

# WHO WINS THE GENERAL ELECTIONS?

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The battle of the ballots is now at the grand height. The prognostication of the CANADIAN COURIER correspondent was made days before the battle began. At the time of writing the two first heats have been run. The Liberals are still in the lead; score 106 to 92. The Unionists have been predicting that a gain of 29 a day would give them a majority of one. So far they have gained at only about half that rate.

It seems tolerably certain that Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd-George will win. So far as Canadian candidates are concerned Liberals lead: Winners—Sir Gilbert Parker, Unionist; Bonar Law, Unionist; Dr. Macnamara, Secretary to the Admiralty, Liberal; "Joe" Martin, Liberal; J. Allen Baker, Liberal; Losers—Hamar Greenwood, Liberal; Shirley Benn, Unionist. However, it seems certain that the Government majority will be materially reduced.

**M**OST people in the Old Country, and a good many others outside, have been smitten by election fever—smitten pretty badly, too, for this isn't an ordinary general election, by a long way. Scares are thickly in the air, and while some of these are of the familiar stock variety, there is quite a refreshing number of brand new bogies.

We have long been used to the croaking that England is going to the dogs and that ruin stares us in the face—croaking that blissfully ignores the Board of Trade returns and the official statistics that show distinctly decreasing unemployment and pauperism, and equally steadily increasing sobriety and thrift.

The fact is, that the ordinarily sane and intelligent man has the sense to realise that these things—unemployment and pauperism, sobriety and thrift—are not, in England anyway, governed, and are only incidentally influenced, by the circumstance whether this party or that is in power.

And of course the German bogey has been trotted out again, with all the blare of the brass trumpets of the jingo press. Of course, everybody sees that it would be the best thing for Germany to ignore *ententes* between England and France, Italy, Russia, Spain, and Portugal, and to "have a go" at England. German politicians, our jingo friends think, are such amateurs at the game that they would be blind to the practical certainty that, in a war with England, which would necessarily be a long and costly business, Germany, whether she won or lost, would have lost irretrievably her place in the great commercial arena while she was fighting—a lucky opportunity that would be fully grasped by the non-combatants.

There are plenty of other bogeys—stage properties that can always be resurrected at these times, but, thank goodness, there is, after all, something fresh to talk about or to listen to. Socialism is now, we are being told, on the rampage—fiery, red-flag, down-with-the-monarchy Socialism! These Socialists are, at present, only British working men, the products of state education, and are really decent and respectable fellows outside of the drinking saloons. But, are not there violent Socialists and anarchists in other countries—men who throw bombs and preach and act murder—and might not our Socialists take it into their heads to imitate their Continental namesakes? Well, well, the prospect is not imminent. "We don't think!" as the London East-enders say.

No, the real business hangs on the constitutional relations between Lords and Commons. The issue is not new; nearly every Prime Minister has raised or made reference to it. Gladstone fought and lost on it, because he stood on the shaky ground of Home Rule for Ireland. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in his prophetic watchword declared that "The Commons shall prevail." Mr. Asquith, on whom has fallen "C.B.'s" mantle, has carried it further, and says the question must be settled now. The Budget was only the peg upon which it was hanged. So the issue stands: Shall the Lords or the Commons have the last word in financial as well as other matters? Upon that the British electorate is now making its decision.

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The state of parties after the last general election, four years ago, was:

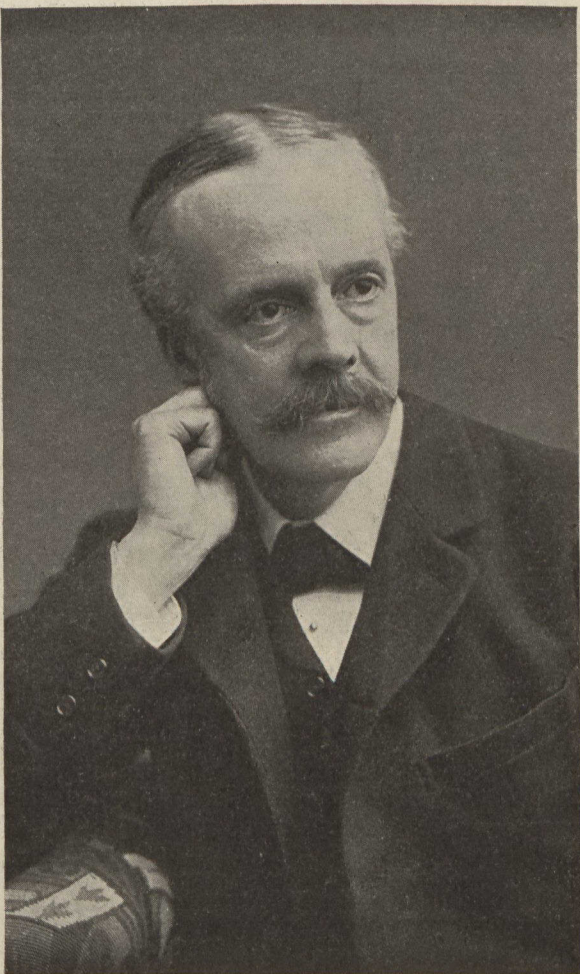
Liberals . . . . .	376
Conservatives . . . . .	157
Nationalists . . . . .	83
Labour men . . . . .	54

670

Since then the Conservatives have gained a few seats at bye-elections, but up to the proroguing of Parliament the Government had a clear two hundred majority over their rivals, led by Mr. Balfour. But that does not represent the actual disparity between the two historic parties, for Mr. Asquith's ministry has placated both of the other parties, the Irish Nationalists and the representatives of Labour. Mr. John Redmond, the Irish leader, has declared himself satisfied with the Prime Minister's declara-



The Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith, Premier and Liberal Leader, whose fight on behalf of the Budget has apparently been successful.



The Rt. Hon. Arthur J. Balfour, Ex-Premier and Leader of the Unionists, whose fight against the Budget has only been partially successful.

tion that local self-government for Ireland will be brought forward in the next Parliament, and the Irish party has issued a manifesto calling upon the electors to vote for Liberal and Labour candidates. The Labour party is satisfied, first, because the Government has passed a number of measures that were part of their programme and intends to pass more; and, secondly, because they heartily approved of the Budget and voted solidly for it.

A more significant fact, however, than that the Liberal Premier has been strongly supported by the Labour men in Parliament is seen in the arrangements for fighting the General Election. Up to now there has always been a good deal of friction between the Liberal and Labour parties at the polls, and the Labour leaders never lost an opportunity of bringing forward a candidate in opposition to the usual Liberal and Conservative. Now, that has all been changed. Won over completely by the Budget and the promise of further legislation dealing with workmen's insurance against unemployment and sickness (on the German plan), the English Labour Party, although denying anything in the shape of an official arrangement with the other party, have smoothed matters very considerably for the Government. Many Labour candidates have been withdrawn, and in every case what was looked upon as a purely vexatious contest has been obviated. Meeting these advances, the Liberals have stood down a number of their candidates in favour of Labour men, and here, again, three-cornered fights have been avoided. Previously many Conservatives have got in because of this splitting of votes, but this unwritten compact between their two foes will rob them of not a few seats.

The significance, therefore, of the understandings between the Liberals, on the one side, and the Irish party and the Labour party, on the other, lies in the fact that the Conservatives have not been able to count upon side issues to let in many of their nominees. As against that, the Peers have come out strongly as election speakers. Following Lord Rosebery's lead at the beginning of the Budget controversy, prominent men of the Upper House like Lords Curzon and Milner, and not a few of the Dukes, have toured the country making rousing election speeches.

But on every side it is acknowledged that Mr. Asquith can count upon the strongest political combination of modern times. Even Gladstone had never such a solid support of talent, organisation, and co-operation of interests to rely upon. There is a serious tone about the utterances of responsible Conservative leaders, blended with something of despondency and fatalism, that cannot be mistaken to the man who watches the signs of the times. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, an inspiring and able leader, is sadly missed on the Opposition side. The followers of Mr. Asquith, on the other hand, taking their cue from the abounding confidence of their head, as well as from Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Ure, and the rest, display no anxiety as to the chances.

Both Irish and Labour leaders have predicted a convincing majority for the Liberal Government, and the general trend of serious opinion certainly seems to indicate that Mr. Asquith will go back to Westminster with a clear lead over his opponents not much reduced from the unprecedented majority which his party secured at the General Election of 1906.

## The Actual Results

By the Editor

**T**HE real contest began on Saturday last when some seventy-four members were elected. At the end of the day's voting the result, including those elected by acclamation, was as follows: Unionists 43, Liberals 37, Labourites 6 and Nationalists 5. The Unionists gained one and lost one in Manchester. They gained two in Devonport, where Sir John Jackson and Sir Kinloch Cooke had a great victory. The total Unionist gains were eighteen. The Liberals made three gains, defeating Mr. Joynson Hicks