

same time be efficient and cheap; the financial genius of Mr. Asquith was to make short work of Tory extravagance, reduce expenditure, and restore the national credit which his predecessors, according to the current Liberal legend, had lowered; while the appointment of a Hyde Park orator, who had given evidence of character and ability, to a post in the Cabinet was described truly enough as "interesting," and was welcomed by his opponents with a warmth of appreciation which Mr. Burns hastened to chill by the grotesque violence of his electioneering methods. Even the surprise excited by the appointment of Mr. Churchill as Under-Secretary for the Colonies was for the most part courteously concealed. It is true that he himself, having been given an office which under the circumstances of the moment was one of the most important in the Administration, thought it necessary to make an early opportunity of explaining to the public that his self-effacement in accepting a "subordinate" position might be justified from the national standpoint by the security it provided for effective control of Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons. But the surprise of others than Mr. Churchill himself was not caused by his modesty, as he appears to have assumed, but by the proof his appointment afforded that the Liberal rank and file did not contain sufficient talent to man an Administration without resort to eleventh-hour deserters from the opposite camp. As to the head of the New Government, no one thought much about him one way or another before the election, except to wonder whether his colleagues would prevail in persuading him to go to the Lords, or his dread of Lord Rosebery in keeping him in the Commons.

In fact, when Radical pæans proclaimed that a Ministry of all the talents had replaced "the worst Government that ever was known," Unionists were content good-humouredly to await the subsidence of the clamour and see how far events would vindicate the bombast. For whatever might be the state of political opinion in the country, the idea that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had brought together a combination