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# The Daily Record

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## THE NEW BRITISH PREMIER.

There can be no party in England which does not welcome the choice of the King in calling on Mr. Asquith to take up the reins of government as the best choice which it was open to him to make. In a sense, that choice has been inevitable. Since Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's indisposition assumed the grave aspect which necessitated his withdrawal from an actual share in public business, the responsibilities of the Premiership have, in fact, rested upon the shoulders of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and it has been clear that he has borne them in a manner that left no question as to his fine ability. But ability, however, magnificent, is not Mr. Asquith's sole claim to the high position he has been called upon to fill; he embodies to a very full extent the solid, conservative elements of his party's faith; he could be claimed alike by broad-minded Liberals and broad-minded Conservatives. He is not a Home-Ruler; he is not in favour of the movement against the House of Lords; he is a staunch Imperialist; and, if he is not a Tariff Reformer, he is, at all events, guilty in good company. To his Licensing Bill most Conservatives, and many Liberals, must find themselves opposed, and if it is the case, as he declared at the dinner given to Lord Swaythling the other day, that the Government mean to persevere in it with unabated zeal, it must certainly tend to weaken his popularity in the country. On the whole, however, Mr. Asquith has the confidence of his party, and his opponents are glad to accept him as an upright and worthy enemy.

The question which will everywhere be asked is, how far the change in the leadership of the House of Commons is likely to affect the political programme of the Liberal party, or how far the aspirations of Unionists are likely to be deferred by the new conditions of the contest. In a word, will Mr. Asquith be able to hold the party together? The answer depends upon several considerations. In general terms, the Government are pledged to a wider scheme of political reconstruction than Mr. Asquith has declared himself ready to approve of. They are pledged more definitely than they care to admit, even to themselves, to Home Rule—by inches in practice, fully in theory; they are engaged upon two unpopular measures which are also measures of the first magnitude, the Education Bill and the Licensing Bill; they are encountering opposition to many measures of minor importance; and in their crowning effort against the House of Lords they run a danger of outraging the common-sense of the nation. How much will turn on

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the scheme of Old Age Pensions which is to be incorporated in the Budget it is impossible to predict; but, in view of expert opinion on the subject, the probability would appear to be that between the dissatisfaction of the recipients, since the scheme is hardly likely to be non-contributory, and the reluctance of the legislature to embark on dangerous enterprises, the measure will meet with severe handling.

On these things much must depend; but we are misconceiving the mainsprings of English political life if we put too small a value on the personal influence exerted by the Premier himself. It has been observed that not the least remarkable feature of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's last few weeks in the House of Commons was the influence of his personality on an angry Opposition. Where his lieutenants were unable to satisfy the demands of their opponents a word from the Premier, though it added nothing to what had already been said by other Ministers, produced an entirely contrary effect through the exercise of sheer personal authority. We do not claim the capacity of soothing the Opposition as the highest requirement of statesmanship, except in so far as this capacity indicative of the kind of power on which successful statesmen have always relied, in addition to the more technical accomplishments of office. Mr. Asquith, especially of late, has had occasion to give proof that he is not wanting in personality, and it must be agreed that he has acquitted himself more than creditably. His lucidity and common-sense commend him to all men who love straightforwardness in politics. As Dr. Jowett said of him at Balliol, "Asquith is sure to get on; he is so direct." Will this quality stand him in as good stead in the House of Commons as it undoubtedly will in the country? Will it be sufficient to knit together the divergent views of his colleagues? If it is to do this, concessions, which will appear to outsiders like sacrifices, will have to be made; whole portions of the

old programme will have to be abandoned; or else Mr. Asquith, yielding to the pressure of the majority, must place before the country views which have never been his own. But that assumption is belied by the character Mr. Asquith has borne among friends and opponents. His period of power will be no easy one; and, for his own sake and the sake of Conservatism, we wish that it may be successful. He is so exceptional a Liberal that it would be no exaggerated compliment on the lips of a Conservative to desire him on the Conservative side.

## GENERAL NEWS.

### NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

#### KING EDWARD'S SCANDINAVIAN VISIT.

With reference to the coming visit of King Edward and Queen Alexandra to Denmark, it is officially stated from Copenhagen that their Majesties will be accompanied by the Countess of Antrim, Lady of the Bedchamber, Miss Knollys, Lord Althorp, Lord High Chamberlain, Earl Howe, Lord Chamberlain to Her Majesty, Lord Farquhar, Lord in Waiting, Sir Charles Hardinge, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, General Sir Stanley Clarke, Sir Francis Laking, and Colonel Ponsonby. The following persons will be attached to Queen Alexandra's suite during her Majesty's stay: Countess von Ahlefeldt-Launvigen and M. Oxholm, Count Frijs zu Frijsenborg, Lieut.-Col. Engelbrecht, Capt. Grut, and Lieut. Count Blucher, of the Royal Hussars, will be attached to King Edward's suite. On Thursday, the 23rd inst., there will be a gala performance at the Royal Theatre.

#### THE NEW PREMIER.

On Thursday morning Mr. Asquith had two short interviews with King Edward at Biarritz. He left at noon by the Sud Express on his return to London. Wishing to take advantage of the sunny weather, and to obtain a little walking exercise, Mr. Asquith started on foot for the railway station, but the King's motor car, which had been placed at the Premier's disposal, picked him up on the way and conveyed him to the train. He was accompanied by Lieut.-Col. Ponsonby. Mr. Asquith conversed amiably with several persons who had gathered at the station to see him off.

The official announcement of Mr. Asquith's appointment as Prime Minister appears in the *Court Circular*, as follows:

(Continued on page 2.)

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