

world's market price, which may be below \$2.20, a situation which will certainly not enhance the happiness of the Canadian wheat grower.

If the crops of the coming season are so abundant as to supply the markets liberally the world's price may be so reduced as to impose an enormous tax on the people of the United States to enable the Government to fulfil its contract with the farmers. A fall of a dollar a bushel—and a price of \$1.20 would be a liberal one on a pre-war basis—would probably call for a contribution of seven or eight hundred million dollars by the people as a whole to make good the loss of the Government in paying the farmers the price agreed upon. If Canada, in the consideration of this difficult question, should find it expedient to follow the example of the Americans and extend the guaranteed period until June, 1920, a very large sum might be required from the general treasury to pay the farmers the guaranteed price.

A very complex and perplexing problem it is. If its solution costs the general treasury something, we may at least have the comfort of believing that the fixing of the price at \$2.20 probably gave our people cheaper breadstuffs during the last year than they would have had if there had been no interference with the law of demand and supply.

Apart from the question of Government guarantees, it is quite probable that the world's demand for foodstuffs for the next year will be so great that, even with abundant crops, there will not be any considerable reduction of price.

## The British Elections

THE political situation on the approach of the British elections made several things clear enough. The first was that Mr. Lloyd George's Coalition Government would be handsomely sustained. Behind it stood a practically solid Conservative party, a large body of Liberals who avowed themselves supporters of the Coalition, and a small section of Labor Coalitionists; and also the Asquith Liberals who, while declining to pledge themselves unconditionally to the Premier, declared their intention to support the policy that he had announced. The second thing easily foreseen was that the Irish Nationalist party would be severely beaten by the Sinn Fein extremists.

These anticipations have been more than realized. The pronounced supporters of Mr. Lloyd George are more numerous than anybody predicted. From the Conservative (Unionist) section alone he has a clear majority of the House. Adding the Coalition Liberals and the few Labor Coalitionists, the successful party is the strongest in British Parliamentary history. Every Minister of the Government was returned, most of them by large majorities. On the other hand, the Asquith Liberals elected were few, and Mr. Asquith and his most eminent associates were defeated. The Sinn Fein section of the Irish people won even a greater success than had been expected. Mr. John Dillon and many of his strongest supporters went down in the flood. The triumph of the Lloyd George Ministry is overwhelming.

Labor comes out of the conflict with a

largely increased representation, though not with as many members as a few weeks ago seemed probable. It will be the strongest section of what may be called the Opposition.

The defeat of Mr. Asquith is the surprise of the contest, and should be regretted by all thoughtful people. He is a great British statesman, who has had few equals as a Parliamentarian. The House of Commons is much the poorer because it has not the benefit of his ability and experience.

Too hastily some of the writers in the press are assuming that such a triumph as Mr. Lloyd George has won means a long reign for the Coalition Government. The circumstances under which the great victory was won are exceptional. Success for the Government was easy. It was a Khaki election, and experience has shown that victories won under such conditions are not very lasting. The war had been won. The forceful personality of Mr. Lloyd George had been an important factor in Great Britain's part in the conflict. The voters evidently felt that they could not at such a moment refrain from rewarding him with a vote of confidence. But that public opinion is sensitive and changeable is apparent enough to those who remember that a few years ago the hero of the present hour, Mr. Lloyd George, and his Liberal friends were overwhelmed by the flood of a Khaki election. Having given the Premier this cordial renewal of confidence, the voters will probably, as in times past, begin to be more critical. The Premier laid down a policy of a progressive character, the carrying out of which may not be agreeable to the Conservative party which forms the main body of his Parliamentary army. His course will be watched with interest by the Liberal section of his followers, which desired to support him and at the same time to obtain the advanced legislation that he has advocated. Whether Mr. Lloyd George has captured the Conservative party for a progressive policy, or they have captured him, is the interesting question that is now engaging much attention.

Mr. Asquith, if he desires a seat, will doubtless obtain one. His principal supporters who have been defeated will not be long out of Parliament. Sir John Simon, though for the moment defeated, if spared a few years, will in all probability be Prime Minister, unless a Labor Government arises in the meantime. When the war spirit of the time has passed away, public opinion will undergo rapid changes. Labor will pull its forces together and exercise an ever increasing power. The irrepressible Irish question becomes more difficult than before. New questions arising will create new lines of division. Strong as the Coalition is to-day, its strength may easily be found to lack the quality of durability. But for the moment, Mr. Lloyd George's triumph brings him the admiration and congratulations of the world.

## President Wilson in Europe

THE practice of the President of the United States staying at home during his term of office was so well established that many people thought it was a provision in the American constitution, and that consequently Mr. Wil-

son could not attend the Peace Conference. Never before did a President leave the United States. When important functions have taken place at the boundary in which the President has participated, great care has been taken that he did not go an inch beyond the limit of American territory. Mr. Taft has for many years had a summer house at Murray Bay, to which he came regularly. But when he became President he did not feel free to visit his family for a week-end at his Canadian home. It was a surprise to many people to find that the stay-at-home policy was merely a matter of custom, and not one of law. There was some adverse criticism when the announcement of Mr. Wilson's intention to go was made, and there are yet echoes of it in the Congressional proceedings at Washington. On the whole, however, it seems that the American people have been much pleased by the splendid reception accorded to their President in France, England and Italy. Certainly no rulers of another country have ever before been the recipients of such a cordial welcome from all classes as has been given to Mr. Wilson and his wife. While the reception in all the capitals was general and enthusiastic, that which occurred in England is of particular interest and importance. The relations between Great Britain and the United States have too often been strained. The memory of the ancient quarrel out of which the American nation sprang, a quarrel not always fairly described in American school books, had left a groundwork for ill-will which was exploited by trouble-makers, both native and imported, and more than once there was grave fear that the two nations would again clash in war. If immense harm has been done through the war now ending, some good also has come, and not least of it is the discovery by the American nation of the real character of the British people. The noble fight upon which Britain entered unhesitatingly in defence of the right, the splendour of her achievements on land and sea, the devotion of her overseas Dominions which instantly came to her aid, these and other features of the war-time enabled the fair-minded American everywhere to see that his country should be proud to have sprung from such a mother, and that the two nations ought to be united in a common purpose for the good of mankind. In the reception accorded to their President by the British people, from his host the King at Buckingham Palace to the humblest citizen in the street, Americans have seen evidence of Britain's desire to co-operate with them in all good works. There is every reason to believe that this good feeling is heartily reciprocated by the mass of the people of the United States.

## Conference News

A FEW days ago one of the many press correspondents in London and Paris sent to Canada a detailed report of the arrangements said to have been made by the British Government in connection with the coming Peace Conference, including the names of many prominent officials of the Civil Service who, the announcement said, were to attend as advisers of the British delegates.