

# THE WEEKLY GRAPHIC

AND

## NEW ZEALAND MAIL

VOL. XLV.—NO. 22

NOVEMBER 30, 1910

Subscription—25/ per annum: if paid in advance, 30/. Single copy—Sixpence.

### The Week in Review.

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#### NOTICE.

The Editor will be pleased to receive for consideration Short Stories and Descriptive Articles, illustrated with photos, or suggestions from contributors.

Bright, terse contributions are wanted dealing with Dominion life and questions.

Unless stamps are sent, the Editor cannot guarantee the return of unsuitable MSS.

#### The Second Chamber.

MANY New Zealanders find it hard to follow the trend of British politics. They cannot understand the immense interest that centres round the question of the abolition of the House of Lords on which to a large extent hinges the realisation of social reform. When our own Upper House made amendments to the Gaming Bill the Premier simply moved the rejection of the amendments en masse, and his motion was unanimously agreed to. Our Legislative Council is ornamental, and has perfect freedom of discussion, but it is not allowed to obstruct necessary reforms. Mr. Asquith seeks to put the Lords in a similar position. They may meet, and dress up, and talk to their hearts' content; but the Liberals, and with them a large, if not overwhelming, section of the British electors, feel that they ought not to be allowed to stand in the way of the declared will of the people. It is only to be expected that a number of people resent Mr. Asquith's essentially democratic position, and are going frantic over the threatened curb being placed on men who own their power to birth rather than to talent or effort. The position is so curious that it requires some explanation.

#### The Shortcomings of the Lords.

The reason for this typically conservative attitude of mind which resents change, and, most of all, progressive change, is that Englishmen are by nature sentimental. They loathe to part with anything that has been part of the national life. The alleged freedom of the English are said to enjoy to-day is largely the freedom of the upper and the middle class. The great hungry mass of the people have no freedom, politically speaking. Many of them have no votes. Less than 1-5th of Britain's 43 millions are enfranchised. It is not yet a century ago that any sort of political freedom was forced by the middle class from the hands of those in power, and that was only gained after obstruction by the Peers was fought and defeated. The present election in England is not only a fight to compel the wealthy, privileged and land-owning classes to contribute towards the heavy burden of taxation and the navy, but it also foreshadows a more democratic age when the mass of the people will have something like an adequate voice in the affairs of the country. At present the burden of taxation on necessities of life falls hardest on those who are least represented in the councils of the people. The Lords, by reason of their hereditary right and omniscient powers, have too long held in check reforms and protected their and others' vested interests which for years have been

making fortunes out of a depraved liquor traffic, rotten insanitary housing, extortionate rents and charges, and other such traditional usages. Some people feel that the Lords are picturesque and romantic, and sentiment of this sort still looms large in life. But all the sentiment in the planet cannot stem the rising tide of conviction that the constitution of the Lords to-day is simply a not over-scrupulous menace to the rights of the people. The time has arrived when sentiment must give way to practical considerations. The will of the majority must prevail in the long run, particularly when it is in deadly earnest to crush the conservative prejudices of the Lords. The battle to be fought in Britain before Christmas is not only a fight of the people versus the Peers, but also a struggle against the self-interest of landowners, wealthy monopolists, and the brewers.

#### An Old Difference Settled.

In countries which are free from the archaic and hampering conditions imposed by traditional reverence for the past, the love of impressive spectacles still remains. It chiefly takes the form of vulgar display by wealthy plutocrats. In older times bishops travelled with immense retinues, and lived in princely splendour. The modern bishop is too busy to travel in state, and his income forbids any but a most modest household. This is especially true of America, where bishops are prone to sacrifice dignity to efficiency. But the impressive spectacle is still provided for the people, and the millionaire has kindly taken on his own shoulders the cost and burden of providing it. When Mr. Pierpont Morgan, the modern Christian wealth monopolist, is engaged on his religious duties, he travels with a costly magnificence that might have excited the envy of a Wolsey. He recently attended the Episcopal Convention at Cincinnati as representative of St. George's Church, New York, and St. George himself could not have been treated better. For his convenience the "most expensive bedroom in the country" was specially reserved. It is situated in the £250,000 house erected by the late Mr. Alexander McDonald. Over £25,000 was spent on the decoration of Mr. Morgan's bedroom, which is furnished in Louis XVI. style, and hung with rose-pink damask tapestry, and contains three gold cabinets filled with antique jewellery and rare bric-a-brac. Everything else connected with his visit was on an equally sumptuous scale. Mr. Morgan is described as a deeply religious man, so it would look as if the Camel and the Eye of the Needle had settled their ancient differences. At the same time, the hypocrisy of the whole thing is disgusting.

#### Catch Phrases.

At elections few things are of more importance than good battle cries. In this respect, Mr. Asquith's party has a distinct advantage. "Down with the Lords" is much better than "Tariff Reform" as an election cry. When the Licensing Bill was before our own House, Mr. Peole pointed out that thousands of pounds had been spent on popularising the phrase, "Strike Out the Top Line," and he was able to prove that great damage would be done to the cause of temperance if the position of the lines on the voting papers were to be altered. "Votes for Women" and "Three Acres and a Cow" are instances of the value of catch phrases. We cannot but recognise that the Conservatives are not good at manu-

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facturing these things, for the reason these catch phrases often epitomise a popular conviction. People like something definite to vote for. Nebulous reform of the Lords and equally nebulous schemes of fiscal changes do not appeal to the popular imagination. For this reason, Mr. Balfour has not nearly so much hold on his audiences as Mr. Lloyd George. Mr. Lloyd George is a master of catch phrases, and they score because he is a great reformer.

#### The Colonist Car.

Mr. John Henderson, in his "Life as an Emigrant," describes some of his experiences on the C.P.R. When one reads them one is forced to the conclusion that our own Main Trunk is a palace of comfort by comparison. In describing the colonist carriages on the Canadian Pacific, he says that the cars are cheerless in the extreme. One car holds fifty or sixty people. Little wooden tables are arranged between each two seats, and round each of these boards four people can eat. At night the table is lowered to the level of the two seats, and you have a bed—a bed for two. A flap of wood is lowered from the ceiling, and there is another bed for two. Two and two in tiers the colonists sleep on their hard wood couches. An overcoat serves for covering and a valise or boot for pillow. The jolting, rocking, dust-filled train wobbles along, shaking the weary immigrant through the long, cold nights. Sleep is impossible. Men and women and children are all together in the great car. You can imagine the shrill cries of the tired, uncomfortable, terrified children; the scoldings of sorely-tried mothers, the grumblings of bachelors, and the entreaties and apologies of the fathers. The bachelors, as a rule, are either frankly blasphemous or loudly sympathetic. Pity for the women and children is the prevailing note, and a shouted complaint of more than average brutality usually brings upon the head of the complainant a shower of admonitory language. The words used are, of course, usually awful. The atmosphere of the place is hellish. The writer goes on to say: "I don't want to exaggerate the discomforts of the poor emigrants; still less do I desire to be unfair to the Canadian railways. I have 'roughed' it in many countries; I have felt desperate and lonely before; I have been in tight corners, and thought that the end was near; I have been hungry and thirsty in wild jungle countries, and lived alone with black people; but never did I feel so degraded, so utterly an outcast as I did on the colonist car."

#### Canada and Deportation.

But the worst feature of Canadian immigration would seem to be the deportation system. Glowing pamphlets are distributed all over England and Europe describing the glories of Canada. A family in some British or Roumanian or German hamlet sells everything—farm, furniture, all worldly goods. They take tickets and reach Quebec. There one member of the family—an old man, or woman, or young child—is found physically or mentally unfit. The medical officers are above sentiment; they order that that person must go back. No matter whether it is father or mother, or infant in arms. Back they must go. The cost of the long journey has swallowed up the proceeds of the sale. Imagine the position! There is no appeal from the decision of the Department, nor can one always see reason in its actions. A man, a pensioner from the Clutham naval dockyard, with a long service character, and seventy or eighty pounds in his pocket, went to Canada to get work in connection with the new Dominion naval scheme. He paid his own passage, and was apparently in excellent health. One would imagine an excellent settler in every way. But what follows?

#### What Deportation Means.

As far as can be ascertained, for official secrets are closely guarded, he celebrated his arrival by drinking to the health of his adopted country. There is no evidence that he got drunk in any sense of the word. Yet the next day he was deported. The morning after the boat left Quebec this man did not appear at the breakfast table. The stewards broke open his cabin door, and found him dead in a pool of blood. He had cut his throat. As soon as possible the body was dumped down the ash-shoot—flung into the sea at midnight—and only the ship's officers and stewards knew anything about the matter. They did not want any scandal. Another deported Englishman jumped overboard and was drowned. A Canadian, writing to an English paper, says: "If the Canadian authorities deported the religious maniacs that have been having such a time in Canada, they would be doing a service to humanity. What an awful, cruel country Canada is! We hear a great deal of English slums, but nothing of the evils of the shipping and immigrant business, and the terrible conditions in Canada of crime and murder." We hear nothing because the moan of the mother, the wail of the infant, and the despairing cry of the suicide are drowned by the fanfare of the imperialistic trumpet and the loud beating of the British drum.