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LONDON, WEDNESDAY, FEB. 23.

THE CRISIS POSTPONED.

Unless Mr. Balfour's address yesterday was a Machiavellian attempt to lure the Government to immediate destruction, it was a promise that he would support the budget on the ground of the urgency of the financial problem.

The money market has been disorganized by the necessity laid upon the Government of borrowing to meet current expenditures. Treasury bills amounting to \$180,000,000 have been floated in the past three months. The adoption of the budget would enable the treasury to collect at once the arrears of taxation and redeem its promissory notes. The present arrangement cannot continue much longer without precipitating a financial crisis, and checking the revival of trade which has been in progress for some months.

Evidently Mr. Balfour would be consulting the interests of his party by aiding in regularizing the finances before a general election ensues. Others, wise, the Unionists, if they obtained a majority, would be obliged to shoulder the burden. The only method by which a Unionist Government could collect all the taxes in arrears would be by confirming the provisions of the Lloyd-George budget. The taxes proposed in the budget are the only ones that can be made retroactive. They were collected from the day the budget was introduced in the House of Commons until the day it was rejected by the House of Lords. A Unionist Government could not rectify the situation by a tariff-reform budget this year, because customs duties could not be made retroactive, excepting those already provided for in the Lloyd-George budget. The necessity of re-enacting Mr. Lloyd-George's measure, or the bulk of it, even provisionally, would be humiliating, and perhaps disastrous. To aid the present Government in re-enacting it would be a much easier way out of the difficulty. Perhaps Mr. Asquith and his colleagues shrewdly reckoned upon the dilemma of the Unionists when they decided to defy the Nationalists and Laborites by giving the budget precedence over the veto. The budget may owe its attention to the Unionists, but the Unionists will owe to its adoption their escape from a grave embarrassment.

Another effort is being made to secure the admission of Edgar Allan Poe to the American Hall of Fame. The Philistines who are in control of that curious institution are making it play Hamlet with Hamlet left out.

The Toronto Mail throws a new epithet at the Canadian Government—"pro-German." It has been usually described in that quarter as "pro-French." Its real offence is that it is pro-Canadian.

The Ontario milk commission reports that 10 per cent of the milk cows of Ontario are tubercular. The possibility of drinking tubercular milk and eating tubercular meat at the same time is not cheerful to reflect upon, but it is necessary that people should be worried over such a matter so as to bring about reforms.

Lord Lansdowne has already intimated that no home rule bill will pass the House of Lords. He talks as though it were a new issue to be sprung upon the present parliament. It has been an issue for at least 25 years, to go no further back than Gladstone's conversion. The principle was endorsed by an overwhelming majority in the last House of Commons. It was definitely made a plank in the Liberal platform in the recent election. If the House of Lords can throw out another home rule bill sent up by the House of Commons, the peers will have reduced popular government to a farce.

THE WAY IT WORKS.
[Boston Herald.]
"The time to save is when you're young."
"That's all right, but a fellow doesn't get anything till he gets well along, and then it costs more to live."

NO BETTER.
[Philadelphia Record.]
"Silence. Do you believe there is honor among thieves?"
"Yes. No; they are just as bad as other people."

LIKES HECKLING.
[London News.]
Henry George, Jun., of New York, has been in this country during the general elections, and as might be expected from the son of his father, he takes the rosy democratic view of the present political situation. He does not think the constitutional question has figured largely in the British electoral mind, the questions that interested audiences being mostly those affecting the taxing of land values and food. He is warm in praise of British heckling.

"Or think," he said, "this heckling is really the way civilized men ought to conduct themselves. It is admirable for the electors; it gives opportunities to the man exercising the suffrage to impress his own personality upon his representative, and it gives stimulus to the candidate, filling him up with his responsibilities."

ROLLER SKATING ABROAD.
[New York Sun.]
All Paris has gone wild over roller skating and the various rinks are gay all afternoon and evening with performers in various degrees of perfection. Even the parks and the streets have their skaters, and the broad asphalt walks of the Tuilleries and the Luxembourg make fine practicing grounds for small boys and girls. The keenest of all skaters, whether roller or otherwise, are the English.

Coming from down by the sea, Mr. McLean is in a position to speak of Canada's future naval reserve. In the Maritime Provinces are a large number of fishermen who go to sea during the summer months, manning the Canadian fishing fleet, and to a large extent the Gloucester fishing fleet, as well. These men Mr. McLean says are half-mechanics by trade. They live at home in the winter, are handy with tools, and are the very finest material for the making of a naval reserve. For three months in the winter they have no regular employment, and during that time they can be taken on a cruise to Bermuda and trained, so that in four years they will be thoroughly competent to take positions on warships. They are already skilled in seamanship; they are hardy and brave, and all they need is a little technical training to fit them for duty on a man-of-war. Is it not better, asked Mr. McLean, that Canada should provide for the highest type of coast cruisers, and be training that large body of men to take their places in the fighting line, than to hand over \$20,000,000 to Britain, and say, "Do what you like with it?" The latter would be like Canada saying to England at the time of the South African war: "Here is \$50,000,000; go and do the fighting for us." Sending out our own men on that occasion was the effective way of showing the mother country that we were in earnest.

THE FARM AND THE CITY.

In a recent address Mr. C. C. James, deputy minister of agriculture for Ontario, referred to the movement from the farm to the cities and towns as a cause for anxiety. In 1899 the rural population of the province was 1,108,874; in 1909, it was 1,047,016—an increase in the decade of 61,858. In the same period the population of the cities and towns rose from 901,874 to 1,197,274—an increase of 295,400. Mr. James agrees with Mr. J. J. Hill, the railway magnate, that this movement from the farm to the cities and towns is particularly disquieting for the reason that there is a lessened production for a larger population, and he contends that that is the cause of the excessive high food prices which now prevail.

A prominent Wisconsin farmer and business man, Mr. S. A. Cook, who has given the question close study, has come to the conclusion that not until business methods are applied to agricultural pursuits will the movement from the farm to the great centres of population be stayed. What he says has special reference to farmers of the United States, but his remarks are not without application to Canadian agriculturists. As soon as the farmer becomes fully alive to the advantages of thorough and scientific cultivation, he says, he will, like other producers, be able to share the gains by economy with the consumer. Mr. Cook believes it will be to the farmer's benefit to cheapen the cost of living in this way, for while high prices are to his advantage up to a certain point, when the price goes above that point there is a reaction through people taking up other things.

There are farms of forty and eighty acres, which produce more now than farms of double that size used to yield. The increased rewards of improved agriculture should induce imitation and make farming a more attractive pursuit.

For a year past, British politics has furnished thrills, situations, and climaxes like an old-fashioned melodrama.

Lord Rosebery makes a plea for a variety of universities, each specializing in a different department. It is to be hoped a copy of his speech reaches Premier Whitney.

Mr. Balfour now says the budget is not a matter of principle. It was not for a principle then that the House of Lords forced the dissolution of parliament and trampled upon the constitution?

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