

Finance Department. The loan will need all the attractions that can be attached to it to ensure success. It seems to be the opinion of most of the financial houses that the tax-exemption is a necessary element of successful flotation, and the Minister, apparently, does not feel that he can take the risk of dropping it. The convenience of the present is served, at the cost of some trouble hereafter.

Ireland

At a moment when the affairs of Ireland have seemed to be in an almost hopeless state, a ray of light comes from Mr. Edward Shortt, Secretary for Ireland. In a recent statement in the British House of Commons, in answer to a question, Mr. Shortt said he was engaged in drafting a Home Rule bill "which he expected to pass Parliament." So many intimations of Irish policy have been given only to be followed by abandonment, that perhaps one should not attach very much importance to Mr. Shortt's brief statement. If, however, it is to be taken as trustworthy, it must mean that the Government have still in mind the early enactment of a new Home Rule measure, and that while the Ulstermen, represented by Sir Edward Carson, continue to condemn every Home Rule proposal, the Conservatives in the Cabinet—Balfour, Bonar Law, Long and others—who formerly sympathized with the Ulster view have reached the conclusion that some form of Home Rule is essential in the settlement of Irish questions, and are now prepared to support liberal concessions to the Irish majority. Coincident with Mr. Shortt's announcement is a statement from him that the Government will seize fifty thousand rifles which are known to be in the possession of the Ulster semi-military organization, which was formed shortly before the war, to resist Home Rule. The agitation of the anti-Home Rule party at that time had reached a very dangerous point. But for the breaking out of the war Heaven alone knows what would have happened in Ireland. The Ulster men had been encouraged to go to extremes in their resistance to Home Rule, and, naturally enough, the Nationalists had organized on the other side. The suppression, or at all events, the disarmament, of all military or semi-military organizations in Ireland—whether for or against Home Rule—seems to be a necessary step.

Sir Edward Carson is still the leader of a great Irish party which is firmly convinced that Home Rule would be disastrous. But there is a perceptible break in the ranks of that party. Many of the Southern Unionists who participated in the Dublin Convention manifested a disposition to find a ground of compromise. If now the Conservative colleagues of Mr. Lloyd George are prepared to support a fair Home Rule scheme, it is not too much to expect that the movement will receive the approval and assistance of a considerable section of those who have hitherto strenuously resisted it. Sir Edward Carson and his associates will still be powerful enough to make a vigorous fight against the new proposals, but not to successfully resist them.

Public Ownership

In all democratic countries there is a strong movement towards the public ownership of public utilities. Sometimes it is in the field of national affairs, sometimes in the less broad field of Provincial or State activities, sometimes in the narrower sphere of municipal business, but

always with the same aim—the management by representatives of the people of important enterprises, hitherto conducted by corporations. It is argued that the gain from the operation of such works should flow into the public treasury instead into private cash boxes. It is nearly always the prospective gain that is kept in view. The possibility of loss is conveniently ignored, or, if it is remembered at all, comfort is found by many in the fact that, though the benefit of the operation may be local, the bill will be paid by all.

Canada is feeling the force of the movement. We are, apparently with wide assent, if not with keen approval, largely extending our system of Government-owned railways. A recent announcement of our Minister of Marine in England makes us aware of the fact that Canada is venturing on the sea of public ownership of steamships for the carrying trade. In England and the United States this movement for public ownership has been broadened by war conditions. In England, the Government at an early stage of the war took control of the entire railway system of the country, first giving assurance to shareholders that they would receive fair dividends. The operations of the British railways under this arrangement seem to have given pretty general satisfaction. In the United States the British example has been followed, during the past year, with satisfaction to a large part of the public.

The measure of success that has attended the management of these great railway enterprises by the Government has naturally led the advocates of public ownership to more zealous efforts to bring about the permanent adoption of the system. If it be proposed at the conclusion of the war to revert to the old system of corporation ownership there will be a very strong effort to resist such a course and make the policy, which was designed for the war only, a permanent one. The outlook in this respect is giving some concern to those who see various dangers in the movement, and particularly in the abandonment of the stimulus which private enterprise offers to individual capital and individual effort. In New York State this aspect of the subject has so impressed the Republican party that in their recent convention they adopted the following as a plank in their platform:

"We insist that in the necessary war-time extension of Government supervision and control over private undertakings, no steps be taken in the direction of permanent Government ownership or operation, or of limiting individual opportunity and responsibility in time of peace. The preservation of individual rights and full opportunity for all men and women to make the most of themselves is a fundamental American doctrine which the Republican Party will always defend."

The Democratic platform is silent on the question. The Republican party is, to a large extent, the party of the wealthy class, who may be expected to stand for the old-time system. The Democrats will be more inclined towards public ownership, but they have within their ranks many men of conservative tendencies who will be reluctant to accept so large a measure of Government control and management of great business enterprises. The conflict between the two principles may play a considerable part in American politics in the early future.

Pippins or Pickles?

THE Toronto Globe, in discussing the question of preferential trade, mentions Mr. Lloyd George as having once "derided the idea of an 'Empire built upon pippins'." Is the quotation correct in words, and is it rightfully ascribed to Mr. Lloyd George?

Mr. Winston Churchill is member for Dundee. Dundee is the original home of marmalade. The industry of preserving fruits and vegetables is quite an important one in the city. In the midst of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's campaign for preferential trade, Mr. Churchill, discussing the question before his constituents, referred to the relation of the proposal to the Dundee industries and claimed that they would be injured by the tariff policy advocated by Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain, in a later speech, referring to Mr. Churchill's Dundee address, spoke disdainfully of the people who "thought that an Empire could be built up on jam and pickles."

Coal

A REPORT which makes strange reading at this time comes from Edmonton, Alberta. In nearly all parts of the Dominion warnings are being issued by the Fuel Controller and the press as to the danger of a fuel shortage in the coming winter. The cry for increased production and the saving of fuel is as universal as that respecting wheat. Miners are everywhere urged to speed up their work and to produce more. But from Edmonton comes the report that the coal mines of that region "are practically stagnant for the want of orders." Some of the mines have been obliged to close "because they have not sufficient work to keep them going." It does not appear that there are any surplus stocks on hand. But the consumers are neglecting to order their winter supplies. In the East the situation is the very opposite. The mines are not producing enough coal to meet the demand.

Labor for the Harvest

FROM Alberta comes a report that is in one respect pleasing, though not entirely so. Owing to the scarcity of labor in most quarters there has been much fear that there would be difficulty in obtaining sufficient men to gather the harvest, especially in the West. Premier Stewart, of Alberta, has just announced that there is no longer such fear in his Province. There will be no need, he says, for any outside labor to save the crops of Alberta. The special railway rates, designed to induce men from the East, have, the report says, been cancelled as respects the country West of Sudbury. We notice, however, that the railways' call in the East for harvesters is being continued, and that special trains for their transportation are scheduled. Doubtless the demand in Manitoba and Saskatchewan will give ready employment to those not needed in Alberta.

The assurance that there is sufficient labor for the harvest in Alberta is gratifying. But it is somewhat marred by the statement that this change of the agricultural situation is due to the fact that frost and drought have reduced the crop. There is less need of labor because there is less grain to be garnered.