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ENGLISH POLITICS.

The forecasts repeatedly made in the London correspondence of the *Daily Record* in regard to the imminence of a General Election are, it appears, likely to find startling confirmation. The telegrams we have published during the last day or two have been significant in the extreme. To Balmoral have been summoned Lord Rosebery, the Earl of Cawdor, and the Prime Minister, and now—ignoring the semi-official denial—Lord Lansdowne, all of them men intimately concerned in the grave Constitutional crisis which has indirectly been brought about by Mr. Lloyd George's disputatious financial proposals. These successive audiences can have only one meaning, namely, that the monarch, for the first time in a generation, is endeavouring personally to conciliate conflicting parties for the ultimate good of the State. Bearing in mind the brilliant series of diplomatic triumphs in the cause of peace for which King Edward has been responsible, it is not too much to hope that his extreme tact and genius for smoothing over difficulties will find a neutral path along which the warring factions may walk in mutual amity,—for a time. That the conflict is very serious is distinctly proved by the commendable interference of the King. But the roots of the trouble are too deep for superficial painting.

The Liberal party, driven to bay in spite of its unwieldy majority, still retains enough talent for strategy to force on an appeal to the country at a moment when a splendid battle-cry presents itself: "Lords or People?" "Are the Constitutional liberties for which your forefathers fought and bled to be roughly trampled into the dust by an hereditary Chamber?" "Shall the nation revert to government by an oligarchy; must it tolerate tyrannical dictation from a small minority of selfish nincompoops?" An appeal such as this would eclipse the infamous "Chinese Slavery" libels in popularity among a large section of the voters. For the good name of English politics we sincerely hope that it will not be permitted to submerge the real factors in the contest. If, as we are compelled to assume, the Government's social, financial, and national-defence legislation has exceeded its mandate and imperilled the highest interests of the State, then Great Britain at this very moment is administered by an oligarchy quite as oppressive and infinitely more humiliating than the rule of the Peers. The House of Lords must always, to a certain extent, be restrained by dignity and weighty tradition, whereas, given favourable conditions, untrammelled demagoguery may thrive and flourish in the Commons. If the country is to choose between the absolutism of a Lansdowne or a Lloyd George, administration by a Cawdor or a Winston Churchill, there is little doubt as to which way the electoral cat will jump.

Granting that the General Election is a matter of days or months, it is hard to discover a capable leader for the Unionist party in the event of its return to power. Mr. Balfour, polished debater and experienced parliamentarian as he is, lacks the virile enthusiasm of the younger generation and is popularly supposed to be a man without strong convictions. Among his adherents there may well be more than one budding leader whom the psychological moment will bring to the front, but up to the present we must confess our inability to find any indications of such a prospective Unionist giant. The hour appears for once to be in advance of the man.

THE AUDIENCES AT BALMORAL.

The Press Association reports as follows on the latest developments in the English political crisis. The Prime Minister arrived at Balmoral on Wednesday morning in obedience to the summons of the King. The right hon. gentleman left King's-cross at eight o'clock on Tuesday night, and travelled by the East Coast route to Ballater, driving thence to Balmoral. The Premier travelled under the name of Mr. Herbert. He breakfasted in the station refreshment room at Aberdeen, where he arrived at 7.22 a.m. He was accompanied by his valet and attended by two London detectives.

Mr. Asquith's sudden call to Balmoral has created some excitement among politicians, and speculation was rife in the Lobby as to the actual significance



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of the summons. There was, however, general agreement that the Premier's journey was connected with the present political crisis created by the Budget. It is significant that it follows visits paid to the King by the Earl of Rosebery and Earl Cawdor. The Prime Minister's visit to the King can hardly be regarded as a sudden one, seeing that an intimation was given as far back as Friday night to the various members of the Cabinet that the usual weekly meeting would be held on Tuesday instead of Wednesday. That the visit is one of considerable importance however, is evident from the fact that, were this not the case, the audience would probably have been deferred until Tuesday in next week, when the King will have returned to London.

The first hint received by members was given in Mr. Redmond's speech, in moving his amendment in the Commons on Tuesday night. The Irish leader mentioned that he was aware the Prime Minister desired to speak early, as he had other engagements. It was suggested in the Lobby that such a compromise on the Finance Bill might be reached as would enable the House of Lords to accept the Budget and allow the course of political events to proceed without the interruption of a General Election. If an agreement could be arrived at between the parties this end could be achieved by amendments to the Finance Bill on the report stage, to be entered upon possibly next week in the House of Commons. It is doubtful, however, whether both Ministerialists and Unionists are not too strongly committed to their respective positions to allow such an arrangement to be made, the differences between the parties not being such as to be capable of adjustment by compromise.

NEWS OF THE WORLD.

We regret that pressure on our space in this issue compels us to hold over our usual Paris article until Tuesday.

In the House of Commons on Thursday, Mr. Dillon enquired of the Government whether they had given to Spain any assurance respecting that country's operations in Morocco, whether it was to be taken as a fact that Spain contemplated an occupation of Tetuan or of another important section of Moorish territory, and whether it was true the British Government had communicated to Spain the attitude likely to be adopted in such an eventuality. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. McKinnon Wood, replied that the answer to all three questions must be in a negative sense. Upon Mr. Dillon's enquiring as to whether the House would be consulted before the Government took any steps towards sanctioning an extension of the Spanish operations in Morocco, Mr. McKinnon Wood answered: "We have no knowledge of an intention on the part of Spain which is contrary to her treaty obligations, or which can in any way clash with the interests of Great Britain."

Several of the Parisian newspapers yesterday expressed their disapproval at the statements attributed to General d'Amade in regard to the Spanish operations in the Riff, and reproduced in yesterday's *Daily Record*. The *Temps* remarks that these statements can only be read with feelings of astonishment and regret. General d'Amade proves his complete ignorance of

the Franco-Spanish Moroccan agreements concluded in 1904 and 1905. Up to the present Spain has in no way gone beyond her rights. If General d'Amade demands that France should intervene without delay, the following question would naturally arise: Where, how, and against whom? Against Spain or against Mulai Hafid? France and the French people preferred to act upon specific advice, and under these circumstances the interference of General d'Amade was utterly objectless and regrettable.

A Paris telegram to hand yesterday stated that the War Minister had requested General d'Amade, who is at present staying at Montauban on leave, to give explanations of the declarations he made to the *Matin* regarding the Spanish operations in Morocco.

The New York *Herald* yesterday published an interview with M. Pichon, French Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which the Minister said that the d'Amade incident would soon be settled. If it was confirmed that the general had actually made the statements attributed to him, he would be severely punished. Spain had rigidly respected treaty obligations, and France viewed her Moroccan operations with perfect complacency.

A Melilla telegram states that the searchlight on the lighthouse of Lancello on Wednesday evening revealed several detachments of Moors belonging to the Beni Sitar army hiding in the bushes. As soon as they were detected, they opened a heavy fire against the outposts of Melilla. The Spaniards returned the fire and sent out a company to attack the enemy. The fight lasted one and a half hours, while all through the night a desultory fire was maintained.

According to cablegrams from America, there appears to be a likelihood of the excellent relations at present prevailing between the United States and Japan being disturbed in consequence of the agreement recently concluded between the latter country and China. The London *Morning Post* of yesterday published the following cable message from Washington: "There is hardly a doubt that the recall of Mr. Crane, the American Minister at Peking, to Washington to receive fresh instructions is due to the Chino-Japanese Manchurian agreement signed on September 4 at Peking. In State Department circles it is affirmed that strong protests will be raised against articles 3 and 4 of the Agreement, according to which all mines along the Antung-Mukden Railway and the main line of the South Manchurian railway, with the exception of the collieries of Fushun and Yuentai, will be operated as mutual Chino-Japanese undertakings; while Fushun and Yuentai will be worked exclusively by the Japanese, a certain share of the profits being paid over to China as compensation. The American State Department looks upon this concession as a direct infringement of the 'open door' promises, since Japan thereby receives mining privileges from which every other Power is excluded."

The Ottawa (Canada) *Free Press* stated yesterday that it was authorised by the Dominion Government to announce that in the next session the Canadian Parliament will be asked to grant the sum of 20 million dollars for the creation of a Canadian Navy, and a further annual sum of three millions for the development and maintenance of this force. If these demands are acceded to, as appears extremely probable, Canada will soon be in possession of a formidable naval force. Australia, at the present moment, is building several torpedo craft and cruisers, the contracts for which were placed with British yards. New Zealand is also to undertake the building of one or more powerful armoured cruisers. It is thus evident that the nucleus of an Imperial Colonial Fleet is rapidly taking shape.

The North German Lloyd has concluded an arrangement with Sir John B. Ellerman, Bart., owner of the Ellerman Lines of Steamers, City and Hall Lines, whereby a new co-operative system of transit between Europe and India is to be established. From now on both lines will issue through tickets to India at reduced rates. On one side passengers may embark on Lloyd steamers from Bremen, Hamburg, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Gibraltar, Algiers, Genoa, or Naples for Port Said and Suez, or from Marseilles or Naples to Alexandria; and on the other hand, may continue the journey from Port Said or Suez to Bombay, Karachi, Colombo, Madras, and Calcutta by the Ellerman boats, and vice-versa. Return tickets, allowing an interruption of the journey and overland transit across Egypt, are valid for two years.