

in the past. The attempt to force the hands of the British Government at this stage upon a question of such controversial character was not wise and not patriotic. Mr. Asquith and his colleagues, Liberal and Conservative, have dealt with it upon the only lines possible at this time. They have made it clear that Great Britain participates in the Conference upon the understanding that the meeting is one for inquiry and study, and that no action is to be taken that will in any way bind the British Empire.

The correspondence on the subject that has passed between the Imperial Government and the Governments of the Overseas Dominions has not been made public, but we may rest assured that it is upon this understanding that representatives of the Dominions have been invited to be present. Such a meeting may be of much value in bringing about satisfactory action hereafter. At all events the ground properly taken by the British Government prevents any departure from the Imperial unity which at this time is so important. If there must still be wide differences on these fiscal questions, let them be postponed until after the war, when they can be better dealt with in the light that will then be available.

Rural Credits

ON referring recently to the subject of rural credits, we credited the British Columbia Government with leadership in legislative action, provision having been made in that Province for the loaning of money to farmers by the Government. The Halifax Chronicle claims that in this as in some other things the Province of Nova Scotia is entitled to the honor of leadership. There is on the Nova Scotia statute book, a Farm Settlement Act, passed in 1912, whereby says our contemporary:

"through the guaranteeing of a part of the mortgage to a loan company, the farmers of Nova Scotia may obtain cheaper money and a larger proportion by way of loan on the security of the property than under ordinary circumstances they would be able to do. The total loans thus granted amount to \$110,000, and have been given to natives of the Province and to newcomers in about equal proportion. The interest rate has varied from 6 per cent, in the cases of those to whom the money was loaned, at first, to 7 per cent, at the present time. In this matter Premier Murray has distinctly the leadership among the Provinces in establishing a rural credit system for farmers."

The Bench and the Candidate

THE nomination of Justice Hughes and his acceptance of the position as the Republican candidate for the Presidency of the United States have brought to the front a question as to the relation of the Judicial Bench to party politics that seems likely to play a considerable part in the coming election. His Democratic opponents evidently intend to treat his acceptance of the nomination as a breach of what they claim should be the rule against the members of the highest court in the United States having any relation whatever to party politics. For a year or more Justice Hughes' name had been before the country as a possible candidate, but not at his

request or with his authority. Indeed, whenever it became known to him that he was being put forward as a candidate at any of the "primaries" of the Republicans he took immediate steps to forbid such use of his name. Nobody alleges that he or anybody with his authority made any effort to secure the nomination. Nevertheless his name continued to be mentioned and many people predicted that he would be chosen by the Convention to be held at Chicago. The situation readily lent itself to his selection, without any movement on his part. Mr. Elihu Root, probably the ablest among the available candidates and eminently fitted for the Presidency, was deemed objectionable because of his close relations as legal adviser with some of the large corporations which the people look upon with suspicion. Among the "favorite sons"—men of prominence in their respective states—there was not one who could be regarded as a strong national candidate. Mr. Roosevelt, of course, was quite willing to accept a nomination from the regular Republicans, but the very prospect that he might obtain it angered the old guard of the party, who held him responsible for the defeat of 1912, and made them determined to find a better candidate. Under such circumstances the mention of Justice Hughes' name met with great favor. As the day of the convention approached the fact became apparent that if he would consent he could have the nomination. The situation became alarming to the Democrats, who began to put forward strong protests against the presenting of his name. Just before the nomination was made at Chicago, the New York Times, independent Democrat, always a very moderate journal, in a leading article expressed strong disapproval of the Hughes movement. "However, desperate be the plight of the Republicans," said that journal, "they should not take their candidate from the bench of the Supreme Court. That court is the one institution under our Government that bears the stamp of finality." Once the tradition that candidates be not taken from the Supreme Bench is violated, the Times argues, "irreparable mischief will be done." Justices less restrained than Mr. Hughes will be found negotiating with political agents and arranging campaign plans.

Almost simultaneously with the publication of the Times' article a Democratic member of the House of Representatives made a speech in the House in which he insisted that the formal forbidding of the use of his name at the primaries was not enough; that Justice Hughes should make it distinctly clear that under no circumstances would he accept a nomination, or, if not prepared to give such assurance, should at once resign his seat on the bench.

The admirers of Justice Hughes apparently believed that, although he had never said or done anything to invite a nomination, if a call were made upon him under circumstances showing a general desire of the party to have his services, he would break his silence and accept the nomination. This view of the situation proved correct. Justice Hughes must have seen from the moment the Convention met that such a call would be made, and when it came it found him ready to respond to it.

In Canada in several instances Judges have been taken from the bench of the higher courts to become candidates in the political field, not, however, in any case from the bench of the Supreme Court of the Dominion. Sir Oliver Mowat in Ontario and Sir John Thompson in Nova Scotia were so taken from the higher Provincial courts. In both cases there was some criticism along the lines of the present

comment in the United States, but it cannot be said with truth that harm came from the selection of these men for the active duties of political life. The indications are that in the case of Mr. Hughes, the Democrats will regard his coming from the bench as one of the points to be urged against him in the campaign now opening. A report from the Democratic Convention at St. Louis represents that a proposal had been made to raise the question formally in the Democratic platform, but that President Wilson emphatically objected to such a course. Nevertheless, the matter is certain to be heard of often in the course of the battle.

The Movies

THE rapid expansion of the moving picture business is one of the noteworthy things of the time. But a little while ago the leading actors and actresses of the day looked upon the picture theatres with something like scorn. Now there are few of the leading men and women of the stage who have not played before the film and thus made their names and their work known to many thousands of new admirers in all parts of the country. Moving picture theatres multiply in every large city. New theatres are being specially constructed for the pictures at large cost. The production of the films has become a great business in which large capital is invested.

The moving pictures may be made instruments for the instruction and elevation of the people, or the reverse. The Board of Censors for the Province of Quebec has done good work, for which it is deserving of high praise. Our picture houses are kept free from the most objectionable class of exhibitions. But there is one direction in which even greater vigilance is needed. Many of the so-called "comedy" pictures are vulgar, coarse and repulsive to all good taste. Their effect upon the minds of the thousands of young people who daily flock to the halls cannot fail to be debasing. There is no need to say anything about a worse class of pictures. Our censors will do their duty to protect the public against such evils. But there is danger in the vulgar pictures that are sometimes presented under the guise of comedy. Wholesome fun is desirable. It helps brighten the life of the great army of movie patrons. But it should be and is possible to have amusement furnished in an attractive form without the coarse and vulgar scenes that are sometimes furnished at our picture theatres.

A Whisky Embargo

THE distillers of Ontario, who find their business embarrassed by the embargo laid by the British Government on imports of whisky, cannot be congratulated on the exercise of diplomacy in their efforts to obtain the removal of the embargo. An Ottawa dispatch to the Montreal Gazette says:

"Ottawa, June 15.—A protest by the Canadian distillery industry against the exclusion of Canadian spirits from the British market has been forwarded by the Government to the Imperial authorities. Canadian rye whisky and kindred spirits come under one of the later embargoes placed by the British Government against the importation of certain foodstuffs and other commodities, this action being taken for the purpose, as explained here, of conserving the already limited ocean tonnage