

## Now Planning Tour For Prince of Wales To India

LORD CROMER TO BE HIS CHIEF OF STAFF ON THAT VISIT

London Comment on Prospect of Break in High Living Cost—Change in the Shilling—Burglary Season in Full Swing in the Empire Metropolis.

(From Our Correspondent.)

London, May 27.—I learn officially this week that arrangements for the Prince of Wales's Indian tour are already well advanced, many of the details lacking only the formality of royal sanction. Except in the matter of essentials, this will naturally be reserved until the prince returns after his present voyage. The great event of the Indian tour will be the opening, by His Royal Highness, of the new Indian Council, to be set up under the bill recently piloted through the House of Commons by Mr. Montagu, and representing another step forward in the self-government of India. The programme also includes some big game hunting in the magnificent preserves of the ruling prince of the northern provinces.

The last occasion of a similar visit was that in which the Crown Prince of Germany—now numbered among the royal "exes"—figured rather unpleasantly. Lord Cromer will be chief-of-staff to the prince during his Indian tour. This will be a popular appointment in India as well as here at home, for Lord Cromer is exceeding well liked in both places. Lord Cromer is presiding over a small committee, which is holding frequent meetings to settle the details of this interesting royal tour.

The Consumer's Hope.

The general public is keenly interested in the prospect of a break in the excessive prices now obtaining for almost all the necessities of life. I am told by those who should be able to speak with some certainty on this engrossing topic that the hope is well founded. It is apparent in many directions that a slump in prices is imminent and is now actually in progress, in spite of powerful attempts to resist the natural process by artificial means.

The main credit for this happier prospect is Mr. Chamberlain's, in spite of the abuse that has been heaped upon that minister. In fact I am told that much of this abuse, in the press and outside it, is due to just this initiative on the chancellor of the exchequer's part. His action in persuading the banks to withhold unlimited credit to speculators who are holding on to stock for a profit has caused a general unloading, which is mainly the cause of the present break in prices.

The public is also playing its part by refraining from purchasing anything except absolute necessities at present prices. And another factor of real importance is the falling off in the foreign demand for goods of a certain character at exorbitant prices. So we may hope at last for more normal and healthier conditions, which, in the long run, will be good for trade, as well as for the general body of the people. It is to be hoped that excessive prices do not tend to make for increased production always, or even often.

Efficientest Gold.

Among the things that are going to cost us more, and in which there is the smallest possibility of a slump just yet, is our champagne. The price of a bottle in London is to be somewhere in the region of £4, we are now assured by the inevitable chortling Jeremiah. Some people seem fairly to revel in doleful prophecies of staggering prices. However, it is very likely true enough that decent champagne will be about that price. It will not seriously affect very many people nowadays, though there are to be sure, a considerable number of individuals who use the liquor medicinally, as well as some joyous souls who still quaff it for sheer pleasure. There has been an increasing demand for champagne in London since the armistice, a fact which may be attributed either to patriotic celebration, or to mere dissipation of excess profits, at you please. One suspects a little of both, but more of the latter than the former. With a certain class of war-rich persons—unless Mr. Chamberlain really does get on his back with a convincing levy—the more expensive champagne becomes the more they will enjoy drinking—and particularly ordering—it. Before the war, an M.P., who was among any acquaintances used to start his day by

drinking before breakfast half-a-pint of ale and half-a-pint of the best champagne mixed. He is now an M.P., no longer. And he dispenses with one-half of his matutinal beaker.

The Chaper Shilling.

Today I was discussing with a city friend Mr. Chamberlain's announcement that he proposes to proceed with the change in the fineness of the silver coinage as provided in the coinage bill. The new standard is to be one-half fine silver and the other half alloy in all silver coins, instead of the present thirty-seven fortieth fine silver. My friend expressed the opinion that, at any rate, a temporary improvement should be effected by this measure in the rates of exchange with India and China, to which countries it will be possible to export silver. This improvement, however, can only be temporary, and while the disposal of the silver is taking place. It is like a householder selling his furniture to pay his rent, there is immediate relief until the next quarter falls due.

The danger of such a reduction in the value of our silver coinage is that it removes the last piece of real coinage, and the new silver will be really only the equivalent of paper money. Its nominal value will have small relation to its intrinsic worth. The penny will then undergo an apotheciosis, and occupy the premier position in our currency.

The Nelson Touch Again.

The charm of London is the way in which one contrives to drift across all manner of interesting personalities. The other day I was introduced to a man who is doing a huge business for the government in assisting in the disposal of some of the prodigious dumps over in France and even as far afield as Mesopotamia. He told me many interesting stories about his experiences, but what pleased me most was his account of the arrangements made by a party of about 1,700 mixed troops were bivouaced in Kensington Gardens before the famous Victory march through London. He engaged 700 "Waves" to look after the work of the encampment and he still speaks in high praise of their devotion and efficiency. But the weather was vile and the place became a quagmire. The "Waves" were looking forward with misery to the operation of cleaning their own boots on the great morning. It was a terrible task owing to the mud. But when they got up in the morning, the girls were amazed and delighted to find that every pair of boots was as clean as a new pin and shining with polish in the loveliest way. The explanation of it was that, quietly arranging the whole thing among themselves, a party of about a dozen black-jackets, in recognition of services rendered to the "Waves" set up practically all through the night cleaning their boots for them. The man who told me this little story said it was "the way they had in the navy."

Wind Up!

The burglary season is now in full swing in London, and nervous householders are not being soothed by the threats of insurance companies about having to raise their premiums. It seems that so prevalent an epidemic of house robberies has never before been known in London, and the insurance managers are blaming the army. They argue that in the army if one needed anything from a canteen, a stockman, one just "won't" without taking the trouble to indent for it. And this habit, the insurance people contend, has stuck to the men who acquired it, or at least to a considerable proportion of them. Greater nonsense was never talked. The police explanation is that burglary is now considerably safer and much more remunerative than before. There is more to be made by burglary; it is worth more, and there is less chance of being spotted.

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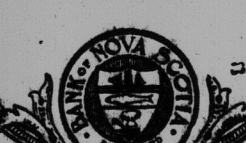
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But the affair has its amusing side. A friend tells me that today he wondered what on earth was the matter with his road at Wimbledon. At every other house, carpenters and joiners were securing locks on doors, fastening up windows, and even boarding up skylights. The explanation was that on one night and several others attempted. I heard another man complaining that his life is being made a domestic drudgery at home nowadays, owing to the insistent demands upon his amateur carpentering in the same cause. There is certainly a great boom in locks and bolts.

Service Music.

Very interesting is an official announcement by the lords of admiralty that the correct tune for all march pasts by sailors is in future to be "Hearts of Oak," which dates back to 1759, and has always been a great favorite. The marines are to appropriate "A Life on the Ocean Wave," a polka tune, long used by the navy generally. Some critics will think that the marines get the better of this bargain. This was written in 1888.

The war has led to a great deal of activity in service marches. For example, the machine gunners have adopted a march past tune, and the one adopted by the machine gun battalion of the guards, which is the setting of Kipling's "Mandalay." Then the "Waves" are to have a march past tune, and the one adopted by the machine gunners is to be "Mandalay." The war has led to a great deal of activity in service marches. For example, the machine gunners have adopted a march past tune, and the one adopted by the machine gun battalion of the guards, which is the setting of Kipling's "Mandalay." Then the "Waves" are to have a march past tune, and the one adopted by the machine gunners is to be "Mandalay."

The Theatre Slump.

The serious slump in theatres is making the managers very gloomy, and all kinds of explanations are being advanced as to the cause of it. I was talking the other day with Temple Thurston, who nowadays divides his time between lucrative farming in Kent and superintending the arrangements for three plays which, slump or no slump, are to be produced in the Autumn, and he advanced the theory that the reason of the slump is daylight saving. If this is the case, we may expect theatrical managers to join with Sir Frederick Banbury and the dairymen in opposing the re-imposition of summer-time next year.

The theory is that people will not go to the theatre in daylight, and that they did so during the war, only because, with so many officers and men on leave, people went to the theatre anyhow, daylight saving or not. I attempted to advance the case of matinees, but Mr. Thurston pointed out to me that the matinee public are a different type altogether from the rest of the theatre-going public, and that no persons of self-respect will put on their best clothes until after dark.

With all respect to him, I believe the explanation is quite different. In the first place, there are not many good plays at present to be seen, and those that are regularly full up, daylight or not. But there is another cause, which is really serious. The theatres, for the most part, are filled by people who do not live in the centre of London but on the outskirts. Coming to the theatre, therefore, generally means dining in town, and the rise of the cost of food, and especially of wines in the restaurants is now so heavy that the family outing to the theatre, instead of costing 2s or 3s can easily cost 6s or 8s. To many people this is, of course, absolutely prohibitive and instead of going to the theatre, they are going to the cinema nearer home, as the promoters of these places have been puffed to find out. The cinema public of today in the residential suburbs is really the theatre public of 1914, and unless the managers can induce the restaurants to lower their charges, I fear the slump will continue. One can see it for oneself any day. Restaurants, where it would have been hopeless to get a place without booking a table beforehand, now show plenty of empty places each evening.

"Mary Rose."

When theatres are full, however, they are very full indeed. "Mary Rose," in spite of the indisposition of Robert Lortie, is drawing packed houses, which have so encouraged Sir James



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