weary of the past—
O might it die or rest at last!

"P.S.—One of your own ancient poets wrote that Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit ('Greece, conquered Greece, her conqueror subdued, and Rome grew polished who till then was rude.') He referred to literature, but the words, to-day, are true in the sphere of ethics. You may yet learn to cry vicisti, Graecule. Meanwhile, I note that in July of this year nine Greek doctors succumbed to typhus as they tried to stem the disease which was claiming 500 infant victims a week in Western Thrace. Here is an opportunity for a 'big' nation. Will you take it?"

15.9.23
Advertisement

Dr. Herbert Basedow has been asked by the Commonwealth authorities to conduct a party, consisting of Federal Ministers and the Commissioner of Federal Railways (Mr. N. G. Bell) to Central Australia.



Dr. H. Basedow.

tralla. When in Adelaide last week the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) announced that the Minister for Works and Railways (Mr. Stewart) would proceed shortly to the Macdonnell Ranges in connection with the North-South railway, and that upon Mr. Stewart's return a definite decision would be arrived at.

MR. HAROLD WYLDE'S ORGAN RECITALS.

From "PARNASSUS":—Through The Register I would like to express my very great appreciation of the organ recitals given by Mr. Harold Wyld on Thursdays in the Elder Hall. Mr. Wyld's ability and prowess as a musician are well known, and for the 40 minutes from 1.20 to 2 o'clock music lovers who attend the recitals are lifted above the monotony of their work, and experience the joy and privilege of hearing a master musician play on an exceptionally fine organ. Lovers of true music now in the city could not spend the hour better than be present at the recital on Thursday. The Elder Hall is next to the Exhibition, and easily accessible.

15.9.23
WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE.

A FORESTRY REVIVAL.

11.—By the President S.A. Branch Forest League (Sir William Sowden.)

Prison Labour in Forestry.

With the advantage of official introductions from our own Government, and the zealous guidance of skilled and experienced officers placed at my disposal by the Dominion Prime Minister, I inspected recently some of the principal forests of New Zealand, and enquired particularly regarding the application of prison labour to forest operations. There seemed to be no difference of opinion about the benefits thus conferred upon the prisoners themselves through the substitution of open-air work in pleasant surroundings for the closer confinement of a gaol, but there was diversity of view concerning the economic gain derived by the State from such labour in relation, at any rate, to forestry other than that connected with the planting of new areas. Where prisoners were engaged on created forests there was a duality of control—the discipline of the prison and the general management of the forestry department. Sir Francis Bell, a pioneer forester and an enthusiast in forestry during many years past, believes strongly in the prison labour system; but most of the officers of both the forest and prisons departments contend that such labour is best applied to roadmaking, and for that and other reasons the employment of prisoners in tree-planting has ceased for several years. The Controller of Prisons, however, is considering whether prisoners may not profitably be engaged in putting forest trees upon a large expanse of land granted recently to the State in the North Island by a Maori chief—volcanic land, which is composed mainly of pumice and shingle, and is useless for any other form of cultivation. The Controller of Prisons (Mr. C. E. Matthews) testifies that roadmaking by prison labour has been completely satisfactory. With reference to the placing of prisoners on forests, he does not suggest that they do no work efficiently. His special point is that "the men got no further forward by merely digging thousands of holes for trees—a task which they could learn to perform in a few minutes without any permanent advantage in connection with subsequent occupations." The roadmaking prisoners, by the way, are not required to submit to a gaol haircrop, or to wear a broad-shouldered garb, or any other distinctive form of clothes; and, although they are locked up at night, they have a large measure of liberty, which they hardly ever abuse. They are paid about 9d. a day as a special wage, and thus accumulate a fund which is useful on their discharge. Escapes are of rare occurrence, and some of them are made in an unaccountable and unreasoning manner. At one roadmaking camp which we saw a prisoner had broken away from control the day before that of our observation, although he had only a fortnight to serve and was entitled to draw about £70 earned during his imprisonment. The Government did not over-exert itself, in such circumstances, to secure his re-arrest! On a large reserve of timber, when prisoners worked in the forests, one of their number was placed in control of the sawmill, and performed his tasks without giving the slightest cause of complaint. My opinion, based on the evidence offered, is that forest work can well be done by prisoners properly trained; but that, in the very nature of the occupation, it cannot absorb many of them. Those more favoured than the majority in this respect would find the forest life specially congenial and safe, as it would not bring them again into contact with dangerous associations in the cities which witnessed the downfall of most of them. As a matter of fact, the prison labour in New Zealand was confined chiefly to the planting of exotic trees on new ground.

State Enterprises.

Recently an official document issued in another State expressed the unfounded opinion that that State had been the Australian pioneer in national forestry operations. This honour is probably due to South Australia, which had a forest department as early as the year 1876. In the period which has passed since that date £530,000 has been spent upon our State forests, and £304,000 received from them as revenue. The present annual outlay in all departments is about £40,000, and the