

TANGLED POLITICS IN BRITAIN

WHAT COURSE WILL ASQUITH TAKE?

The Budget, Reform of the Lords and of Election Law Will Follow

(By Charles P. Stewart, London Correspondent of the United Press)

London, Feb. 21.—When parliament gets fairly down to business to-day it will be up to King Edward and Premier Asquith to deal with the most tangled situation ever known in English politics.

Here is the position: A House of Commons passes a finance bill by the biggest majority recorded. Against all constitutional practice, the House of Lords throws it out. Premier Asquith refers the matter to the electorate. Furthermore, he implicitly declares that he will not accept office again until:

1. The legislative veto of the Lords is removed.
 2. Every vestige of power of interference in finance is similarly removed from the Lords.
- The election takes place. But as in every English general election, thousands of small local matters obscure the great point and every other subject under the sun is talked about rather than the main issue. In this case Asquith's opponents had no wish to fight on his ground. They preferred to fight on their own. Their platform was:

A supreme British navy on the assumption that at present the navy is insufficient.

A reversal of the present policy of free trade.

Class opposition to the Liberal social reform policy.

The House of Lords question was never fairly answered. In every country district the Conservatives swept the board on the matter of protection. Similarly in the great towns the Liberals more than held their ground because of their adherence to free trade. And so the elections finished thus:

Liberal, 275.

Labor, 49.

Conservatives, 713.

Nationalists, 71, following Redmond. Nationalists, 11, following O'Brien.

This means that Liberals and Conservatives, the two great antagonists, are equal. The balance of power is held by the Laborites and Nationalists. On many matters the Liberals will get their undivided support. Trusting to this they have taken office. But the Laborites and Redmond group can throw them out when they please.

With precarious support of this kind how is Asquith going to carry out drastic reforms? How far can he go?

This much is certain. Liberal Redmond's followers and Labor men are united on points that:

1. In administration and finance the elected representatives of the people shall have absolute control.
2. In legislation the final and deliberate will of the people shall prevail.

This is all very well so far as it goes. But it only satisfies the moderate branch of the Liberals. The rest want something far more drastic. They want to see the House of Lords, in its present form, swept away altogether.

This is where King Edward comes in. He does not want a complete end made to the peers. So far back as last April he said to Asquith: "I don't want to be the only hereditary institution left in this country." And just present King Edward holds the key to the situation.

It happens like this: The only way to destroy the House of Lords is by legislation. For this to become law it must be passed by the peers themselves. In fact, the Lords will be asked, more or less politely, to commit political hari-kari.

Disappointing as it may be to the Liberals, the Lords will refuse to do anything of the kind. Then there will be only one way out. Sufficient new peerages will have to be created to swamp the present Tory majority in the House of Lords.

It was a threat of this kind that brought the peers to their senses after they had twice rejected the great reform bill of 1832. But that case was different from the present one, the bill had the united support of the country behind it with the exception of a small group of landed aristocrats. Obviously, as a result of the recent election Premier Asquith can hardly go so far as to claim this much for his policy. And so should he go to ask King Edward to take this course the latter might easily refuse.

The King would probably say, "You mean that you have the country behind you. Your party by itself has only a majority of two over the Conservatives. You hold office by the precarious support of the Labor party and the Nationalists, people who might take it into their heads to fire you out any moment. You had better wait until your support is stronger before you start taking drastic steps and completely changing the constitution of England."

It is no longer a secret in Great Britain that King Edward bitterly resented the action of the Lords in throwing out the budget. It is now known that he fiercely resents the manner in which the leaders of the Lords refused to follow his advice and pass the bill. But, despite this, as a constitutional monarch he can scarcely consent to an overwhelming and revolutionary change in a delicately balanced constitution like that of Great Britain, unless there are unmistakable signs of its being desired by the great majority of his people.

He is willing, and has promised Asquith, to see the powers of the Lords curbed and checked. But just now he will have no extreme courses.

On the other hand, Asquith leads a party, which embittered by the fiercest fight ever known, has come back to Westminster determined and pledged to see their hated hereditary enemies swept away. Nationalists and Labor men are of the same view. And so the premier is in this dilemma: If he listens to the voice of his followers he will find the King against him; if, on the other hand, he tries to steer the medium course he will be faced with a

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The object of this special wind up is to clear out a few Odd Lines and Slightly Soiled Garments



Wind Up Prices in Children's Dresses

- CHILDREN'S SHORTENING DRESSES, slightly soiled. Reg. \$2.90. Now **\$1.50**
- CHILDREN'S SHORTENING DRESSES, Reg. \$3.90. Now **\$2.25**
- CHILDREN'S SHORTENING DRESSES, Reg. \$5.50. Now **\$2.75**
- CHILDREN'S HAND MADE DRESSES, real lace. Reg. \$3.25. Now **\$1.50**
- CHILDREN'S MUSLIN AND LACE, ages up to 4 years. Reg. \$3.00. Now **\$1.25**
- TWO SPECIALS—2 Children's Dresses, very handsome. Reg. \$6.75. Now **\$2.50**

A SEASON NEVER PASSES WITHOUT INCREASING THE POPULARITY OF OUR GARMENT AND MANTLE DEPARTMENT. THE REASON IS OBVIOUS—EXCLUSIVENESS.

Wind Up Prices in Skirts

- SKIRTS, with flounce trimmed with insertion and edged of lace **75c**
- SKIRTS, with plain double flounce, 4 rows of tucks. Price **75c**
- SUPERIOR QUALITY SKIRTS, with narrow flounce, edged with lace **60c**

EXTRA SPECIAL PRICES

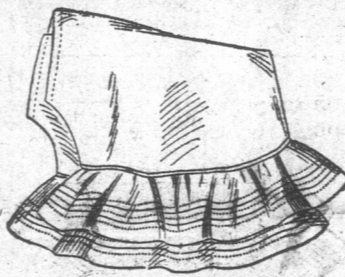
- SKIRTS in numerous styles, trimmed with lace and embroidery and embroidery flounces. Wind up price **\$1.00**
- SEVERAL EXCELLENT LINES OF SKIRTS, with bias muslin flounces and embroidery flounces. Wind up price **\$1.25**
- LACE TRIMMED SKIRTS, two rows of lace insertion, with edge of lace. Wind up price **\$1.25**
- 9 SPECIAL SLIGHTLY SOILED SKIRTS. Regular prices up to \$3.50. Now **\$1.75**

Wind Up Prices in Night-dresses

- NIGHTDRESSES, with hemstitched yokes and embroidery, slightly soiled. Wind up price **\$1.00**
- NIGHTDRESSES, slightly soiled, all-over embroidery yokes. Reg. \$2.25. Wind up price **\$1.25**
- NIGHTDRESSES, with fancy hemstitched and embroidery yokes, made up in heavy cotton, high neck. Reg. \$2.50. Wind up price **\$1.50**
- NIGHTDRESSES, shoulder, yoke and neck embroidery trimmed, with sleeves. Reg. \$1.75. Wind up price **\$1.00**
- NIGHTDRESSES, high neck, embroidery trimming, with Swiss lace yoke. Wind up price **\$1.50**
- HANDSOME NIGHTDRESSES, embroidered, low neck. Reg. \$2.90. Wind up price **\$1.75**

Wind Up Prices in Drawers

- LADIES' DRAWERS, with 2 tucked flounces, embroidery edges. Reg. price \$1. Wind up price **50c**
 - LADIES' DRAWERS, with heavy lace trimming. Reg. price \$1.50. Wind up price **75c**
- A few pairs of slightly soiled and mused up at Wind up price. 90c. \$1.25. \$1.50 and \$1.75. Reg. values go as high as \$4.00.



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New Costumes arriving daily, more stylish and becoming than ever. The models are really exquisite and with us quite exclusive.

The predominating feature this season in Ladies' Utility Coats is seven-eighth and full lengths, and in the coat of the suits hip length is from 30 to 34 inches; NOT tight-fitting, but semi or seven-eighths, with an inclination towards the Russian effect. Pleated skirts, with draped effect.



party revolt that will drive him out of power.

But the Liberals are now asking, "Couldn't Asquith defy King Edward?" The reply is that to some extent he could. It would be by refusing to take office.

It stands to reason that the Tories could not form a government. If they did it would be defeated by the combined forces of the Liberals, Laborites and Nationalists almost before it reached the House of Commons. But if Asquith refused office this would be the only alternative.

But there is this difficulty in the way. Some government has got to take office and pass last year's budget and this year's before the beginning of May. Otherwise finances will be in a state of "confusion worse confounded" and something like state bankruptcy would result.

Asquith's refusal to take office would mean, therefore, an utter deadlock. It would mean another general election and make it impossible to fix up financial matters in time. If Asquith should take this course it would bring its own retribution.

For English people as a whole are a constitution-loving race and hate seeing things upset. Anybody who deliberately stopped the wheels of the machine would be fairly jumped on by the country and his opponents would be sent back to Westminster with an overwhelming majority.

Asquith won't upset his career in this way. The centest, therefore, will, for the present, end in a sort of compromise, that English people love. The premier will have to persuade his followers that for a short time and a short time only, they must curb their impatience. He must try and do this even though he should fall in the end. It is better for him to bear the antagonism of his immediate followers than that of the nation.

With the aid of the King he will gain for them the absolute and uncontrolled right of the Commons in matters of finance. He will further see that the House of Lords shall not delay the passing of a bill for more than three years. On these two points he knows he can win. But he cannot, for the present, go further.

There will be no ultimatum either to Edward or to the Lords. For the time being the latter are saved. Their powers will be curtailed but they are temporarily secure from summary execution.

The programme then for the forth-

coming session will be this: Last year's budget, introduced without change and without discussion, will be rapidly passed through the Commons. Many of the Irish are pledged to oppose it but they will be placated by the promise that their interests will be taken care of by the finance bill of 1910. Coupled with the budget when it finally leaves the Commons will be a solemn resolution affirming the proposition that the House of Lords has no power either to initiate, amend or reject finance bills. All of this the Lords will swallow although with a wry face. No other course is open to them. They forced some of their interests will be taken care of by the finance bill of 1910. Coupled with the budget when it finally leaves the Commons will be a solemn resolution affirming the proposition that the House of Lords has no power either to initiate, amend or reject finance bills. All of this the Lords will swallow although with a wry face. No other course is open to them. 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