

THE YEAR THAT IS PAST.**British, Foreign and Canadian Events of Interest and Import during 1909.**

British politics have interested Canada this year more intimately, perhaps, than ever before. In May, Mr. Lloyd George introduced what Sir Frederick Banbury characterized as "the maddest budget ever introduced." The scheme of taxation involved was of so socialistic a character as to be regarded in financial and business circles generally, as a wild attack upon property in almost any form. The House of Lords rejected the Bill and by so doing precipitated a dissolution of Parliament and a general election campaign which is now in progress amid a state of political turmoil never before equalled. The issues involved are numerous and complex. Not only the budget itself, but the abolition or reform of the House of Lords, Home Rule for Ireland, the national credit, and the general triumph of Socialism in England are all in issue. One natural effect of the budget if it is passed will be to create an influx into Canada of British capital driven out of the United Kingdom by excessive taxation.

Our Relations with United States.

Reference is made elsewhere in these pages to inter-Imperial affairs of 1909. In foreign politics the event most interesting to Canadians was the succeeding of President Roosevelt by President Taft, a man of the same party, but of different temperament, a capable, conscientious and conservative statesman. Some anxiety was felt at first as to whether the new president would feel bound to exercise the powers vested in him by Congress, to impose discriminatory duties against Canada. Mr. Taft, however, has shown a disposition rather to avoid the commencement of a tariff war, and it is reasonable to believe that he has a perfectly friendly understanding with the Dominion Government.

Foreign Politics.

In July, Prince von Buelow resigned the Chancellorship of the German Empire and was succeeded nominally at least by Dr. von Bothmann-Hollwegg, who has not been much in evidence abroad since his appointment. The Kaiser is probably his own Chancellor. His Imperial Majesty's utterances concerning England have not been unfriendly, but he has made significant remarks about Germany's ambition for naval supremacy, and the building of the German Dreadnoughts goes rapidly on. The entire German fleet took part in the naval manoeuvres in the Baltic and the North Sea in August. In April, Sultan Abdul Hamid was deposed from the throne of Turkey and imprisoned; being succeeded by his brother Mehmed Reshad whom he had kept a life-long prisoner. The change marked a complete victory for the Young Turkish party; it rids the Ottoman Empire of a cruel, cowardly and corrupt tyrant. A sharp revolution in Spain attained serious proportions and was only subdued after much bloodshed. A domestic event of great national and international importance was the birth of the Princess of Orange, heiress-presumptive to the throne of the Netherlands.

North and South Polar Expeditions.

An event of much permanent interest to the whole world was the discovery of the North Pole by Commander Peary, and the public interest in the event was greatly stimulated by the audacious attempt of Dr. Cook to steal Peary's honours, by claiming that he had first reached the much coveted goal. A feat only second in importance to Peary's was that accomplished by Lieutenant Shackleton in attaining the Farthest South within a hundred and eleven miles from the South Pole.

Montreal Civic Affairs.

To the general statement that Canada made comparatively little history during the year an exception must be made in the case of Montreal; some of it unfortunately connected directly or indirectly with civic scandals of one kind and another. The dark cloud, however, was not without a silver lining. As the result of a long and careful investigation into civic affairs by Judge Cannon, who was appointed a Royal Commission for that purpose, a report was made by His Lordship which condemns the civic administration in scathing terms. No less severe was the judgment of the citizens as expressed in the vote taken in the Referendum which by an overwhelming majority pronounced in favour of reducing the membership of the City Council by one half and of transferring all administrative powers to a Board of Control elected by the people and not responsible to the Council.

Important Building Operations.

In important building operations and in advancement of real estate values Montreal made unexampled progress. In June the opening of the new building of the Canadian Bank of Commerce gave to the city one of the finest specimens of classic architecture ever devoted to business purposes. The new building of the Eastern Townships Bank is another handsome addition to Montreal's banking premises. During October, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Lomer Gouin laid the corner stone of a building which will be of great value both from an educational and an architectural point of view, the Montreal Technical School. Another most interesting event was the opening by His Majesty the King, at Dean Park Colchester, England, by electrical connection, of the Royal Edward Institute for the prevention and cure of tuberculosis, in Belmont Park, Montreal; the gift of Lt.-Col. Burland and his sisters.

Deaths of Eminent Canadians.

The world's death roll for 1909 contains an unusual number of distinguished names, and Canada has to mourn the loss of many valuable public men. Among other Canadians may be mentioned Mr. Angus Hooper, Archbishop Sweatman, Mr. H. C. Hammond, Mr. David Yuile, Hon. J. Rosaire Thibaudeau, Mr. A. L. Davis, Mr. A. T. Paterson, Mr. W. C. McIntyre, Hon. John Dryden, Mr. Henry Mott, Mr. Robert Reid, Sir Henry Strong, Senator Ferguson, Rev. Edmund Wood, Judge Curran, Brigadier General Buchan, Sir Henri Taschereau, Mr. Arthur Langevin, Mr. W. McLea Walbank.