

British Making Old Political Parties Over and Seeking For New Reconstruction Leaders

London, Aug. 20.—The war has proved a fatal melting-pot to many world institutions, but nowhere has its effects been more marked than in British politics. American and the rest of the world would do well to watch closely the rapidly changing aspects of the situation, for all the old parties are being made over, many favorite policies are being scrapped, and many of the old leaders jettisoned, having failed to test true in the fire of war and reconstruction.

British politicians and the voters are now searching for three things:

A MAN—Wanted by the old parties as a leader.

A PARTY—Wanted by several self-styled "men."

A POLICY—Wanted by the parties, the would-be men, and the general public. And here is where the rest of the world becomes interested, for it is an on-looker.

A number of possible candidates for the first job is remarkably small. The average citizen would tell you, most likely, that there is only one—David Lloyd George, the "little Welsh wizard" who received such an extraordinary national welcome on his return from the conference table at Paris. But Lloyd George would be the first to admit that he is no stranger to the other side of political fame, and for some years before the war he was probably the most bitterly cursed man in England. Nineteen years ago he had to flee for his life, disguised in a policeman's uniform, to escape a "patriotic" mob who resented his championship of the Boer farmers with whom Great Britain was then at war.

Lloyd George is the one outstanding character in British political life today, and by sheer hard work, flashes of intuitive genius and personal magnetism he has lined up practically the whole country behind him.

But what he needs is a party. Formerly leader of the radical wing of the Liberal party he automatically succeeded

H. H. Asquith in the party favor, when the latter was compelled to resign the premiership, and the coalition government was formed by Lloyd George in 1916. The coalition has served its purpose and like most such temporary expedients shows signs of early disruption. Who is Lloyd George going to lead then? is the question agitating politicians.

The old Liberal and conservative parties have suffered too many casualties to be able to set up in business again. The conservatives have their own little "tin gods," and will not adopt Lloyd George. What the majority of the old Liberals will do is a puzzle. Although no longer in parliament (he was overwhelmed in the election just before Christmas) Herbert H. Asquith is still the leader of a bunch of Liberals, who now politically unimportant are contemptuously styled the "Wee Frees." Asquith is a dead letter, but he can still rob Lloyd George of some supporters.

The conservatives are nominally united under Andrew Bonar Law, but Law apparently does not aspire to be the man the country is advertising for. He was only a stop-gap alternative, when elected to succeed Arthur James Balfour in the party leadership in 1911—a buffer between the irreconcilable rancor of Austen Chamberlain and Walter Hume Long respectively. He has proved himself a capable and conscientious statesman, but he lacks personal magnetism indispensable for a great party leader. The remainder of the conservative leaders may be eliminated from the contest, Chamberlain and Long being relegated to the "have-beens" and Balfour desirous of retiring from political life on account of his great age.

The only two serious rivals to Lloyd George in the personality contest are Winston S. Churchill, at present war secretary, and Robert Smillie, miners' leader, and a mercurial king of British labor. Both have the magnetic gift, and both

will go far, according to the prophets and close observers. If he had never taken over the war office in the coalition government, Churchill might have successfully challenged Lloyd George for the leadership of the combined Liberal and labor parties, but his handling of demobilization and the Russian expedition has aroused bitter resentment among laborites and a section of the Liberal party. That Churchill will be premier of England some day is certain, declare most experts, but he will probably have to lie low for a bit.

Smillie is the "dark horse." He is not a new man, but his parliamentary career has been brief and obscure, for he has generally been defeated in typical Scotch labor constituencies by his own countrymen, who nevertheless gave him full power to bargain for them industrially. Since he has been president of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, he has been easily the outstanding figure in the labor world. The favorites then for prime minister are, David Lloyd George, Winston Churchill and Robert Smillie. It might be said that Smillie's party is obvious and ready-made—the labor party, but that is not so, for he had a curious sequence of parliamentary defeats.

For Lloyd George and Churchill there is a bill on offer. A new organization, the center party has arisen, a combination of progressive Liberals and conservatives, and Lloyd George and Churchill would appear to be the natural leaders. Overtures have been made, but although it is said that Churchill is willing, Lloyd George has "nothing to say." Doubtless they are sizing up the situation and weighing their prospects of success.

Is the new center party to provide the solution of Great Britain's political difficulties? And will Premier Lloyd George adopt the latest political infant and undertake to lead it to the promised land of office?

These questions are agitating Britain, although it is generally believed the answer to both is in the affirmative. When, a few weeks ago War Secretary Winston Churchill, accepted an invitation to dine at the Criterion restaurant with the energetic bunch of younger politicians who called themselves the Center Coalition group, he came straight from Lloyd George's home, after interviewing the premier, and proceeded to

bless the Center Coalition group and its aims.

Among his fellow guests were the two great party managers and election controllers, Captain Hon. Frederick Guest, Chief Liberal whip, and Sir George Younger, chief unionist whip. Further the company was honored by the presence of Lord Chancellors Birkenhead, formerly Frederick E. Smith, one of the most brilliant lawyers and house of commons debaters of his party. Of course both "Freddie" Birkenhead and "Winnie" Churchill have long been bosom friends although of different political parties, but both are restless and ambitious spirits and not given to wasting time on complimentary dinners unless there is something to it.

The Center Coalition group modestly refrained from advertising the honor done them, but it came out and immediately the political experts hailed the birth of a new party. It was openly stated that Churchill had attended the gathering as the representative of Lloyd George and as Sir George Younger's presence was taken to confer Andrew Bonar Law's blessing in the movement, the Center party was immediately saddled with three chieftains. That is, added with Lloyd George as high priest, and Church and Bonar Law as assistants.

Churchill smiled and affected to treat the matter as a joke, when questioned, Lloyd George said "I have nothing to say," and Bonar Law smiled. Not enough evidence for conviction, perhaps, but it was not a denial, and the wisecracker easily made out their case. And, one does not have to study British politics very closely to see how likely and even desirable it would be.

Lloyd George, the one outstanding figure in a singularly barren political age, has no party. He has always been a Liberal, but his late chief Herbert H. Asquith, who was ousted from the premiership over the shells scandal, is still the official leader of the Liberal party, and a devoted band of Liberals under Sir Donald Macleod, insist that he is still the one and only leader. Moreover, Sir Donald and the "Wee Frees" as the Asquithian Liberals are called in parliament, do not approve of all Lloyd George's policies.

The schism in the Liberal ranks is even greater in the conservative party for the aggressive Austen Chamberlain and Walter Hume Long factions, have

shed sub-groups following Sir Edward Carson and Lord Robert Cecil. Andrew Bonar Law is the nominal leader but he was never more than a stop-gap destined to conciliate the Chamberlain and Long groups, and he does not seem desirous of striking out a line for himself.

The old Liberal and conservative parties have been killed by the war, and can never expect to resume independent operations when the present coalition government splits up. If they attempted to they would almost assuredly be overwhelmed by a combination of labor groups, since the formation of a Center party composed of the progressive elements of the two old parties would be the logical solution.

The one thing required is a definite policy. Lloyd George undoubtedly has one ready, a strong, progressive policy which will take in many moderate labor men who are at present a bit scared by the bolshevik tendencies of the official labor leaders.

How soon? England is asking.

With the rumblings of approaching dissolution shaking the coalition government, and recent developments in the industrial world, all eyes are turned on the labor party in the house of commons and the question "How long before a labor government is in power?" which would have been laughed at ten years ago, is asked seriously.

For labor alone of the political parties stands better than ever before, and political experts declare that labor can never expect to find itself in a more favorable position, politically. The coalition is doomed, but neither of the old parties, Liberal and conservatives, can go back to their pre-war status. Many old leaders have been thrown overboard, policies have been modified or abandoned, and the breaking up of the coalition would leave them shivering like the babes in the wood, uncertain which way to turn or who to look to.

Labour is not absolutely united in parliament, there being several groups, known as the labor party, the independent labor party, the miners representatives and numerous free-lances like Colonel John Ward, the "navy" M. P. who was promoted to the command of a battalion in the war, C. B. Stanton, one-time miners agent, Commander J. H. Wedgewood, one-time Liberal and Jack Jones, the "common people's member" from east London.

The independent labor party contains the "intellectuals" like Philip Snowden, Ramsey MacDonald, Sidney Webb and other regular socialists but for the purposes of a labor government they would unite with the larger group. And in the two groups there are many good men, who would doubtless make excellent statesmen, and who would have the support of people ordinarily bitterly hostile to labor.

There are George N. Barnes, cabinet minister, who fathered the labor covenant of the peace treaty; G. H. Roberts, food controller, in the present government; Stephen Walsh, at present holding a minor government post; William Bragg, Vernon Harcourt, W. H. Thomas, James O'Grady, J. H. Thomas, railwayman's leader; William Adamson, the official leader of the labor party; Arthur Henderson and last but not least, Robert Smillie, president of the Miners Federation of Great Britain.

Of these Smillie stands out most prominently, from the vigorous part he has taken in the settling of post-war labor problems, and he is probably the most powerful man in the labor world today. Whether he or any of the others have the makings of a premier remains to be seen but they have a fine chance just now to formulate a sensible, reasoned program and secure the spoils of office.

It is practically certain that labor, today, could defeat both of the old political parties working independently, and the proposed Center party, a combination of the two could not be certain of securing a majority over the united ranks of parliamentary labor. The formation of a new party is always a source of strength to its opponents, for sections are inevitable and in the uncertainty labor would undoubtedly gain as a result.

The main problem for labor to solve is whether the extremists are to prevail. At the last election the extremists were roughly treated at the polls, but while there has been the inevitable reaction since the signing of peace, their policy is not popular. If the moderates like Adamson, Bragg, Barnes, Thomas and Roberts can retain control of a labor cabinet is not only possible but extremely probable.

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GOULET WILL BE THE CHIEF OF POLICE AT STATE FAIR.

County Commissioner Goulet was here on business from Woodburn Saturday. He stated that state and county road work is making good progress everywhere in Marion county. He hopes to see the Pacific Highway from Woodburn to Aurora fully completed this fall. The pavement is now nearly a mile this side of the railroad crossing at Woodburn.

Mr. Goulet has been named chief of the State Fair police this year. He was chief of the mounted force last year. He will have some 40 or 50 men to police the grounds.—Aurora Observer.

FIRE AT LONE ELDER.

A fire Saturday evening about 6 o'clock at Lone Elder, destroyed the barn and outbuildings belonging to Chris Goebel. The damage is reported to be \$500 or \$600. The house was saved, though it caught fire four times. In addition to the buildings, 15 tons of hay, 25 cords of wood, and all farm implements were burned. The family were away from home at the time the fire started. Mrs. Goebel who was at a neighbors saw the fire and gave the alarm. How the fire started is not known.—Aurora Observer.

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MT. ANGEL'S WATER SUPPLY.

Mt. Angel's city council has been trying its best for over a year to get a well dug that would furnish ample water for all city purposes, but has been unfortunately delayed on every turn in its effort to attain its end. Seemingly the fates have been against them and the growing demand for water for private purposes has made it imperative in protecting the supply for fire combating purposes to demand under penalty of disconnection, to use the city water for sprinkling lawns, streets and for irrigation purposes, until October 6, the mayor having issued a proclamation to this effect. The work on the 10-inch well now being dug is being crowded and the present condition should soon be remedied.

Arrangements have been practically completed for the location of one of the county's three water plants at Mt. Angel. The county court and Road Engineer Culver were in the city last Tuesday and after inspecting the rock on the butte belonging to the Beneficent Fathers, a pronounced it the best kind of rock for paving purposes, and due to the liberal offer of the Fathers of ample rock from their quarry without cost for road purposes in this vicinity for the country's for the county's requirements in its present program, they have decided to locate the plant and are completing arrangements for yard room on the Southern Pacific track immediately south of the N. Schmalz warehouse property.

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