

# Comment on Imperial Affairs

## Kipling as a Politician

**K**IPLING broke into politics at Tunbridge Wells on May 16th. He has always been at the game more or less, but usually as a non-partisan. Now, he has doffed his high imperial tone, and got down to purely partisan criticism. He accuses the present British cabinet of supplementing their incomes with "tips." This was a reference to the stock exchange transactions in which some of them were concerned. Arguing along similar lines, he makes an attack upon the Parliament Act, by which, when a Bill has been passed three times in the House of Commons, it becomes law without the approval of the Lords. He said:

"A good deal of crooked work on the part of the Cabinet ended in the passage of the Parliament Act, by which the Cabinet assured itself of a straight run of five years' salary. The Parliament Act meant that if their majority could be kept together, the Cabinet stood to make four hundred thousand pounds alone during their term of office.

"The House of Commons voted itself four hundred pounds per head per annum out of the nation's money. It was crooked work, but as the Premier pointed out, the House of Commons was supreme, and master of the situation. Therefore, it embezzled public funds under trust, well knowing that it could not be called to account. The meanest sneak thief takes his chance against the laws of civilized society. The House of Commons took none. As long as the Cabinet stayed in office, every coalition member of Parliament knew that he would get his cheque for one hundred pounds every quarter. Men will do a great deal for the sake of four hundred a year certain for five years."

Kipling then goes on to argue that it was also necessary to bribe the Nationalists in order to ensure the Cabinet getting their four hundred thousand pounds and the private members their comfortable incomes. The Government could not continue in power without the Nationalist votes. Hence the reason for the Home Rule Bill. "A province and a people of Great Britain are to be sold to their and our enemies." There you have the kernel of his argument.

Perhaps such a brief statement of the basis of his speech against Home Rule is unfair to Mr. Kipling, but it is sufficient to show that he is in a most partisan mood. He attacks the Cabinet in language which, in Canada, is reserved for stump oratory in the ward rooms or the back concessions. Such language would not be countenanced in our House of Commons, where men are prone to go the limit in denunciation of their opponents. One may even disapprove of Home Rule, and yet recognize that Rudyard Kipling and those with whom he associates have reached a state which would be considered grievous even in Canada.

There is this to be said. If Mr. Kipling's violent language indicates the feelings of even a small minority of the people of the United Kingdom, then a change of Government cannot be long delayed.

## The Imperial Squadron

**L**AST year, Canada was startled, stimulated, enthused and electrified by the announcement that a flying Imperial Squadron of Dominion battleships was to be placed at Gibraltar, for the quick defence of the outlying portions of the Empire.

Alas and alack! A year has rolled around, and there is no Imperial Squadron. There is not a single ship available for it. Even Mr. Churchill, the brilliant father of this remarkable precocious idea, seems to have forgotten his offspring.

Canada was to contribute three Dreadnoughts. But when Mr. Churchill ordered the British Fleet to get ready to proceed against Ulster, nothing more was heard from Canada.

Australia was to contribute two—but Premier Cook and Minister of Defence Millen of Australia say "Nay, Nay." They announce that the Royal Australian Fleet will stay in Royal Australian waters except in times of war. Indeed, a writer on Australian affairs in the June "National Review" says that "Mr. Churchill's proposed Imperial Squadron, which is to perambulate the Empire, is not regarded seriously."

New Zealand—yes, the New Zealand battleship is available. But New Zealand is hurrying along preparations for a New Zealand fleet which will mean that the "New Zealand" will serve in times of peace in New Zealand waters.

Yes, the Imperial Squadron is dead, dead, dead. Eh, what?

## Speculation by Ministers

**Q**UITE a severe rule has been laid down by the Lords Committee appointed to investigate the Marconi Transaction of Lord Murray of Elibank. Certain shares of the Marconi Company were to be listed on the stock market on April 19th, 1912. On April 17th, Murray bought one thousand shares

at \$10 a share, from or through Sir Rufus Isaacs. On April 18th, announcement was made in the press of an agreement between the Marconi Company and the British Government. On April 19th, the shares were duly listed, and sold like "hot cakes" at \$16.25. On the same day Sir Rufus Isaacs sold 357 shares for Lord Murray at \$16.50 or thereabouts, and on the following day another 500 were sold for Murray at about the same price. Later, he had other dealings, some of which were not so profitable.

The Lords Committee now says that the April 17th purchase was "a speculative transaction and was a grave error on Lord Murray's part, but we acquit him of any dishonourable conduct." Finally, the Committee stated:

"In conclusion, we think it is within our province to express our strong opinion that there should be henceforth an inflexible rule to preclude those who hold office from entering upon any speculative transactions in stocks or shares in any circumstances whatsoever, and that this rule should be by them inculcated in their subordinates both by precept and example. The evils that may arise from a violation of this principle are incalculable."

Here is a standard for Canadian Cabinet Ministers which they might well consider seriously. It is well known that such a rule has not been followed by many of our ministers in the past. This is not to

accuse them of dishonesty, but of taking chances in a dangerous practice.

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## Home Rule Amended

**P**REMIER ASQUITH announced in the House of Commons on Thursday of last week that the Amending Home Rule Bill will be introduced into Parliament before the House of Lords is asked to vote on the second reading of the main Home Rule Bill. Some of the opponents of Home Rule wanted this course followed in the Commons, but Mr. Asquith refused; he forced the House to vote on the main bill before seeing the Amending Bill. With the Lords he will follow a different course. They will have a chance to deal with the Amending Bill before they take their second and decisive vote on the main bill.

The new bill will not reach the House of Lords before the week beginning June 21st, so that no final decision regarding the main bill will be reached before some time in July. It may be that the Amending Bill will be so satisfactory to the Ulsterites and to the Lords that they will pass the Home Rule Bill itself. It becomes law, in any case, and they might do this for the sake of peace and concord. If this were done on July 11th, it would take much of the snap and danger out of the Orange speech-making, in Ulster and Canada on July 12th.

"IMPERIALIST."

## Tips Defined

**T**IPS are carefully prepared pieces of information handed out by those who have knowledge for the purpose of misleading those who have not that knowledge.

## LITTLE COMEDIES OF MILITIA CAMPS

Drawn by H. W. Cooper



The Passing Show of 1914, an old story to the veteran, is as novel as a circus to the recruit. This year the ice-cream cone is a new note.