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THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

The voice of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was raised last Saturday at Edinburgh, for the world must be reminded that the threat of the Liberal party to abolish the House of Lords or maim it beyond recognition is to be carried into effect. Meanwhile, the evil day is put off, at least until January, when the Premier will again descend from his Highland seclusion and Mr. Winston Churchill will return from Africa, no doubt with vigour unimpaired, to renew their attack on the bogey of the Radical press. It is time the fact was more generally recognized that the Government has been using the House of Lords as an instrument of party warfare, that it has endeavoured to force its hand by the menace of popular disfavour, that it has thrust upon it measures of singular complexity, and for the peers themselves of singular importance, at a stage in the session, and in a manner, quite unwarranted by precedent and quite unjustifiable in principle. The admirable amazement of the Radical newspapers when the House of Lords refused to pass a few measures in toto or had the temerity to reject them absolutely, is only equalled by the obstinate repetition of the minatory phrases by which Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman attempts to replace the want of a substantial scheme of reform that shall at once be significant to his followers and acceptable to the peers. The Small Landholders Bill and the Land Values Bill are again to be sent to the House of Lords, yet whatever the result may be, the grand issue must go to the country. The nation would never tolerate that the country should be governed by men who were not of its own choice. The House of Commons, indeed, was being made the subordinate Chamber and its decisions were treated as of no account; the will of the Commons, as expressed through the people, must prevail.

In speech after speech Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has repeated the same phrases, which might well be taken from an elementary text-book on the subject, without determining their precise character or application. We know, it is time, that within the limits of a single Parliament the will of the House of Commons is to prevail; that may imply nothing or it may imply rather more than the thin end of the wedge; but we confess we do not understand the grounds on which the premier bases his general attack on the Upper Chamber. A general attack, one would have thought, must be supported by general instances, not by isolated examples of differences of opinion during the two sessions in which the country has been under the guidance of the Liberal party. In one and the same breath, the various members of the Cabinet, at the close of the last session, congratulated the country on the beneficial measures that had been passed, and condemned with unqualified bitterness of phrase the obstructionary tactics of the peers. The same House of Lords which had given its consent to the large mass of liberal legislation was a national evil, because in the case of the Small Landholders Bill it had postponed for a few days its judgment on a system which has already proved fatal in Ireland, which is opposed by men like Lord Rosebery and Lord Lansdowne, and which is distasteful to the bulk of Scotch tenant farmers themselves. Although Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman may talk of appealing to the country, we are certain that no audience, however prejudiced or ill-educated, would allow itself to be convinced by isolated instances of this kind that the time for fundamental reforms is at hand. The House of Lords is not perfect. There are many points at which reform could be introduced, but those are not the points which determine its place in the Constitution. The constitutional aspect of the House of Lords, its well-balanced power of veto, is precisely what renders it so unique and so valuable. Here is the one English political institution which the constitution framers of other countries have been unable to copy even in form; for the House of Lords is not an edifice, but a growth. It has grown with the other parts of Constitution, and while adapting itself to them, has supported and strengthened them; it has grown with the social and political development of submerged classes; it has grown vastly in

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its aims and sympathies; but it has not lost, what is most essential to its character, that sane and stable outlook on the changing forces of politics and society which justifies, and more than justifies, its existence as a Second Chamber. Let other countries where liberty is constitutionally "guaranteed" but legally inconvenient, dabble in Second Chambers as a matter of experiment. The British nation owes too much to the House of Lords and expects too much from it to cripple its functions for the sake of a party manoeuvre.

PERSIA AND THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION.

A telegram from London states that according to reports received from Teheran the Commission of the Persian Parliament, which was deputed to examine the terms of the Anglo-Russian Convention, will submit an Address to the Ambassadors of the respective Powers. In the Address it is stated that Persia reciprocates the friendly attitude of the two Powers, but that she was not subject to any control in the matter of granting concessions to natives or foreigners. It is further asserted that standing concessions are to be observed.

AMERICAN NEWS.

LINER STRANDED.

A telegram from Virginia states that the liner "Kentucky", of the United States, was stranded on Tuesday at Lambertspoint (Virginia). Attempts are being made to float the vessel with the help of tugs.

MR. CHARLEMAGNE TOWER'S SUCCESSOR.

A RUMOUR DENIED.

The rumour that Mr. Secretary Robert Bacon is to succeed Mr. Charlemagne Tower at the American Embassy at Berlin is officially denied from Washington.

MR. HEARST'S GERMAN FOLLOWING.

A telegram from Boston states that several hundred delegates of the German-American National Union, who had made an excursion there as the guests of Mr. Hearst, visited Harvard University and the German Museum. The President of the Union, Mr. Hexamer, cabled to the German Emperor, expressing the hope that the bond between the old and the new Fatherland would continue as before. A similar telegram



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was despatched to Mr. Roosevelt. An interesting ceremony took place at the Museum at which complimentary speeches were exchanged with the University authorities. In the afternoon the delegates were received by the Governor of Massachusetts.

MASKED ROBBERS HOLD UP A BANK.

£100,000 CARRIED OFF.

New York, October 7.

An audacious robbery is reported from the town of Sedden, Alabama. Four men, completely masked, entered the local bank on Saturday and made a clean sweep of everything of value.

As they were coming out of the building they were observed and pursued by a number of workpeople. The robbers were well armed, and after keeping the crowd at bay with their revolvers and shooting the Sheriff dead, succeeded in getting into a dog cart and escaping.

The value of the securities and bullion stolen is estimated at half a million dollars.

UNITED STATES AND CUBA.

New York, October 7.

The railway strike in Cuba, which, according to the latest telegrams, may possibly be settled to-day (writes the New York correspondent of the Globe) has raised in an acute form the question of the responsibility of the United States Government, under the existing state of affairs, towards foreigners who have interests in the island. As is well-known, the bulk of the capital invested in the Cuban railways is British, and since the present provisional government of Cuba leaves the United States answerable, in the last resort, for the stability of affairs in the island, the dislocation of business and the consequent disappearance of railway dividends which might be caused by the proposed introduction of strike-breakers from the States, might very conceivably bring about an appeal to the British Government which would naturally cause embarrassment to the authorities in Washington.

Thus the question is raised, and is again being discussed, as to whether the present unsatisfactory arrangement under which the provisional government of Cuba controls affairs to some extent, but merely saddles the Washington Government with increased responsibility, should be allowed to continue, seeing that it is fraught with possibilities of complications with Great Britain. It is suggested that it is quite time the position of the island was regularised, and the provisional arrangement made into a permanent one. This, of course, is the beginning of a revival of the discussion as to the advisability of annexing Cuba, or, on the other hand, rendering it completely independent of the United States.

Although the situation in the Philippines is not quite parallel with that in Cuba, it is like it in so far as it is still the cause of fierce disputes as to the policy of retaining the Pacific islands. As was stated two days ago in these messages public opinion, speaking generally, is opposed on patriotic grounds to the sale or cession of the islands. This fact has, of course, considerable effect on the attitude of the Administration towards the question, but another circumstance which may now be referred to has perhaps a still greater tendency towards deciding that the Philippines shall remain in the possession of the United States. This is the fact that the Filipinos themselves—and even the anti-American leaders—are not prepared to pay anything for the restoration of the islands, and even demur to the suggestion that they should refund the 20 million dollars that were paid for them to Spain. Moreover, even the anti-Americans are constrained to admit that it would be well for the Filipinos that the United States should remain in possession, until they have placed the finances of the islands on a firm basis. That is the crux of the matter. American occupation means comparative stability of finances; and for the benefit of both the Filipinos and the United States, which has spent so much money on the islands, it is desirable that the present state of affairs should remain.

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