

"According to some political thinkers no novel or important legislative measure ought to be introduced in parliament, unless it has been brought prominently to the notice of the constituencies at a previous general election."

Mr. Anson shows that in former days some

"very important measures have been introduced into parliament with no such preparatory consideration,"

but he gives no opinion as to the propriety of the suggested rule.

Not to multiply authorities, Mr. Lowell's summation of them may be quoted:

"Another sign of the times is found in the doctrine, sanctioned by the highest authorities, that parliament cannot legislate on a new question of vital importance without a mandate from the nation"(a).

For example, the Liberal party in England declared, in 1906 that they would not use a majority obtained upon the free-trade issue in order to pass a home-rule bill; Mr. Balfour, at the election in 1910, promised that if successful, no attempt would be made to introduce tariff-reform without specific reference to the people; and one of the principal objections to the present home-rule bill is the allegation that the electorate has never approved the proposal.

Mr. Doherty (a close and careful student) thought that the Naval Bill of the Laurier government ought not to become law without previous submission to the electorate, upon the ground that it involved

"the most fundamental change in our relations with the mother country, and the rest of the Empire"(b).

Construction of a Canadian navy under Canadian control necessitated some such arrangement with the United Kingdom as that which was agreed to (c), and although itself not a change in the relations of the countries almost necessarily led to a clearer definition, if not to a re-arrangement of those relations. In the long run it involved a revision, or at least a declaration, of the fundamentals of the existing association.

Mr. Burrell agreed with Mr. Doherty's contention as to the necessity for a reference to the people of the naval proposals of the Laurier government, and supported his view in a long argument (d).

(a) *The Government of England*, Vol. 1, p. 426.

(b) *Hans.* 24 February 1910, pp. 4150-1.

(c) *Kingdom Papers*, Vol. 1, pp. 250-261.

(d) *Hans.* 28 November 1910, p. 319.