

THE BROKEN HILL WAR.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—By sending armed forces to the assistance of the mineowners at Broken Hill the New South Wales Government seems to have placed itself in the unenviable position of a Government aiding a section of the community under its jurisdiction to break its laws. It is freely stated that the existing strike among the miners has arisen in consequence of the mineowners refusing to comply with the terms of a proper legal contract made by them with their employés for a valid consideration. As this statement has never been contradicted, it must be considered as a fact. Now, the bedrock of the law of obligations is that any person who enters into a legal contract is bound to comply with its terms. Therefore, he who breaks a contract which he has the power to perform breaks the law. If my reasoning is correct the mineowners have, by their actions, broken the law of which the miners are entitled to the benefit. All the miners ask for is the proper observance of an arbitration clause contained in the agreement. When the great shearing strike was on many men left their employ under the impression that a certain clause in their agreements stipulating for their right to cease work at any time they should be called out by their Union was valid. They were, however, gaoled for deserting their hired service. In the mining strike, on the other hand, there seems to be not even a suggestion that the mineowners are in the right. They clearly appear to have broken the law, and the New South Wales Government as clearly appears to be aiding and abetting them in its breach. If it was just for the Government to gaoil a number of shearers for breaking the law of obligations, how can it reconcile its present action in supporting a breach of the same law by a gang of employers? But apart from the rights or wrongs of the contesting parties, the whole trouble lies at the door of an iniquitous system of land tenure, which is now pretty well understood by the masses.

The State is the natural proprietor of the right to work the mines, but, for some reason, the trustees of the State have yielded up that right to private persons, who, after the manner of landlords, have established a tyranny over all residing within the vicinity of their monopoly. The consideration received by the State for the surrender of its rights may have been large or it may have been small, but no matter how large it was, it will never be a sufficient

compensation for the trouble and expense which the Government must constantly incur in stamping out the rights of the toilers in the interests of the monopolists. Until the mines are worked *by* the State and *for* the State there never can be peace at Broken Hill. Suppose even that all the present strikers were to go away and leave their successors free to work unmolested, such a course could do no more than create a temporary lull in the war between the exploiters and their slaves. Those who are now styled free laborers are bound in their turn to be goaded into rebellion, and history will repeat itself, as it always does. The first thing to be done to bring about a better order of the social system regarding monopolies is to put into Parliament none but those who have either Single Tax or Socialist views. The day of the man with a stake in the country who is too prejudiced to listen to or master the details of the social problems now so generally discussed is drawing to a close. What the country wants in Parliament is *men*. Social reformation can then be expected to take definite shape.

I am, &c.,

H. S. TAYLOR.

Yarrowonga, September 21, 1892.

[We have been forced to reduce this letter in order to find room.—Ed.]

"A PLEA FOR UNITY."

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—The great body of the people in Australia have wasted too much of their time by neglecting to pay earnest and sober attention to political and social questions. But trying circumstances have begun to press heavily upon them at last. I was thankful when I saw "A Fabian Socialist's" letter in last PIONEER, also a letter to the same effect lately sent to you from E. Parry. The National Defence League is already a great power, and I am not afraid to say that they will carry almost every seat before them at the next general election in South Australia—at least unless we will unite. Why not? They are strong because they are UNITED. They have the wisdom of the serpent. Quite right, too. That the working man always has been and is now practically his own enemy is true. Who have been during the present century his truest and most faithful friends? Are we, as land reformers, not they? But will the Trades Unions join us as land reformers? There are thousands of good, able, educated men amongst the different sections of reformers, or

amongst the Fabians, Free traders, Single Taxers, and the advocates of a just and a moderate tax on land values, who are only too ready to join hands with the Trades Unionists, or, I may call them, the Labor Party. Here is the danger, calling themselves Labor Party. Why can't we unite and adopt one standard to fight our great enemy? The landowners and the capitalists of Australia are thoroughly satisfied so far as they see us here, torn asunder into such fragments. Why can we not establish one strong, powerful daily newspaper in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane? Such daily organs supporting our own reforms would daily teach us all how to conquer our enemy. What we want is a powerful educating newspaper to teach those who are not on our side. In this way we can train and lead our army to victory through the polling booths. Parliamentary control and power to pass just laws is what my dear friends at home are arising for, and they are on the safe way to win such power. Strikes are what the capitalists and monopolists want, and not constitutional weapons. Let us sink petty differences, and be heart and soul in earnest. Let a fund be started and get the trades unionists to take advantage of the powerful help which no doubt will be offered to them, and each unionist, as well as each of us in the other branch of the same one-made organisation should become shareholders in such a newspaper, and the other colonies invited to do the same, and many wealthy Liberals at home will help us in our work, and with able weekly letters from such great men as John Burns, Michael Davitt, and Thos. Burt, members of the House of Commons, upon the political and social advancements at home, a profound impression would be made upon the people of Australia. The leading articles, almost brutal, which have appeared in the Adelaide press and the unfair accounts of the Broken Hill strike should convince every honest man of the urgent necessity of a daily press of advanced views, but not a class press on any account.—I am, Sir, &c.,

RADICAL.

Caltowie, September, 1892.

[Scarcity of space has obliged us to reduce your letter.—Ed.]

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