

Ex-Premier Sees Political Storm

Socialists Striking at Capital

Average Citizen Unaware of Growth of Radical Group's Power, Declares Lloyd George.

Warns of Indifference

By THE RT. HONORABLE DAVID LLOYD GEORGE, O. M., M. P. (Former British Prime Minister). Copyright, 1923 by United Feature Syndicate. Copyright in Great Britain by Lloyd George. Copyright in Australia by Australian Press Association. Exclusive World Rights Held by United Feature Syndicate. Reproduction in Whole or in Part Prohibited. All Rights Reserved.

London, April 21.—A few weeks ago I predicted that the comparative calm which has prevailed in the political seas of Britain during the past few years was coming to an end. Recent parliamentary scenes leave no doubt that the prolonged political depression is to be followed by a period of storms—it may be hurricanes.

No amount of organization or propaganda can excite a deal of feeling in an electorate over trivial and unreal issues. The war was real enough. Why the cabinet split in 1917? Who was responsible? Should a general election have taken place in 1918 or 1919? Ought the open and declared opponents of the government of the day to have then received government support, or at least government neutrality?

These are questions which agitate a few who are personally interested, but they leave the nation cold. But the war was supported by men of all parties and therefore provoked no political controversy. The minority which opposed it was negligible and challenged no parliamentary discussion on the question. The treaty of peace was on the whole accepted by all parties when first submitted to parliament. The leaders of the opposition parties in the lords and commons at the time of its presentation offered no serious criticism of its provisions. Legislation proposed by the Coalition—although in ordinary seasons much of it would have aroused angry passions—coming as it did after the war had exhausted emotion, passed with no more than a feeble murmur of protest.

Underlying Causes. Take, for instance, such controversial topics as adult suffrage, enfranchisement of women, wholesale reductions in hours of labor, representative government in India, and notably the conferring upon Ireland of a measure of home rule more complete than any proposed by Gladstone. Any one of these measures proposed

before the war would have led to heated discussion throughout the land. The case of Ireland is, perhaps, most significant of the changed temper of the nation immediately after the great war. The conflict over Irish home rule has now culminated in a treaty accepted by the nation as a whole and acquiesced in by the most violent amongst its opponents. But fiercer political passions were stirred up by the struggle between parties over Ireland than by any political question of modern times.

The causes underlying the conflict dealt with two of the most powerful motives which make the human heart throb—race and religion. There was an old feud between Saxon and Gael extending over at least seven centuries. It drenched the moors of Ireland with the blood of both races before a new sting was given to its hatred by the introduction of an acute religious quarrel. After the reformation, the religious differences which rent Europe with fratricidal wars added fresh fury to racial enmities which made poor Ireland a cauldron of perpetual strife.

Parliament Aroused. When Gladstone proposed to settle this raging tumult by wresting supremacy from a race which had been dominant in that island for 700 years, and a faith which had been supreme there for 400 years, and transferred it to the race and religion which all that time had been in a condition of servitude; and when, in order to attain his ends, he had to secure adhesion of men of ruling blood and creed to his proposals, the passions raised were deeper and angrier than any witnessed in British politics for many a day. It led for the first time in the history of parliament to scenes of physical violence on the floor of the house.

It shows what we may expect when there are genuine divisions of opinion which profoundly move masses of men and women in a democracy. Those who recall the tropical heat of the parliamentary debates in 1833 naturally regard their voyage through the frigid proceedings of the last parliament as they would a sail through Arctic seas. That voyage is now over, and there are signs that the waters will soon be lashed into fury.

For years political controversy between parties has been suspended in the presence of a common danger. Reaction was inevitable, and the greater the suppression the more violent the rebound. That does not, however, altogether account for the ominous visible of a coming struggle unprecedented in its gravity. Fundamental issues have been raised of such moment to millions that they cannot be settled without a struggle that will rock society.

Gusts and Gales Expected. The scene enacted in the commons a few days ago was by no means as exciting as that which some of us witnessed in 1833. But it gave me an uneasy feeling that the period of calm is definitely over and that parliament henceforth must expect gusts and gales—and worse. Emotions are once more welling up, and there are signs of a great stir coming in British politics. The cause is easily explained. The sense of exhaustion is passing away, and issues containing

a serious challenge to the privileges and rights of powerful classes in the community, and vital to the interests of all classes, have been raised by one of the great political parties that divide Britain.

The momentous character of that challenge may be gathered from the terms of the motion submitted by Philip Snowden to the judgment of the house of commons: "That in view of the failure of the capitalist system to adequately utilize and organize natural resources and productive power, or to provide a necessary standard of life for vast numbers of the population, and believing that the cause of this failure lies in private ownership and control of means of production and distribution, this house declares that legislative effort should be directed to gradual supersession of the capitalist system by an industrial and social order based on public ownership and democratic control of instruments of production and distribution."

Supported by Labor. This motion will receive the full support of every member of the labor party. A few men outside the socialist party who have acquainted themselves with the publications of that party were quite prepared for this demand of complete change in the organization of society. And as they saw that party grow with startling rapidity they knew we should not have long to wait before subversive ideas would be formulated in the house of commons. Still, even for students of socialist literature, the actual introduction of the resolution on behalf of the second largest party in the state came as a surprise and a shock. Too much credit was given to the restraining influence of the trade union section of the party. Sir Lynden Macassey, in his informing book on "Labor Policy, False and True," points out that it was in 1885 that the first avowed advocates of this proposal for the abolition of private property and for nationalization of all means of production and distribution first stood for parliament. There were only two candidates standing on this platform, and they polled 32 and 29 votes respectively.

At the last election the aggregate socialist poll reached the imposing figure of 4,251,011 votes. The party that secured a majority of member in the house of commons polled only 5,467,871 votes. Ramsey MacDonald states categorically that he knows that independent liberal members—exclusive of their leaders—favor nationalization and a capital levy. If that be an accurate statement of the views of the majority of these gentlemen and of those who elect them, nearly one-half of the British electorate already is prepared to assent to socialism in easy stages—which is the purport of Philip Snowden's motion.

Capital to Be Arranged. On that assumption we are on the eve of greater and more fundamental changes affecting the lives of every class and condition of men and women than has yet been seen in this country. Hence the new sense of struggle with which the political atmosphere is palpating. Capitalism is to be arraigned before the supreme court of the nation, condemned, sentenced and executed by installments—Chinese fashion. The composition of

that court is not today favorable to the prosecution. But who will be the judges after the next general election?

It is customary in a political controversy to state that the election which is for the moment impending will be the most epoch-making in history. Without exaggeration, the next British election may well turn out to be so. The British people, with their inherited political instinct, are beginning to realize that grave decisions must then be taken. Hence the greater keenness shown by the voters at bye-elections—hence the new interest taken by the public in the proceedings of parliament.

Still Much Apathy. There is still a good deal of apathy and indifference. The average comfortable citizen is still inclined to think these socialist schemes so crazy as to be impossible. They cannot believe that 21,000,000 of sane people can possibly contemplate giving their sanction to such fantasies. There are two cardinal facts which are constantly overlooked by the complacent. The men and women who have no property for the state to seize constitute an overwhelming majority of the electors of the country. The second fact of note is the great preponderance of the industrial population over the staid and more stolid agricultural population.

America, in spite of its gigantic manufacturing and distributing industries, still retains 60 per cent of its population on the land. The same proportion of the French and Italian populations is agrarian. Barely 10 per cent of British workers are engaged in cultivating the soil. Most of our workers breathe and have their being in the crowded and excitable atmosphere of factories, workshops and mines. The air is filled with germs of all kinds, and isolation in these thronging areas is impossible. Hence the rapidity with which the fever has spread. Can it be arrested?

Prophets Laughed At. Nothing will be done until the danger is visible to every eye. To vary the metaphor, no one will believe in the flood until it is upon us. Trained weather prophets who forecast its coming will be laughed at or told they have a personal or party interest in ark-building.

It is an old tale—as old as the dawn of history. "As in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking and knew not until the flood came and took them all away." The trouble can be averted only in two ways. One is systematic inculcation of sound doctrines of economic truth into the minds of the working people of this country. The second, and more important, is the rooting out of social evils which furnish the revolutionary with striking and indelible object lessons of the failure of the capitalist system as an agent of human happiness. Without the latter the former effort will be futile. Arguments in favor of the existing order will be refuted by glaring and

painful facts. Meanwhile, let the champions of that order take note of the efforts put forth by the socialists to advertise their eagerness to redress the wrongs of the ex-service men, and to soften the asperities of discipline for the soldier.

The socialist leaders have shrewdly taken note of the causes that produced the overthrow of their Italian brethren, and they mean to take such steps as will ensure that if fascism comes in Britain it will be an ally and not a foe.

Boy Who "Sassed" Judge Gets Sterner Sentence
Lawrence, Mass., April 21.—"Where do you get that stuff?" shouted Louis Schulze, 17, when Judge Mahoney intimated he would send the youth, who was charged with delinquency, to the Shirley school. Judge Mahoney changed his mind and sentenced Schulze to Concord reformatory.

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