

The News of the Week.

OLD COUNTRY.

FORCED LEGISLATION.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

The British Government has introduced a special procedure resolution of the guillotine type in order to greatly accelerate the passage of the Scotch Small Landowners and the Land Values Bills. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman said the House of Commons had maturely considered the bills, and it was unnecessary to waste time by debating them again. Mr. Balfour strongly denied that they had been adequately discussed in the House of Commons. Referring to the by-election, the ex-Premier said the Government was not in a position to revolutionise the constitution of the House of Lords.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's "guillotine" resolution was carried by 331 votes to 84.

In the House of Lords Lord Camperdown's Small Holdings (Scotland) Bill was read a first time.

The bill avoids the Land Court, divided ownership, and other contentious features of the Government's bill, which the Lords threw out last year, and follows the main lines of the English Small Holdings Act of 1907.

[The English Small Holdings and Allotment Act, which came into force on January 1, 1908, provides for allotments up to five acres in extent and for small holdings up to fifty acres or £50 in value. The measure creates two Small Holdings Commissionerships to be filled by the Board of Agriculture, with the consent of the Treasury. The Commissioners' duty is to ascertain the extent to which there is a demand for small holdings in each county "or would be a demand if suitable land were available." The county council is to give them assistance, and in return to receive information as to the existence of a demand. Finally, the Commissioners may inform the council that "a scheme should be made." It will then be the Council's duty to formulate one or more schemes, failing which the Commissioners, having the powers of a Council, may do so themselves. The Act also extends the period for the repayment of Council loans for this purpose to 80 years, and makes other important provisions in detail. The Scottish bill, which came to grief in the House of Lords last year, and is replaced by the measure mentioned in the above cable, applied the Crofters' Act's throughout Scotland, constituted a Land Court instead of the Crofters' Commission, and appointed three Agricultural Commissioners in place of the Congested Districts Board. The ascertaining of the demand for land is provided for, as in the English bill. The details of the measure were necessarily different.]

STATE-OWNED RAILWAYS.

Government's Attitude.

The resolution of Mr. G. A. Hardy (Liberal member for the Stowmarket Division of Suffolk) in favour of an inquiry into the question of the State purchase of railways was talked out, though it was elicited that Mr. Lloyd-George (President of the Board of Trade) had offered to inquire how far evils could be remedied by any change in the relations between the railways and the State.

RECENT INDICATIONS OF CHANGE.

The Railway Servants' Congress last October passed a resolution, with only two dissentients, in favour of the State ownership of British railways, on the grounds of certain evils, including (1) the tendency to pool profits; (2) the giving of preferential rates to foreign producers and manufacturers; and (3) the material effect of excessive competition on the position of the railway workers.

At Liverpool last September Lord Brassey strongly urged the nationalisation of the railways before the Associated Chambers of Commerce. "We are per-

haps on the eve of a great change of policy. We see what is taking place in Continental Europe. In Germany and in Russia, in Belgium, and more recently in Italy, the railways have become the property of the State. The requirements of the public are fully considered. The results to the Exchequer have been satisfactory.

"If we were taking a new departure today," continued Lord Brassey, "there can hardly be a question as to what Parliament would do. It is difficult to change a policy to which we have long adhered." Lord Brassey showed that the capital value of the railways was twice the amount of the National debt, and suggested beginning with State ownership in Ireland.

SENTENCE ON VELTHEIM.

TWENTY YEARS IN GAOL.

The trial of Franz Moritz Ludwig von Veltheim, charged with attempting to blackmail Mr. Solly Joel, a brother of Mr. Woolf Joel, who was shot at Johannsburg in 1898 by the prisoner, has been concluded.

Veltheim was severely cross-examined, and Mr. Joel was recalled to prove that prisoner's version of his interviews with the late Mr. Barney Barnato was inconsistent with facts.

The judge having summed up, the jury retired and finally returned with a verdict of guilty.

The judge spoke in terms of the strongest condemnation of the prisoner's life of crime, and sent him to penal servitude for twenty years.

Inspector Pentin gave an outline of prisoner's history. According to police accounts from various countries, his real name was Kurtze, his father having been a forger.

Prisoner had been a bad character from childhood. He was a sailor in the German navy in 1880, and deserted the same year, being suspected of stealing his captain's gold watch and seal bearing a family crest. The captain's name was von Veltheim.

Later on prisoner served aboard a British merchantman. He went in 1880 to Fremantle and Perth, where, in 1887, he married a Miss Maria Yearse. He then went to Capetown, and his wife went to England, and became acquainted with a gentleman whom prisoner, on rejoining his wife, attempted to blackmail. Prisoner was told that the matter would be placed in the hands of the police, but continued to write threatening letters to his wife's friend.

Veltheim next bigamously married and defrauded and deserted several women. He obtained £1500 from one, and underwent a supposed secret marriage with a young American lady at Saint Cloud, one of his friends on that occasion impersonating a priest.

Later the prisoner obtained from a German widow whom he previously knew, and now promised to marry, £2800 to invest on her behalf. She, finding he had squandered the amount, committed suicide. Prisoner served with the Cape mounted police, and, being requested to resign, began to blackmail the Joels, one of whom (Woolf Joel) he shot dead.

Later he raised a large sum of money on the pretence of being able to unearth Kruger's buried treasure, amounting to £5,000,000.

Mr. Justice Phillimore, in emphasising the fact that the prisoner had been found guilty of one of the most serious crimes, declared that the sentence and the punishment must be equally preventive.

The prisoner was stunned on hearing the sentence.

WOMEN SUFFRAGISTS.

RAID FROM FURNITURE VAN.

FIFTY ARRESTS AT HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

A conference of suffragettes was held at Caxton Hall, the delegates representing all parts of England. Mrs. Patrick Lawrence presided, and associated

with her were Misses Pankhurst and Kennedy, well-known leaders of the movement.

It was unanimously resolved to demand the introduction immediately of a measure to extend the franchise to women, and to appoint a deputation to see the Prime Minister (Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman).

While the meeting was in progress a previously arranged raid on the House of Commons was developing. A pantheist van stopped at the entrance of St. Stephen's Hall (that portion of the Houses of Parliament which affords communication between the Central Hall and Westminster Hall on the west), and its back doors swung open, and the 30 suffragettes emerged and endeavoured to storm the entrance.

The police arrested 20, and the rest were repulsed. A second vanload met with the same fate.

Contingents from Caxton Hall then arrived in quick succession, with the intention of compelling 150 arrests, but lack of spirit on the part of the militants and the determination of the police to effect only necessary arrests, totalling 50, defeated the scheme.

One of the suffragettes who participated in the raid on the House of Commons on 12th inst. was fined 40s. in default one month's imprisonment. The others were bound over in sureties to keep the peace, with the alternative of six weeks' imprisonment.

One defendant, who was 70 years of age, was discharged, and seemed disappointed. All except two chose imprisonment.

The prisoners, on going to Holloway Gaol, sent the following message:—

"All well and very cheerful. The only thing we care about is that the Government shall be forced to yield the franchise to women. We are keener than ever. Heavy sentences will not deter us, and we consider them an indication that the Government is afraid of our agitation."

As the authorities have been hinting at the existence of the Act of Charles II, prohibiting more than 10 from approaching Parliament with a petition, Mrs. Pankhurst (chief organiser of the Women's Social and Political Union), Miss Annie Kenney (also an organiser), and 11 others, in order to challenge its enforcement, left the conference at Caxton Hall for St. Stephen's (that portion of the Houses of Parliament which affords communication between the Central Hall and Westminster Hall on the west), and declined to disperse.

Ten were arrested, and were disappointed because they were not prosecuted under the Act, but merely charged with obstructing and resisting the police.

Miss Kenney, another suffragette arrested whilst attempting to storm the Houses of Parliament, was fined £5, with the alternative of a month's imprisonment.

Seven other defendants were ordered to enter into sureties to keep the peace, in default to be imprisoned for six weeks. All the defendants elected to go to gaol.

THE STATE OF IRELAND.

Balfour Urges Force.

In committee in the House of Commons last week, while the vote for the expenses of Irish prosecutions was under discussion, Mr. John Roche (Nationalist member for Galway East) insinuated that Lord Ashdown had been implicated in an attempt to manufacture a bogus outrage at Woodlawn for political purposes.

Mr. R. R. Cherry (Attorney-General for Ireland) and Mr. Balfour (Leader of the Opposition) both declared that there was not the slightest foundation for this abominable accusation. The debate also dealt with the paralysis of the jury system under the ordinary law.

Mr. Birrell (Chief Secretary for Ireland) admitted the deplorable failure of the prosecutions for cattle-driving, and remarked of boycotting, "I wish to God it would cease!"

Mr. Balfour insisted that the prosecutions had been a sham from beginning to end, adding, "Force is the only remedy against crime."

THE LAST OF THE GOOLDS.

The sentence of death passed upon Mrs. Gould for the murder of Madame Levin has been commuted to penal servitude for life.

[Gould escaped the death sentence on the ground that he was an irresponsible degenerate, but Mrs. Gould was condemned to death as the main mover in the murder of Mrs. Levin, the wealthy English lady who was treacherously murdered by stabbing in the rooms of the Goolds at Monte Carlo.]

The warders at Wormwood Scrubs prison describe von Veltheim as a "broken man." He has since sentence was passed remained dazed and in a state of semi-collapse.

Mrs. Gould will shortly be sent to Cayenne (French Guiana), where she will undergo her life sentence.

UNMOVED REPUBLICANS.

STILL CRY, "GIVE, GIVE!"

The Lisbon correspondent of "The Times" comments on the incredible equanimity with which the assassination of King Carlos and the Crown Prince is regarded by the populace.

The correspondent of "The Standard" says that the work of the regicides is generally considered to have been justifiable, no real effort having been made to discover the accomplices.

Subscriptions are, the correspondent adds, being raised for families of the assassins, and Republican newspapers demand the criminal prosecution of King Carlos' squire, who sabred one of the assassins.

According to some accounts the public feel that Senhor Franco was too precipitate in abolishing sinecures wholesale and in endeavouring to divide parties and then rule as dictator.

The Lisbon correspondent of "The Times" asserts that a previous plot against the Throne was organised with the tacit, if not the active, connivance of both Republicans and Monarchists. Yet three days later Senhor Franco, despite the ominous complexity of the population, induced King Carlos to agree to the institution of what was practically a Star Chamber. The assassinations followed immediately.

POSTAL EMPLOYEES' WAGES.

PROPOSED INCREASES.

The adoption by the Postmaster-General (Mr. Sydney Buxton) of the recommendations of the committee presided over by Mr. C. E. Hudson to inquire into the wages of postal officials and their conditions of service will have the effect of adding half a million sterling to the Estimates.

[The total number of persons employed in the post offices of the United Kingdom on March 31, 1907, was 199,178, of whom 82,208 were on the establishment. The rise on the former figure would average £2 11s. and on the latter £6 per head per annum.]

BRITISH SEA SUPREMACY.

THE CRY FOR RETRENCHMENT.

Mr. R. B. Haldane (Secretary for War), addressing the London Chamber of Commerce, said that the great broad defence of the nation rested on sea supremacy. If we lost that we would have lost the mainspring of our defence.

The military power of Great Britain, he added, was based on her sea power, but let them listen to none urging them to do with a navy without an army. The two services must stand or fall together.

"The Nation," a Liberal weekly, edited by Mr. H. W. Massingham (formerly editor of the "Daily Chronicle"), states that if Mr. Haldane and Lord Tweedmouth (First Lord of the Admiralty) are unable to keep the cost of the army and navy within the bounds a democratic House of Commons will willingly sanction they must give place to others.