

and warned the railroads that their continued management of the public highways will depend upon the effectiveness of the legislative control. What democrat can say less? What democrat would advise making the democratic party the champion of the railroads in the fight which is approaching? Aside from the principle involved, it would be suicidal to the party to take a position which would alienate the patrons of the railroads and please only the railroad magnates who have for a generation been discriminating

against persons and places, extorting from the public through rates unreasonably high and corrupting politics in every part of the country.

Regulation is to have a fair trial, but the railroads must know that their interference in politics will only hasten the day of public ownership, and the people ought to be considering whether in event of government ownership they will prefer the centralization plan of national ownership or the dual plan, which contemplates the national ownership of the trunk lines and the state ownership of all other lines.

England's New Liberal Government

Mr. Bryan's Thirty-ninth Letter

Great Britain has recently experienced one of the greatest political revolutions she has ever known. The conservative party, with Mr. Balfour, one of the ablest of modern scholars, at its head and with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, a powerful orator and a forceful political leader, as its most conspicuous champion, had won a sweeping victory after the Boer war and this victory following a long lease of power led the Conservatives to believe themselves invincible. They assumed, as parties made confident by success often do, that they are indispensable to the nation and paid but little attention to the warnings and threats of the Liberals. One mistake after another, however, alienated the voters and the special elections two years ago began to show a falling off in the Conservative strength and when the general election was held last fall the Liberals rolled up a majority of something like two hundred in the House of Commons. A new ministry was formed from among the ablest men of the party—a ministry of radical and progressive men seldom equalled in moral purpose and intellectual strength. My main purpose in visiting London at this time was to become acquainted with the personnel of the new government and learn of their program.

Before speaking of the ministers, just a word in regard to the king, who is the head of the government whether it be liberal or conservative. The government of Great Britain is always in harmony with the House of Commons and as the ministers speak for the king, he does not emphasize the virtue of consistency, for he may be put in the attitude of advocating a thing today and opposing it tomorrow. He is not expected to have opinions upon public questions or, if he has them, they are always presented with the understanding that if the ministers will not adopt his views he will adopt theirs. It is much easier to be a king now than it used to be and the burdens of a monarchy have been very much lightened in the nations which, like England, recognize the omnipotence of parliament.

I was very glad to avail myself of the opportunity offered by a private audience to meet his majesty, King Edward, and to be assured of his personal interest in the promotion of peace. The king has a very genial face and makes the visitor feel at ease at once. He has a knowledge of world politics and by his tact and good nature has done much to promote cordial relations between his own and other countries. It may not be out of place to correct an impression that has gone abroad with regard to the style of dress required of those who are admitted to the presence of the king. Because knee breeches are worn at court functions many have understood, and I among them, that they were required on all occasions; but this is not the case. Most of the calls made upon him informally are made before dinner and the ordinary black coat is worn. The requirements are not as strict as they are in Russia, Japan and Sweden, where I was advised to wear an evening suit for a morning call.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, a sturdy Scotchman, is the new prime minister, and those who know him intimately feel that his selection is a vindication of the doctrine that patience and courage, when joined with merit, are invincible. He is now well advanced in years and during his entire public career has stood unflinchingly for democratic ideas. He has not been discouraged by the fact that he has often been in the minority; on the contrary, he has felt as confident in his position when he has had to maintain it amid taunts and jeers as when his speeches brought forth applause. He is not as great an orator as Gladstone, but he has a very

persuasive manner and his fine sense of humor gives brilliancy to his speeches.

In outlining the policy of the Liberal party last December, he credited the victory at the polls to several causes—the tariff question, the Chinese question, the educational problem and municipal questions. He pledged his party to certain reforms and boldly advocated a reduction of military and naval expenses. He pointed out that there could be no retrenchment in taxation if the appropriations for armaments and for armies continued to increase. He has been called a "little Englander," but that did not deter him from uttering a protest against the rivalry which seems to be going on in Europe in the building of warships.

In view of his utterances in favor of arbitration and against militarism it was most appropriate that he should deliver the address of welcome at the recent session of the Interparliamentary Union, better known as the peace congress. His speech on that occasion was an epoch-making deliverance. In no uncertain tones he threw the influence of his ministry on the side of peace and opened the door for the adoption of a far-reaching proposition in favor of the submission of all questions to investigation before hostilities are commenced. He used the North Sea incident as an illustration and urged the extension of the powers of the board of inquiry. His now famous exclamation, "The Duma is dead—long live the Duma," illustrates both his moral courage and his devotion to representative government. The sentence was a part of his peace congress speech and was uttered in the presence of the Duma representatives who left Russia before the proroguing of that body. It electrified the audience and has been widely commented on throughout Europe.

Few premiers have had so large a majority back of them or possessed so fully the confidence of their supporters and the program prepared by the ministry is a most comprehensive one. It is too much to expect that the Liberal majority can be maintained on all the questions which will be under discussion, but it is evident that the new government will have a number of important reforms to its credit when it finishes its work.

The president of the house of lords, the lord chancellor, is one of the most popular of the Liberal leaders. His name is Robert Reed and he is also a Scotchman. He is a rare combination and one of the most lovable of men. There is a striking resemblance between him and the Edinburgh statue of Walter Scott and in his heart there is the democracy of Burns. With high ideals, an eloquent tongue and a disposition which attracts men to him, he is especially fitted for public life, and it is to be regretted that upon retirement from his present position he becomes a judge, for the bench does not afford an equal opportunity with the forum for the moulding of public opinion.

The foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, is a man who would attract attention anywhere by the strength of his face. He reminded me of the late William M. Everts of New York. He played an important part in the campaign which led up to the Liberal victory and his selection was regarded as a fitting one. His position, however, is not so difficult to fill, because Great Britain's relations with the other powers are quite amicable.

We extended our stay in London in order to hear the minister of war, Mr. Haldane, make his argument in favor of a reduction in the size and cost of the army. By the courtesy of our ambassador, Hon. Whitelaw Reid, I had an excellent seat in the gallery of the House of Com-

mons. The reader may be interested in a brief sketch of this most ancient of parliaments and most powerful of all the factors which enter into the political life of the British Isles. The hall will seat sixty per cent of the members—an astonishing fact to an American who is accustomed to see each of his senators, congressmen and state legislators with a seat assigned to him for the session. The members who are present sit on cushioned benches, resembling church pews, and these benches rise one above another on either side of the hall. The Liberals sit on the right of the speaker and the front bench is reserved for the ministry. The Conservatives occupy the benches at the speaker's left, the front bench being reserved for the leaders of the opposition. On the left, but farther from the speaker, are the Irish members and the Labor members. There is a narrow gallery on each side which is occupied by members when there is a large attendance and a small gallery in the rear for visitors. The ladies gallery is just over the speaker's desk and is so carefully screened that the occupants of the gallery can not be recognized from the floor. While no one, least of all the ladies, seems to defend this screen, it still remains. Most of the members wear their hats in the hall, but as they have no desks they can not write when a colleague is speaking, although I was told of one member who occasionally occupied his time knitting.

As parliament virtually selects the ministers and as these ministers are responsible to parliament rather than to the king, they must attend the sessions at stated times and answer questions. Any member of parliament is at liberty to submit a question in writing and the minister is obliged to give answer, provided, of course, answer would not make an improper disclosure.

The leaders, facing each other from the opposing benches, present a very interesting picture and after listening to the discussions back and forth, one can understand why free speech has had so large an influence in the development of the political institutions of Great Britain. Here every idea is threshed out and every measure moulded into permanent form.

But to return to the minister of war. Mr. Haldane might be taken for Tom L. Johnson, Cleveland's redoubtable mayor, so much is he like him in face and figure. He is plausible in speech and so good natured that no one can be angry with him, however much he may dissent from his conclusions. For two hours he held the attention of the house and gallery—an unusual feat in London where the speeches are not so long as in America. He was frequently encouraged by cries of "Hear! Hear!" the usual applause in the House of Commons. It was noticeable that the heartiest responses were drawn forth by his expressions in favor of peace and arbitration. The re-organization scheme which he presented provides for a reduction of several thousand men and a considerable decrease in the total cost, but to make the scheme more acceptable the remaining regiments are so disposed as to give the country a larger fighting force than it now has. It was interesting to watch the opposition benches whose able leaders vigorously attack everything that the new government proposes. Ex-war Minister Foster followed Mr. Haldane and picked flaws in his plans, but he did not receive the attention accorded the war minister.

The army question is arousing considerable interest, and the government bill is likely to have more opposition in the House of Lords than in the Commons. In fact, Lord Roberts has already attacked the bill in advance in a speech which affords conclusive proof of the tendency of man to magnify his own calling. Nothing better illustrates the conservatism of the House of Lords than the fact that the Liberal party can claim but one-tenth of the membership of that body while it has two hundred majority in the popular branch of parliament. It must not be supposed, however, that all the bills passed by the House of Commons will be defeated in the House of Lords, for while a large majority of that house may really oppose a measure they recognize that the very existence of their body would be jeopardized if it opposed the people on any important question. Nominally the House of Lords has an equal voice with the House of Commons, in the enactment of laws, but as a matter of fact it does not dare to exercise the power which it has.

The navy department has reduced the appropriation for large vessels and it is certain that at the next Hague conference Great Britain will be