

Speculation As To Motherland Politics

German Admiral on the Zeppelin Raids—Nervous War Millionaires—Stephen Leacock and the Prohibitionists—News of London.

(From Our Own Correspondent) London, March 28.—The present moment affords a convenient opportunity for reviewing the results of the marching and counter-marching that has gone on at Westminster during the last few days. It is idle to assert that Lloyd George's desire for a complete fusion between the Coalition Unionists and the Coalition Liberals has met with the complete success that was hoped for. The setback the movement sustained has been due to the timidity of certain prominent members of the coalition, especially on the Liberal side, who fear they would have little chance of retaining their seats at an election if fusion becomes an accepted fact. I am told that what really occasioned alarm at Westminster were the protests which came from the constituencies as soon as fusion was authoritatively mooted. These protests came not only from Coalition Liberal, but from Unionist associations all over the country. So far as Mr. Asquith is concerned his policy cannot be the familiar one to which he applied the description of "wait and see." Those who are hoping and working for a Liberal Centre party, with Mr. Asquith, Lord Grey and Lord Robert Cecil at its head, are being warned to "go along" just as a similar warning has been addressed on the coalition side to the more ardent advocates of fusion. Mr. Asquith and his advisers are awaiting developments in the rival camp before deciding on their policy. They believe that the whole political situation is in the melting pot. This is certainly not the opinion on the coalition side. The feeling there is that public opinion necessarily requires time to reconcile itself to the scheme of fusion advocated by Lloyd George and supported by Bonar Law and the great majority, at least, of the Unionist leaders. The belief in this quarter is that when political feeling has accustomed itself to this dramatic development it will quietly become an accomplished fact.

What Stopped the Zeppelins. Admiral von Szeer's account of the Zeppelin raids on London from the German point of view is not without interest even today. The head and front of this department of German frightfulness was one Captain Strasser, a naval officer, who finally perished when the L-70 was shot down off the east coast in August of 1918. According to Admiral Szeer, the Zeppelin raids were abandoned because our airplanes became very annoying and the Zeppelins were forced to travel at heights beyond the limits of human endurance. Altogether we succeeded in bringing down eleven of the German airships during all the raids they made on this country. It is noteworthy that Admiral Szeer, who how in Berlin no reliable estimate even now exists of the actual damage done by the London raids, beyond a statement that in this way for the first time was the realism of war brought home to home-keeping Britons. The German admiral pays a high tribute to the utility of the Zeppelins proved to the German admiralty for scouting purposes. About this he need be no manner of doubt. Anyone who attempts fairly to reckon what our navy did in the war against the Germans must never lose sight of the fact that while our fleet was groping in the dark the Germans could see eleven of our ships. Practically the Zeppelins gave the Germans 100 miles more vision than our navy possessed.

Nervous War Millionaires. One effect of the government's inquiry into the taxation of war fortunes is that a perfect volume of information has suddenly become available of the tremendous fortunes other people have made in the last six years. The city is full of gossip of this description, but it is always "the other fellow" who has accumulated the money. Naturally, the city as a whole intensely dislikes the idea underlying the inquiry, and various commercial associations are being pressed by their members to take up an officially-hostile attitude to the proposed tax. The men who have made huge war fortunes are popularly reported to be buying second-hand clothes, selling their motor cars, and investing in foreign bonds to bearer. No doubt the rumors on the side of exaggeration, but it is maintained in some circles that a deal of money is being invested abroad under circumstances which create the belief that the investors desire to cover up their tracks.

Ill-gal Law. Sir Charles Darling's observations in giving judgment in an action for breach of promise of marriage recently are receiving the consideration they deserve. Proposals have sporadically been made to curb the propensity towards bringing this sort of suit. Some years ago an attempt was made in that direction by parliament. The plan then mooted was that the plaintiff should be enabled to recover no more than out-of-pocket expenses, and that there should be at law no money solatium for a broken heart. Whether this went far enough or too far is a matter of opinion. There are some cases undoubtedly where a defendant has behaved so badly that the sense of justice could be satisfied only by making him pay pretty heavily. But it is equally true that the main motive of

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and informers undosed upon the domesticity of America. He actually advises us, if these people come to England, to throw them into the sea. And he draws a dismal picture of America's social and party-state under the new regime. It seems illogical to award damages in a case where a marriage had been avoided which would have been declared impossible on any rational principle. Expensive Apathy. A banker in the city tells me that the public, in his opinion, is either very slow or very lazy. Quite recently his bank issued shares of which the existing shareholders received first option. All they had to do was to sign their names to the papers and receive the shares. He supposed they did not want to take up the actual shares the signature was shilling ten, or shillings per share on the current market prices. By simply signing their name in order to establish their option any shareholders could have realized that sum per share immediately. The result showed that almost exactly 200,000 share options went unsigned, whereby somebody lost, through reluctance merely to sign their names, an aggregate of £100,000. Presumably the brokers came into this little windfall. At least that is what the banker friend surmised.

Gift to Go. It appears that the objection of the more modern painter to the conventional gilt frame, as inconsistent with the present-day cry for simplicity in art, has at last obtained a hearing, and at the Academy this year frames of any color or design were admitted. Frank Potter, the versatile young artist, who is creating something of a stir both with his etchings and his boldly-conceived color work, expresses the great opinion of the younger school in calling this a very necessary concession to the demands of art, although, as he says, the composition of some pictures undoubtedly demand a gilt frame which, by the way, need not be the gaudily ornate thing that is said to lure the promoter to purchase. The work of every man requires that the color scheme of the picture should be carried at any rate in a limited form, into the frame if the full strength of the design is to be brought out. The change, however, appears to be no novelty, as he tells me that several of the Velasquezes and other great masters in gold and black and gold and lacquer, the latter an idea believed to have come from Morocco. Frank Potter will be remembered for the decorative art group show, and he is now getting together an exhibition of etchings and drawings, to be shown at the Bond street galleries in the autumn.

Repertory Jazzing. I hear that even the great Arnold Bennett has fallen a victim to the modern dance craze, and is the latest recruit to the ranks of the jazz enthusiasts. He is having private lessons behind shut doors in the seclusion of his delightful home in Hanover Square. The drawing room has an ideal dancing floor and perches before long, when Mr. Bennett can foot it with the best of the "cards," there will be jazz gatherings for the intellectual and literary friends. Mrs. Bennett, I understand, has not yet fallen a victim, and is spending her evenings reciting the French poetry which she loves so dearly. Quite recently she gave a recital of the American Embassy, and she is shortly to visit Liverpool and Edinburgh. Her ambition is to make the beauties of French verse generally appreciated.

The Drug Evil. There is no doubt that the closer restrictions placed upon the sale of cocaine and other similar drugs through normal channels has enormously increased the illicit trade which is being widely carried on in the West End. It is practically impossible to prevent the French and smuggled into the country, as a very small quantity can be sold for a figure which makes a journey to the Continent an extremely profitable enterprise. The victims of the habit will pay any amount for an infinitesimal quantity, and the only result of the increased difficulty in obtaining supplies has been, as in the normal result of any demand exceeding the supply, that fortunes can be made by any one daring enough to handle the drug. The cocaine dealer, moreover, has an advantage over the purveyor of opium in that no apparatus is needed for its

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