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LORDS QUESTION EMBARRASSING

Asquith Government Must Soon Face Problem Of Forcing Through Programme Of Parliamentary Reform

WILL INTRODUCE VETO BILL EARLY

Securing Of Liberal Majority In Upper House Means Unwieldy Body Of Thousand Members—Alternatives

LONDON, Dec. 28.—With the approach of the new year and the close of the Christmas season, politics are again the all-absorbing topic. In the press and in all the political clubs speculation is rife as to whether the House of Lords will acknowledge defeat or will drive Mr. Asquith to the extremity of securing guarantees from the King for the creation of new peers to carry the parliament bill in the upper chamber.

It is generally recognized that all other business save probably the introduction of the Budget will give way to the Lords' veto bill which the government will bring forward at the earliest possible moment.

By this action the government secures the support of its allies, the Laborites and the Nationalists, who in order to secure a change in the law regarding the payment of Labor members and the passage of a Home Rule bill of some sort or other, will place their votes at the disposal of the Liberals.

Whether they will continue to extend support to the ministry when difficulties arise—as they are certain to do when the precedence of governmental measures is involved—is another matter.

Conservatives are prophesying that dissensions in the Nationalist and Laborite camps are only a question of months, and if these are not smoothed over the existence of the coalition is at an end.

What will happen it is impossible to foretell—another general election before the coronation is not to be thought of.

And yet, unless a second veto conference reaches an amicable agreement in the meantime no other solution suggests itself. It is not likely that Mr. Asquith will recommend the referendum, seeing that it is his opponents' proposal and that he had already denounced it in unmeasured terms.

A Thousand Peers

On the question of the creation of new Liberal peers, the Spectator says: "In the first place the new House of lords, which would consist of over a thousand members, would be excessively unwieldly. When it had to sit for the purpose of registering the decrees of the House of Commons, it would be difficult to find any place except Westminster Hall big enough to hold it. In addition to this question of size, there would be the strange anomaly that the House of Lords would be, as regards the Liberal party, in a position similar to that which the Liberals have always told us is so monstrous and disgraceful—namely, that one party should have a permanent predominance in that house. The House of Lords after the creation of the five hundred peers would be, at any rate, during the next ten years, a persistently Liberal house. For this then, as well as for physical reasons, some plan must at once be produced for filtering the House of Lords and reducing it to a body of, say, three or four hundred members at most.

"In other words, the creation of the peers would mean that the government must at once tackle the problem of House of Lords reform. They must put this thorny and exhausting question before the introduction even of the Home Rule bill. No doubt the Irish people would object to this; but in case of this kind even Mr. Redmond's commands would, we venture to say, have to be disobeyed. The scandal of leaving the House of Lords with a thousand members would be unendurable. It will thus be seen that the government, even though they have the power, have many very strong reasons for not wishing to dare the House of Lords to force them to create five hundred peers, and thus precipitate the question of the composition of the second chamber. The government would clearly prefer a compromise under which they could get the assent of the Lords to their bill without recourse to the wholesale manufacture of coronets."

Arrested in Seattle

TACOMA, Dec. 28.—Parmlee Spear, a prominent mining engineer of Vancouver, B. C., was arrested at the Olympus hotel today by the police at the request of Canadian authorities, who hold a warrant charging misappropriation of funds. No particulars of the case are unknown. Mrs. Spear and child left early this evening via Seattle for Vancouver.

Found Dead

MONTREAL, Dec. 28.—Amedee Ecrement, brother Arthur Ecrement, M. P. for Berthier, was found dead.

Flour For Japan

WINNIPEG, Dec. 28.—U. Suzuki, representing the firm of Suzuki & Co., Kobe, Japan, one of the largest importing and exporting firms in that country, is in Winnipeg to interview the big flour milling companies with regard to exporting large quantities of flour. He will compare prices and terms here with those of the United States and Australia before placing orders.

ILLEGAL FISHING

Two Japanese Fined For Operating In Departure Bay During Prohibited Hours

NANAIMO, Dec. 28.—The Dominion government fisheries steamer Alcedo this morning captured eight Japanese fishing boats that were caught fishing during prohibited hours in Departure bay. This afternoon the owners of the outfits were brought before Justice of the Peace Shakespeare, and Takashasi and Tanaka were each fined $35.

As none of the boats were showing lights, this fact was reported to Harbormaster Knarston and another fine was inflicted on this count in one case and a warning given to all.

Two of the outfits were able to prove that they were not fishing when the Alcedo came across them, although they were in protected waters, and all were warned against hanging round in the waters of the bay during prohibited hours.

WOULD TIE UP ITALY'S TRAFFIC

Railway Employees Threaten To Strike For Increase Of Wages — Unions Now Include Host of Members

ROME, Dec. 28.—Leaders of the railway employees declare their unions incude 146,000 members and that they are now ready to inaugurate a strike for an increase of wages.

They add that "sabotage" will be applied in such a manner as to ensure the complete success of the movement.

The government officials declare that they are ready to adopt extreme measures, including the militarization of the railway men.

EXPLOSION VICTIMS

Two Men Killed and Others Buried Under Heap of Slag at El Paso—Many People Are Hurt.

EL PASO, Texas, Dec. 28.—Two men are known to be dead, four others are believed to have perished, at least fifty men, women and children were injured, and a number of small houses were wrecked by an explosion of nearly 40,000 pounds of powder in a huge slag pile at the El Paso plant of the American Smelting & Refining Company today. Three men are still imprisoned. The dead and missing are Mexicans, and no accurate list of the names can be given.

Three tunnels had been bored in the slag pile by the El Paso and Southeastern railroad for the purpose of removing the slag from the road ballast. A premature explosion of powder in one of the tunnels where a gang was at work filling in back of the timbering, buried four men.

Foreman John Sykes, who was standing near the mouth of this tunnel, was blown twenty feet away, and suffered a broken collarbone and other painful injuries.

The shock of the explosion caused the slag to slip, blocking the entrance to the other two tunnels. Just how many men were working in these tunnels, is not known, but six were rescued alive and two dead bodies were recovered. Three men are imprisoned, but alive, and are pleading with rescuers to save them.

The four men buried in the tunnel where the explosion occurred, are most likely dead, as they have been entombed more than nine hours.

Tonight a steam shovel was placed in commission to assist in reaching those inside the tunnels.

"BATTLER" ISSUES A DEFI TO CHAMPION

DETROIT, Mich., Dec. 28.—Battling Nelson, who is filling a theatrical engagement here, said today:

"I will fight Wolgast just as soon as he is ready—any time and any place, for any amount of money.

'Luck made Wolgast champion. He doesn't own a punch, but he can take an awful lot of punishment.

'I was not in condition, and I knew I could not get into condition on February 22nd last. When they continued to demand a fight I put the figures so high that I never thought they would accept them."

GRAFT MICROBE AMONG LIBERALS

Opinion Expressed By County Court Judge Grant of Vancouver In Letter To Minister Of Customs

DOCUMENT READ AT INVESTIGATION

Members Of Party Profiting By Frauds In Importation Of Chinese—Disclaimer From Mr. Senkler

VANCOUVER, Dec. 28.—What was referred to as the patronage committee of the Liberal Association of Vancouver was brought into the limelight at the Chinese commission this morning, when J. H. Senkler, K. C., president of the association and chairman of the patronage committee thereof, was called as a witness.

Mr. Senkler repudiated telegrams sent in his name to Ottawa protesting against the suspension of Yip On, the Chinese interpreter of the department of customs, and against the issuance of a Royal Commission. He said the telegrams were sent by somebody else in his name while he was absent, and that he had written to Sir Wilfrid Laurier urging an investigation into Chinese immigration.

Another witness today was Judge Grant, of the county court bench.

Judge Grant wrote a letter to the minister of customs with regard to the appointment of a commissioner or commissioners to conduct the present inquiry. The following paragraphs are culled from that letter:

"We observe with great satisfaction the feeling of the Dominion government in deciding to appoint a commission to investigate alleged frauds in connection with the importation of Chinese through this port and Victoria. There is no doubt that there exists a large scheme to defraud the government, and that certain parasites of the Liberal government have profited thereby.

"I understand that these same parties are doing all in their power to prevent the appointment of a commission, but I trust that the government, which has done so much in the past to ferret out graft, will see that this also is looked into, and that the facts are made public, notwithstanding the high social and party standing of its perpetrators.

"The microbe of graft is evident in the ranks of the Liberal party in this province, and no serum is more effective than the light by way of a searching investigation."

At the end of the letter there was a postscript to the effect that the writer was known to the minister of public works and the minister of finance. The letter is dated November 14th.

Questioned by Mr. George E. McCrossan, counsel for the Dominion government, Judge Grant, said that he did not know personally the facts that were alleged in this communication.

"All I have is from certain old-time members of the Liberal party in this province, who knew these things before ever I came to the coast," he explained.

"Do these disclosures refer to the Chinese immigration?"

"No, not entirely. That letter really relates to fishermen's licenses and the Japanese element. For instance, in Nanaimo, I understand there is a provision that in the issuance of licenses the white man comes first and the Japanese may apply for the licenses that are left over. My information is that there are a number of men in Nanaimo who are not bona fide fishermen, who apply for licenses, sell them to certain enterprising men in Vancouver, who in turn sell them to the Japanese at a great profit."

The reference to the attempt to stop the investigation were also based on hearsay, said the witness. The only thing he could do would be to disclose the name of his informant, and that he did not propose to do.

VANCOUVER HANDS STANFORD SURPRISE

VANCOUVER, B.C., Dec. 28.—To the work of their honest forwards, who used every ounce of their strength when their backs were bent in the scrums, and who tempered discretion with dash in their dribbles in the open, the win of Vancouver over Stanford University yesterday by two goals and one try to two tries (13 points to 3) is primarily to be attributed, although the backs, by taking care of their scattered opportunities, also helped to put the issue beyond all doubt. The result can be written down as agreeably surprising, especially in view of the workout of Saturday, which, following on the test of the week before, was a most disappointing affair, four forwards who were regarded as first choices, being away.

Stanford back was not as well balanced as that of Vancouver. Dole and Cheda were always to the fore in the California rushes, but the pack did not work with that unity which was a feature of the work of the Vancouver forwards, each of whom made his presence felt, each taking his turn at heading a rush. For about thirty minutes after the start of the game, play was singularly free from scrums, the ball being dribbled back and forth with enterprise and energy, and the line-outs being marked with fairly clean work. At any rate there was not in the first half that frequency of scrumming which is customary when the ball is restricted considerably to the forwards, and which palls on the appetite of the spectator.

CORONATION CLOTHING

Crown Princes, Carpets and Chairs—Great Preparation for Coming Ceremony

LONDON, Dec. 28.—The work of preparation for the Coronation is proceeding apace. A splendid pile carpet, of remarkable and striking design, has been ordered for Westminster Abbey, and the weavers are to be Messrs. Templeton, of Glasgow. The foundation color will be royal blue, and the ornamentation will include emblems of the Order of the Garter and other heraldic devices. The pattern is on such a large scale that the design is only repeated or matched in every six and a half yards.

The general principle adopted for the seating in the Abbey is to dispense with fixed seats. Special chairs of Chippendale design, but with rush seats, were made for the previous Coronation. For the coming ceremony there will be Chippendale chairs of somewhat similar character, but with seats upholstered in silk.

Smaller chairs and narrow stools were supplied in hundreds, and were of unpolished beech, with cane seats. Next June there will be replaced by polished chairs and seats unpholstered in silk.

Westminster Abbey will be closed from the beginning of March until the end of July. The choir and transepts and the chapels which are to be used during the ceremonial will be completely transformed, and several galleries will be erected for the spectators, as at previous Coronations.

It is expected that the Coronation will be attended officially by five heirs-apparent to thrones—the German crown prince, the Duke of Sparta, and the crown princes of Denmark, Sweden, and Roumania. The King of Italy is to be represented by his cousin, the Duke Aosta, and it is probable that the prince consort of the Netherlands will attend as the representative of Queen Wilhelmina.

Edmonton's Projects

EDMONTON, Alta., Dec. 28.—The city council passed debenture laws totalling half a million dollars to be voted upon on January 22. They include another bridge over the Saskatchewan, a stock pavilion at the exhibition grounds, the purchase of industrial sites, and the Jasper avenue subway.

AIRSHIP VOYAGE ACROSS ATLANTIC

German Aeronaut Plans Trip From Cape Verde To Barbadoes Or Trinidad In March Or April Next

BERLIN, Dec. 28.—Joseph Brucker, who has announced his intention of attempting in March or April next, to cross the Atlantic from the Cape Verde islands to the Barbadoes or Trinidad in the airship Suchard, will utilize a novel sysetem to keep the gas cool and prevent loss from radiation.

This will be accomplished by sprinklers constructed at the top of the envelope, which will spray water over the surface of the balloon. The water supply will be hand-drawn from the ocean in torpedo-shaped cylinders, offering a minimum of resistance to the waves, and after being taken on board will be pumped through a hose to the sprinklers.

Brucker proposes to carry a crew of six in his craft, which will be equipped with two motors, each of 100 horsepower. A non-sinkable lifeboat will be taken along. He hopes to arrive on the other side after four or five days and nights in the air.

EARTH SHAKEN

Three Shocks Registered at Santa Clara Observatory — Vashon Island Disturbed.

SANTA CLARA, Cal., Dec. 28.—The seismograph at Santa Clara College observatory recorded three earthquake shocks today. The first was at 8.27 o'clock in the morning, the second at 9.31 and the third at 10.07. The period of each was 1 1-2 seconds. The movement came from the northeast, a long distance away.

SEATTLE, Dec. 28.—Two distinct earthquake shocks were felt on Vashon island, situated in Puget Sound between Seattle and Tacoma, late today. The first shock was felt at 5.20 and the second soon after. The earthquake shook the houses and caused the residents to hurry out-doors, but no damage was done.

COMMONWEALTH DEFENCE FORCES

Active Preparations For Training Of Hundred Thousand Youths Between Ages Fourteen and Twenty

WORK TO BEGIN IN JULY NEXT

War Establishment Also To Be Increased To Fifty Thousand Men—Fear of Yellow Races Invading

MELBOURNE, Dec. 27.—Active preparations are being made by the commonwealth with a view to the establishment of defence forces on the soundest footing in the shortest possible time. The latest calculations that have been made indicate that at least one hundred thousand youths between the ages of 14 and 20 years will be ready for training in July next.

The defence department has taken measures accordingly, and is ordering all the necesary clothing and equipment.

Further to augment the war forces of the commonwealth it is proposed to increase the war establishment to fifty thousand men.

This scheme will be put in force also in July next, it is hoped.

In everything that is being done the principle of imperial standardization is observed, in accordance with the advice of the military experts who have visited Australia and inspected its land forces.

The North Queensland Herald says that without public expenditure to cheapen the cost of passage, Australia cannot acquire its much needed additional population at a reasonable rate until Canada is "full up." Judging by the still steady flow of population to the "nearly full up" United States, that will certainly not occur before the yellow man is knocking at the Australian gate and peremptorily demanding admission to its unoccupied territory with arguments which no military force possible for so numerically feebly a people as the commonwealth would be able to answer.

HELD BY JAPANESE

White Girl Rescued by Seattle Police After Being Kept in Captivity for Months.

SEATTLE, Dec. 28.—May Harris, an 18 year old white girl, rescued from her Japanese captors on Christmas Day, was committed to the State Hospital for the insane at Steilacoom by a lunacy commission in the superior court today.

The girl disappeared several months ago, and had been held a prisoner in a hotel in the Japanese quarter. Her whereabouts was unknown until Christmas morning, when she managed to reach a telephone and implored the police to come to her rescue. The police searched the building three times before they broke down the door of a small back room, where they found her in a helpless condition.

The girl told the examining physicians today that she had been given drugs and "sake" by the Japanese and had been beaten when she became rebellious.

SHRUBB AND LONGBOAT WILL TOUR ENGLAND

TORONTO, Dec. 28.—Alfred Shrubb is negotiating with Tom Longboat's manager with a view to having him accompany him to England and run a series of races in February.

"Longboat, as he is now, is as tough a man as I want to meet from 15 to 18 miles," said Shrubb today. "In England I believe some one would take hold of him and persuade him to train properly, and properly trained that Indian is even now as good a 10 and 12 mile runner as there is roaming around. The more I see of that Indian the more I respect him. He runs wonderfully well for a man who does no training. I know a dozen places where we can draw 20,000 people to a race. They are crazy to see the Indian in England. If I could get a decided answer from the Indian and could depend upon it my English friends would draft a tour that would make us both some big money."

Shrubb is in nice shape right now. He ran 1 1-2 miles through the deep snow with all his hunting clothes on the other day, after ploughing through the woods and swamps for four hours after rabbits.

Not Poisoned

VANCOUVER, Dec. 28.—The coroner's jury tonight decided that George Black, formerly of Seattle, who was supposed to have died of poisoning in a Granville street flat, in this city, after partaking of a midnight lunch with two others, who were also taken ill at the time, really died of natural causes. The verd

evidence by analysis and pathological experts, the former stating that no trace of poison of any kind could be found in the man's organs or articles taken by the police from the room. Pathologists said that weakened condition of the organs shown in Black was liable to cause death on undue excitement or over-exertion.

Ontario Mayors

TORONTO, Dec. 28.—The following mayors were re-elected by acclamation: Meaford, Dr. Clarke; Powasson, Jos. McArthur, sixth year; St. Thomas, Dr. Guest; Galt, McLellan; Uxbridge, Deal; Goderich, M. G. Cameron; Windsor, J. W. Hanna. The following were elected for the first time: St. Mary's, Sanderson; Forest, Rumford; Oakville, Geo. Hilmer; Newmarket, Pearson.

Birthday of Sir M. Bowell.

BELLEVILLE, Ont., Dec. 28.—Sir Mackenzie Bowell, former premier of the Dominion, received numerous messages of congratulation and wishes yesterday on the celebration of his 87th birthday. The public career of the veteran statesman covered a period of forty years, beginning with his election to the Commons at the time of Confederation and ending with his resignation as leader of the Opposition in the senate in 1906.

Commander Sims' Case.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28.—The navy department is waiting upon the president to determine what action shall be taken in the case of Commander Sims, who is charged with indiscretion in his allusion to American sentiment towards England in an after-dinner speech at London. The officer's explanation called for by the navy department is said to have been that he uttered the remarks without premeditation and purely on his personal responsibility.

TUNNEL UNDER PART OF CITY

Rumored Project of Canadian Pacific To Make Underground Connection Between Shops And Yards Vancouver

VANCOUVER, Dec. 28.—While officials of the C. P. R. are unable to deny the truth of the report that a tunnel is to be constructed from the back of Beatty street to the end of Burrard street, and so connect the False Creek yards and shops of the company with the wharves and depot on the waterfront, they are equally not in a position to confirm it.

It is possible that this improvement, which would do away with the street level tracks, may be one of the suggested alterations which was considered by Mr. William Whyte, vice-president of the company, on the occasion of his recent visit to the city, and one which will be submitted at the meeting at Montreal next month.

Should this tunnel be made, it would both start and finish at levels considerably below those of the streets in both quarters, and would probably be close on a mile in length, it would also put an end to the shunting through the streets.

MINER KILLED

Thomas Brown Loses His Life In Extension Coal Mine Through Fall Of Rock

NANAIMO, Dec. 28.—A fatal accident occurred in the Extension mines this afternoon, a miner amed Thomas Brown being killed by a falling rock. Deceased was aged about 32 years. No particulars of the accident have been received.

Only Bluff

CADILLAC, Mich., Dec. 28.—When informed today of "Battling" Nelson's statement Ad Wolgast issued the following reply:

"If there is any club that will give me a large enough purse to fight Nelson I will be only too glad to take him on. I am sure Nelson is ringing in a big bluff when he says he will meet me on my own terms. Nelson at the present time is not worthy of me. He is down and out."

Canadian Methods Crude

WINNIPEG, Dec. 28.—F. H. Muller, of St. Pierre Pecherie, Belgium, passed through the city today en route to Japan via Vancouver. The fishing establishment of which Mr. Muller is manager is the largest of its kind in Europe. All the commoner species of fish are raised on the premises for fish ponds of Holland, Belgium and Germany. He states that Canadian methods of conservation are very crude and are merely in their infancy. They must learn to safeguard this valuable source of national wealth before it is too late. He will inspect the British Columbia fisheries before leaving for Japan.

A steel bridge is being erected to span the Similkameen river at Night-

INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY RATES

Recommendation To Be Made To Two Governments By Chairman Mabee And Judge Knapp After Consultation

JOINT COMMISSION WILL BE PROPOSED

If Established, International Commission Will Have Supervisory Powers In Regard To Through Rates

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28.—As a result of conferences between Judge Martin A. Knapp, chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, and Hon. J. P. Mabee, chairman of the Railway Commission of Canada, an agreement has been reached to recommend to the respective governments the creation of an international railroad commission which shall have supervisory authority over rates between the two countries.

Mr. Mabee reached Washington from Ottawa last night in accordance with a previous arrangement with Chairman Knapp.

He came to discuss the details of an agreement they had reached last August, and today the two officials were in conference. Their report has not been completed, but soon will be, and it will be filed with the State Department and with the foreign affairs office of Canada. No details are available beyond the fact that it recommends the establishment of an international commission upon which shall be conferred certain regulatory powers. Whether the commission is to be created by treaty or by joint legislation cannot now be answered.

For some time it has been realized that the increasing railway traffic between the United States and Canada was likely to render future control over rates difficult, unless some international action were taken. The acquisition by American railroads of Canadian terminals and by Canadian railroads of American terminals and lines present increasing difficulties.

Under existing circumstances it is not possoble to compel either railways or express companies to establish joint through routes and rates to and from points in the two countries. In other words, neither an American nor a Canadian carrier may be required to furnish to a shipper a through bill of lading from any point in one country to any point in the other.

The reasonableness of the international rates, which ordinarily are a combination of the rates local to each country, can be determined only by circuitous proceedings instituted before the commissions of both countries. No power at present exists that can require carriers engaged in international transportation to establish reasonable through joint rates and to apportion them among the participating carriers in the event that they cannot reach an agreement among themselves.

Out of this situation grew the idea of the creation of an international commission which should have supervisory control over the railways and other common carriers doing an international transportation business.

More Immigrants.

WINNIPEG, Dec. 28.—Two hundred and fifty immigrants arrived yesterday, many going through to the coast.

U. S. Officers Entertained.

GRAVESEND, England, Dec. 28.—Rear-Admiral Thomas B. Howard, commander of the fourth division of the United States Atlantic fleet, and the other officers of the warships, were entertained today at the residence of the mayor on the occasion of their farewell visit.

Police Force Dismissed

ABERDEEN, Wash., Dec. 28.—Chief of Police George S. Dean and his entire force of 14, including patrolmen and detectives, were summarily dismissed tonight by the city council and Mayor Benn, their removal to occur January 1. The action followed a report of the police commission, which investigated the alleged brutal treatment of Harry Cardigan, a logger, arrested recently. Mayor Benn has appointed F. R. Archer, formerly in the government Indian service, to succeed Chief Dean.

Sharp Skirmish.

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 28.—Two men were felled with the butt end of a revolver and 59 men were arrested as a result of a battle yesterday between linemen employed by the Pacific-Telephone and Telegraph company and a force of deputy sheriffs at Covina. The trouble originated over a strip of land which it is claimed the telephone company had been ordered to keep off. Thirty-eight of the workmen were charged with disturbing the peace, one with trespassing and twenty with resisting an officer. The men were released on a bond furnished by the telephone company.