

suggest the unwisdom of attempting to forecast events at this time. Let us hope that this is what he meant.

The retirement of Mr. Asquith at this time would be little less than an Imperial calamity. It may be said with some truth that nobody is indispensable, that every man's place can be filled. When the necessity arises the place that has become vacant is filled, or at all events it is occupied, and the world adapts itself as best it can to the situation. Nevertheless it is true that there are men whose places cannot really be filled when they pass away or step aside. Mr. Asquith is one of these. He has had an exceptionally long term of office and he has had to bear its burdens at a time when they have been extraordinarily strenuous. If he should desire to be released none could blame him. But where is his successor to be found? The question would be a grave one even if the old conditions of party government still existed. It is graver because there is now a coalition cabinet, and the Prime Minister who is to preside over it must be acceptable to the leading men of both wings. The last general election confirmed a Liberal Government in power. The House of Commons has a large majority of Liberals, especially if we include the Labor men and the Irish members, who, though they do not call themselves Liberals, usually vote with the Government. It is to be expected therefore that the Prime Minister of a Government under such conditions would be chosen from the Liberal side. A Conservative Prime Minister could hardly hope to keep the coalition intact. Mr. Balfour might possibly be able to do so, for on all sides there is profound respect for his great talents and high character. But even Mr. Balfour would find the post one of extreme difficulty. Besides, he is believed to be reluctant to undertake larger responsibilities than he now has as chief of the Admiralty. Mr. Asquith's successor would almost certainly have to be a Liberal, and while there are other able men of that party in the cabinet it is doubtful if there is one under whom the Conservatives would be willing to serve. The situation is a delicate as well as a difficult one. The best solution of it will be for Mr. Asquith to consent to remain at his post until the end of the war. He is needed now more than ever before.

Ireland

A FEW days ago, just when the efforts of Mr. Lloyd George seemed likely to result in a satisfactory temporary settlement of the Irish Home Rule question, the speech of Lord Lansdowne, giving an interpretation of the contemplated arrangement that was at variance with Mr. John Redmond's understanding of it, put a block in the way of further proceedings. The raising of the obstacle seems to have given pleasure in some quarters. Mr. William O'Brien, leader of the anti-Redmond Irish section, rejoiced at the failure of a scheme that did not meet his very extreme views. So sound and sincere a friend of Ireland as Sir Horace Plunkett, whose services to Irish agriculture have been of the highest value, expressed the opinion that the arrangement could not work out satisfactorily. Critics, if not enemies, of Mr. Lloyd George hastened to speak contemptuously of his efforts as a conciliator. For the moment the arrangement is blocked and Irish affairs are at a standstill, except that the Nationalists, who have gone far to assist the Government, are manifesting much displeasure with the Government's attitude as indicated in Lord Lansdowne's

speech. All this is disheartening to the friends of Ireland in other parts of the Empire. But the end is not yet, and we are not among those who regard the efforts of Mr. Lloyd George as a failure. In what seemed to be the most difficult part of the problem, Mr. Lloyd George was eminently successful; he brought Sir Edward Carson, the chief spokesman of Orange Ulster, and Mr. John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Nationalists, into harmony, inducing them, as he has said, to shake hands, instead of shaking fists at one another. If nothing more than this had been accomplished, the incident would be a high testimony to Mr. Lloyd George's qualities as a conciliator. But we cannot believe that the bringing of these two eminent Irishmen into harmonious co-operation will fail to produce results of the highest importance. Where two men who have hitherto entertained such widely different views on all Irish questions feel it to be their duty, in the presence of the war situation, to work together for the good of Ireland and the Empire, they give to all who are interested in Irish affairs an object lesson that must have a permanent value. If Redmond and Carson can so cooperate, who in all Ireland can truly say that a union of Irish hands and hearts is impossible? Difficulties, delays, misunderstandings there still may be, but out of them all will emerge a settlement of the Irish question that will make for the happiness of the Irish people and the unity of the Empire.

The Deutschland

INTERNATIONAL law is not natural law, but is human nature law, and therefore dependent on changing public opinion. It took many years to arrive at the principle of visit and search. A friendly ship would not need to submerge and it surely is a fair assumption to say only an enemy ship would try in this manner to escape. This is the position the Allies may take.

Roger Casement

LORD ROBERT CECIL put the matter fairly when he told the House of Commons that, apart from a political question which he thought should not be allowed to influence the decision, there was absolutely no reason that could be advanced in favor of clemency to Sir Roger Casement. There are people who feel that the political question could properly have been taken into consideration, and that in that view it would have been well if the sentence had been commuted. But that impression, which has found voice in a London journal, does not in any way affect the justice of the condemnation of the prisoner. Casement's crime was treason of the blackest character. There was no redeeming feature in it. He had more than ordinary reason for loyalty to the Crown. He had in his day rendered useful service and he had been honored and rewarded for it. Forgetting both that and his duty as a British subject, he conspired with the enemy in Germany; he endeavored to seduce British soldiers in German prisons from their allegiance; he was captured at the moment when he was engaged in an effort to land arms in Ireland to be used against his sovereign. If all this was not treason it would be hard to find anything that could properly be characterized by that name. He had the fairest of trials, before tribunals the impartiality and justice of which are beyond

question. Difference of opinion there may be as to the wisdom of visiting upon him the extreme penalty of the law. That is not a question of justice, but one of political expediency. As to the character of his crime, the fairness of his trial and the justice of his condemnation, there can be no difference of opinion among British people.

The Nickel Refinery

WHEN Hon. Mr. Ferguson, of the Ontario Government, announced that the Government would insist on the International Nickel Company constructing its refinery in the Province of Ontario, it was not easy to see the precise method by which they proposed to accomplish this. The company, it was well known, felt that it had a free hand to select a location anywhere in Canada. Its representatives had examined proposed locations in half a dozen places in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces. The influence usually counted on to bring about the refining of nickel in Canada was the power to prohibit the export of the ore, or to impose an export duty that would have the same effect. This power, however, was entirely within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government and Parliament, as a matter of trade and commerce. A Provincial Government cannot prohibit the export of anything, or levy an export duty. The history of the saw-log question in Ontario has sometimes created the impression that such power could be exercised by Provincial authorities. But it is not so. The Provincial authorities in Ontario, however, were able to accomplish the same end, in the case of saw-logs, in a different way. The Province owned the timber lands within its borders and leased them to the lumber operators. The owner of anything can usually stipulate the terms on which he will dispose of it. The Ontario Government decided that a condition of its leases should be that the lumber should be manufactured in the Province. This was more effective even than a Dominion system of prohibiting the export, or imposing an export duty. Under such a Dominion system, the logs cut on Ontario lands could be moved to another Province for manufacture. Under the system adopted in Ontario manufacture within the Province became necessary. In the case of the nickel, however, the same way was not open to the Ontario authorities. The nickel mines were long ago acquired by the companies, without any conditions respecting refining in Canada. Hence, so far as the law was concerned, the company desiring to construct a refinery was free to select its location anywhere in Canada. Since the ores are in Ontario, it is but natural that the people of that Province should desire to have the refinery there, and of course, the Ontario Government would be expected to do all that they could to bring this about. Just how they proceeded to influence the company's decision has not been explained. But the announcement is made that the International Nickel Company will proceed at once to construct its refinery at Port Colborne, Ont. The advantages of that region, particularly in the form of electric power, are many, and these, together with such pressure as the Ontario Government were able to bring, seem to have settled the question. The announcement will be a disappointment to more than one place, the residents of which had fondly regarded the nickel refinery as a coming industry. But all will feel that Ontario had the first claim to an industry designed to treat the ores mined in that Province.

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