

palace on the 21st. Premier Asquith and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lloyd George, will represent the government; the Marquis of Landsdowne and Andrew Bonar Law, the opposition; John Redmond and John Dillon, the Irish Nationalists; and Sir Edward Carson and Captain James Craig, the Ulstermen. The announcement of the conference by the Prime Minister in the Commons provoked bitter protests from the radical extremists, who charged that it was a plot on the part of the government to gain time, and prevent the organization of the Ulster provisional government until after the adjournment of Parliament.



The action of the King in attempting mediation has been the subject of sharp criticism, but upon the whole was thought to offer the most promising means of averting civil war. The Laborites felt slighted at not being invited to participate in the conference, and at a party meeting passed a resolution protesting against the King's issuing such a command "regarding any matter of political controversy as being undue interference on the part of the Crown and calculated to defeat the purposes of the Parliament Act."



Proportional representation again received recognition in connection with the Home Rule bill when the Lords amended the Amending bill to provide that Irish constituencies should be so arranged as to elect at least three members by proportional representation. This was done with a view to giving Protestants representation in Catholic territory.



Mr. Asquith in announcing the government's program in the Commons said the House would be asked to deal with the Irish Amending bill, the Indian budget and the House of Lords resolutions, in addition to the necessary financial business, before prorogation. He said he hoped the session would end in August.



Woman Suffrage in Great Britain.

Woman suffrage, especially the workers' demand for the franchise, has been a very prominent note in recent British politics—a note not drowned even by the noise of Home Rule and Budget disputes. Premier Asquith's reception of the deputation of five London East End working women on June 20 was considered a most important public event, both because the women so forcefully presented their case and because the Prime Minister's reply was interpreted as an unbending from his hitherto stiff opposition to the enfranchisement of women. The demand of the delegation which had been elected at great public meetings was for an immediate government measure granting the vote

to every woman over twenty-one years of age. After an able argument by their leader, Mrs. Scurr, for the vote for women as the only effective means of giving them a voice in the management of their own and their children's lives, each of her four women companions told why she herself in her situation, and thousands like her, needed the ballot. As reported in *The London Nation*:

One woman produced two brushes from her pocket and showed the Prime Minister how she had to fill the holes with bristles—two hundred holes for 2d.—and it took her nearly two hours to fill one brush, though she worked with the skill of forty-three years' practice. The brush then sold for half-a-guinea. Others described work at cigarette packing, sewing, and the labor of keeping house for oneself and husband and six children on 25s. a week. But the most touching story was told by a woman who had been driven from a jam factory because she refused to yield to the foreman, and had then taken in—"naturally, of course, sir"—a girl who had yielded and came with her baby. "But sooner than take the food out of my children's mouths, she went out one day, and I never see her again till three days afterwards, when she and the baby was dragged out of the river." Another woman exclaimed: "We women perform the dignified service of motherhood—even statesmen has mothers, I suppose, sir—and yet we're not allowed a voice in the making of the laws, and the law says we're not the parents of our own children!"

Mr. Asquith listened with deep attention to these accounts of personal experience and answered gravely that he was glad to hear directly from the East End working people of their great need for social legislation. He reminded them that already Parliament had done something for the sweated women, but admittedly not enough. He promised "careful and mature consideration" of their case; and closed with the following declaration regarding the sort of enfranchisement they asked—a vote for every woman over twenty-one:

On one point I am in complete agreement with you. I have always said that if you are going to give the franchise to women, give it to them on the same terms as to men. Make it a democratic measure. It is no good paltering with it. If the discrimination of sex does not justify the giving of the vote to one sex and withholding it from the other, it follows a fortiori that the discrimination of sex does not justify and cannot warrant giving to women a restricted form of franchise while you give to men an unrestricted form of franchise. If a change is to come, it must be democratic in its basis.

The (London) Nation—Liberal and strongly pro-suffrage—made extended editorial comment upon the interview, hailing it as a token of change of heart in Premier Asquith. [See current volume, page 538, 612.]



The working woman's practical need and demand for the franchise was again expressed when the Women's Co-operative Guild—a democratic organization whose annual Congress in June is re-

ported all over England as the voice of the working men's wives—approved a resolution demanding a Government bill for the full enfranchisement of "every adult woman," and recommending that all its members refrain from working for any candidate, unpledged to such a measure. This growing demand for universal womanhood as well as manhood suffrage had been expressed in April at the Conference of the Independent Labour Party—a Socialist organization—which demanded "the introduction, during the lifetime of the present Parliament, of a Government measure to enfranchise all adult men and women, with a three months' qualification."



Meanwhile the militant suffragists' destructive campaign for the franchise has gone on conspicuously. The burning of a church near Derby, and of an old mansion in Buckinghamshire on June 5 and 6 and of a railway station in Wales on June 20, and the ruinous hacking of a portrait in the Birmingham gallery June 9, were reported. A bomb, exploded in Westminster Abbey on June 11, damaged the historic Coronation Chair of Edward the Confessor, another was set off in St. George's Church, London, on June 14; and on July 8 two suffragists were caught in the act of setting a bomb to destroy the John Burns Cottage at Ayr. Interruptions by shouting, or the throwing of pamphlets have been experienced by the King and Queen on numerous formal and informal occasions and by Chancellor Lloyd George when he made his Home Rule speech on June 20 at Denmark Hill near London. Augustine Birrell, Chief of Secretary for Ireland, and Thomas McKinnon Wood, Secretary of State for Scotland, were the victims of attack on July 11 and July 15. Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughter Sylvia have each alternated in jail and out under the working of the "Cat-and-Mouse" Act. Sensational charges by militants that women suffragists—Miss Grace Roe being named as one—were being drugged by the prison authorities in order that they might the more easily be fed were answered on June 6 by the Government in the summons into court of an agent of the militants, Arthur Barnett, for conveying drugs to this same prisoner, Miss Roe. The Government's attorney produced evidence in the case when it came to trial June 13, showing that drugs were being conveyed to make the militant prisoners violently sick after they had been forcibly fed, so that they might be discharged under the "Cat-and-Mouse" Act. Mr. Barnett was found guilty and fined.



The increasing resentment against the militants' violence has been very evident, according to press dispatches. A crowd at Hampstead Heath on June 7 knocked over the platform from which a party of militant suffragists were to speak and scat-

tered the suffragists in all directions. They tried to drag two of the women to a pond for a ducking, but the police rescued them. A similar scene occurred on Clapham Common. Two church congregations on the same day, Sunday, followed women interruptors of their services into the street and treated them roughly. Three days later, sellers of the journal "Suffragette" were mobbed in London streets, and suffragist speakers at Portsmouth and in Hyde Park were only protected from angry crowds by the police. Whenever the King and Queen have been approached by violent suffragists the crowd present has shown itself dangerously hostile to the suffragists.



Measures to suppress militancy were discussed in the House of Commons, June 11. Secretary McKenna, in a long speech on the subject, dismissed the suggestion of the deportation of the militants as impracticable and declared that to let them commit suicide in jail by starvation (a course of action loudly demanded by some publicists) would likely arouse sympathy. He appealed to the newspapers to kill the agitation by ceasing to give them the advertisement which they fed upon. Many of these women, the Secretary said, were hysterical fanatics who were possessed of a courage that would risk anything. Many of them wanted to die to gain what they believed to be martyrdom. He advocated the proposed prosecutions of subscribers to the militant funds as the best deterrent and outlined his plan of making these subscribers pay damages for property loss occasioned by militants, and possibly of convicting them on a criminal charge. In speaking of the attempts of the women to reach the King, he said that all the subjects of the King had a right to petition his majesty in respectful terms, but none had the right to a personal audience to present a petition. The Council of the Women's Liberal Federation on June 10—after passing a strong suffrage resolution, and only rejecting by a narrow majority a motion that Liberal women should confine their support to the suffragist candidates—had urged the Government to take the responsibility of bringing these disorders to an end.

NEWS NOTES

—Ohio prohibitionists have invoked the initiative to procure submission of a prohibition amendment. Petitions are now being circulated.

—Efforts planned by the Young Turks party to rehabilitate the Turkish nation include an extensive use of the Boy Scout movement that has proven to be so popular in England and America. It is charged that Persian and Byzantine influences have been detrimental to the Turkish character; and the new