

finally impossible for any but Tory Ministers to render faithful service to the Crown. (Opposition cries of "Oh, oh" and Ministerial cheers.) Do not suppose, however, that you will thereby escape the democratic movement. Those who are now grouped under the standard of party will re-form themselves under the standard of class. When the party system is shattered the class line must be the line of demarcation. See what has happened in Germany. There you have a tremendous Social Democratic Party held down by brute force, utterly estranged from the fundamental institutions of the State, holding rigidly to abstract doctrines, increasing in number and in power, yet wholly divorced from any share in government or responsibility. That is a condition to which we may find ourselves reduced, and so far from realising the ideal of becoming one people and—if I may coin a word—a national nation in which one and all have a share, and where every shade of opinion brings some influence to bear on the business and conduct of the State, that dream will pass away for ever and we shall be reduced to the position from which foreign Governments are struggling to raise themselves. That is why there is a great crisis now. That is why we bring forward our Veto resolutions now while time remains. That is why we shall not hold office unless we have reason to believe that we can carry our resolutions into law. That is why we propose no social legislation though, Heaven knows, it is sorely needed. That is why we have no other object or thought in our minds but to deal with this tremendous danger now. (Ministerial cheers.) We have reached the fateful period when the time for words has passed and the time for action has arrived. (Ministerial cheers.) Since the House of Lords have used their veto to affront the prerogative of the Crown it has now become necessary that the Crown and the Commons acting together—(Ministerial cheers)—should restore the balance of the Constitution and restrict for ever the veto of the House of Lords. (Renewed cheers.)

LORD CREWE ON THE CREATION OF PEERS.

Speaking at Winchester on April 5th, Lord Crewe said:—

In connection with the Budget, he would like to say a word on the attitude of the Irish Party in the House of Commons. The first object of the Irish Party—they would say their only object—was the national one of obtaining self-government for Ireland in purely Irish affairs—(cheers)—and to that they subordinated everything else. He for one was not going to blame them for that. They also undoubtedly thought that there were certain provisions in the Budget, chiefly of a minor character, which pressed with undue hardship upon Ireland. That was a matter upon which each man was entitled to his own opinion. But it was utterly untrue to say that the Irish members or the Irish people were opposed to the Budget as a whole class, and if they felt themselves at liberty to do so they would undoubtedly vote for the Budget. If the Irish members did not vote for the Budget, and, as was known from a process of simple arithmetic, they had the power to reject it, it would be because by some logical process which he was unable to follow they had convinced themselves that to reject the Budget was the best thing for the cause of Home Rule. (A Voice: "No.") He quite agreed with the observation made below. That seemed to him a most illogical proceeding, and he did not believe himself that it would occur; but if it did occur, it would be not because the Irish were opposed to the provisions of the Budget as a whole, but because they had arrived at the somewhat peculiar political conclusion that he had indicated.

With respect to the question of the relations of the two Houses of Parliament, first of all they had to deal with the position of the House of Lords in connection with finance, they having taken up the position that they had a right to throw out the Finance Bill. No one denied that they had the power to throw out a Finance Bill, and the power, he supposed, constituted a legal right; but he was equally convinced that they had no such constitutional right. To throw out the Budget, to make it impossible to collect the taxes, was a breach of the unwritten law which had obtained for hundreds of years between the two Houses of Parliament. It was a breach of the unwritten law in two ways. In the first place the House of Lords by this act declared itself capable of doing what we had always believed only the Crown could do, namely, to dissolve Parliament. That was a breach of the Constitution, an invasion of the prerogative of the Crown. (Cheers.) He would go further and say that even if the House of Lords had been right they

would still have been wrong. (Laughter.) Even if the Budget had been unpopular, and as the result of a Unionist majority a Unionist Government had been formed, he should still say that the House of Lords was absolutely wrong in taking the action it did.

With respect to the creating of Peers by the Sovereign for a particular purpose, that was a universally admitted remedy by all constitutional authorities for a dead-lock between the two Houses. "That is to say," proceeded the noble Lord, "if a deadlock exists between the two Houses and the country has clearly expressed its will, the Minister of the day is entitled to advise the Sovereign to create a sufficient number of Peers to override the opposition of the House. (Cheers.) That is a power which has only once been used, and used to a small extent, and might have been used on another occasion if the House of Lords had not given way. It is obviously a power which only ought to be used in the last resort and under circumstances of the most special character. But I want to impress upon you that it is a power which exists, and has never been abandoned, for the simple reason that if it were, no remedy would exist whatever for the continued and perpetual standing out of the House of Lords against the declared will of the country. It is not for me to indicate in what circumstances such power might conceivably be used. It is to my mind altogether improper even to consider such a contingency until the occasion has actually arisen, if it ever does arise, because its exercise must depend upon a great number of issues. I should like to say, and it is important to remember the distinction, that if ever such an occasion does arise, it is not a question of the Minister going to the Sovereign and asking the Sovereign to create a certain number of Peers as a favour, but it is the constitutional exercise of the power of advice by the Minister to the Sovereign. That is an important distinction. (Cheers.) It is important because it carries this. The Minister has no right to give the advice unless he is prepared to say he would act upon it."

Continuing, Lord Crewe said that there was a great constitutional issue at stake. "If," he went on, "the Opposition win this fight, and it is a fight which may last for some time, if they win, it undoubtedly means that the House of Lords will become the paramount power in the State. The virtue will have gone out of the House of Commons, because the House of Lords by claiming control over finance will thereby claim control over the existence of the Government of the day, and there will be something of a permanent blight upon the progress to which we all look forward. The Unionist Party mean to get this power if they can, and unless we can create in the country a sufficient sense of the real importance of the constitutional issue involved the Unionist Party will obtain what they want. To a great extent the existence of the Liberal Party depends upon the issue of this particular conflict. If we lose this conflict the Liberal Party will not nominally disappear, but with its power of action gone it will tend more and more to become what the Liberal Parties are in many countries on the Continent, that is to say, a band of thinkers and theorists without a really acting and active effect upon the political life of their country." (Cheers.)

MR. CHURCHILL ON LIBERAL AIMS.

Speaking on the Veto resolutions in the House of Commons on April 12th, Mr. Churchill said:—

It is not a mere question of pique or pride. We cannot make any plan either for social reform or political change, or for the ordinary thrifty and careful administration of national affairs. We cannot do that, for the House of Lords now claim, and unless their claim is repudiated at once, have won, the power over finance, including the right of dissolution whenever they are dissatisfied with a Budget or with a naval policy, or on a question of foreign policy. Does the right hon. gentleman really expect us to go on sitting here occupying high offices of State and drawing our salaries at his pleasure, liable to be dismissed at any moment when their lordships have come to the conclusion that there is a chance of the Tory Party bettering their position? (Cheers.) What measures, says the right hon. gentleman, are the House of Lords blocking? Let us be quite frank. We wish to make a national settlement with Ireland (loud cheers), we wish to free Wales from its alien church (cheers), we wish to deal with the grievances of Nonconformists (cheers), we wish to sweep away the electoral anomalies which distort representation

and deny the franchise to so many. (Cheers.) We have promised to do all these things. We are pledged to carry out all these things, we are expected to do so, but we can do none of them although we have a great majority for all of them in this Parliament (cheers), and although we had a far greater majority for them in the Parliament which has passed away. . . It will not be a serious or a vital question if these Resolutions are passed. It will not be a supreme or violent event in the history of our country if they are passed. No, there will be no danger, no revolution, no crisis, and no deadlocks. All will go forward smoothly. The Veto of the House of Lords will pass away as painlessly as the Veto of the Crown, and we shall move forward to the harmonious development of national life. No, the danger is not that they shall pass, the danger is that they shall be rejected. (Cheers.) There is the danger, and let the right hon. gentleman who holds this issue in his hand, who by his signal can direct the course of events elsewhere, weigh well his decision before he takes it. He will find that if these Resolutions are rejected, he will be committed to a long voyage of which the end cannot be foreseen. He and his friends will be committed—it is quite clear by the speech a short time ago of the hon. member for the Walton Division for Liverpool, who spoke of two or three dissolutions in a single year—to a policy of repeated dissolution, with the scarcely concealed object of trying to break financially the organisation of their political opponents. Sooner or later if they embark upon this course of refusing this moderate reform for which we are now pressing they will be driven to raising money without the consent of Parliament, and to administrative action which has not received the force and sanction of the law.

A NEW ZEALAND VIEW.

We publish the following letter written by Mr. P. J. O'Regan, barrister and ex-M.L.A., New Zealand, and a well-known advocate of Land Value Taxation. Owing to the changes in the political situation, the ground of some of Mr. O'Regan's criticisms has been removed, but the main part of his argument is of more permanent value and application:—

"All good democrats in this country are watching the crisis in Britain with the keenest interest and expectation. There are some facts in connection with the struggle which some of us have noted. A point upon which there is some feeling among land-taxers here is the extraordinary tactics of the Nationalists. We had taken it for granted that they were at least the implacable enemies of landlordism. Yet when they have a chance of dealing landlordism a body blow by passing the Budget, they refrain from voting. Personally I have had little faith in the Nationalists since they allowed themselves to be humbugged with the Wyndham land purchase swindle, and their attitude towards the Budget convinces me that there is more of declamation than of sincerity in their denunciations of landlordism. What greater curse this side of perdition can there possibly be than landlordism? Does it not rob the masses of England and Scotland—of every country—as well as the people of Ireland? Does not the long arm of Irish landlordism reach across even to this remote country to pilfer from the pocket of the Irish emigrant a share of his earnings? Has it not driven thousands of innocent Irish girls from their native villages into the vile slums of London, Liverpool, New York, San Francisco? Does it not at this moment rob and steal from millions of Irish poor? Why then give it a moment's quarter? Why miss a single opportunity of paralysing its thieving hand? We have been told that the Nationalists object to the whisky and tobacco taxes. I agree that both are undesirable imposts, but neither can be permanent, and it is not these taxes that have aroused the ire of Sir John and His Grace, but the provisions of the Budget for Land Valuation and Taxation. These contain potentialities for the ultimate destruction of landlordism, and nobody knows it better than the landlords themselves. In any case what have the liquor interests ever done for Ireland except to curse her? Have not the brewers and grog-sellers ever been socially and political the enemies of Ireland? Ireland had been a better and a happier country if the liquor traffic and its twin friend, landlordism, were long since things of the past. The great majority of Irishmen in this country rightly regard Mr. Lloyd-George and Mr. Birrell as genuine friends of Ireland, and they see in the Budget a message of emancipation to the mass of the people of Ireland and everywhere else. Were Mr. Lloyd-George to visit this country he would get a magnificent popular ovation,

and not the least enthusiastic of his admirers would be Irishmen. I have yet hopes that the good sense of the majority of Irishmen will save us from the humiliating spectacle of landlordism yoking Irish democracy to its chariot. Irishmen and men of Irish descent in this country have in the past never failed to respond to every appeal for funds to enable their kindred in far-off Ireland to gain a modicum of justice. There are many of us, however, who will be less prone to respond after the conduct of the Nationalists in respect of the Budget. No good Home Ruler should hesitate for a moment to support a Budget which must in the long run clip the wings of the lordlings by sapping the privileges which landlordism confers. Home Ruler as I am, I would have no hesitation in preferring the Budget and Land Value Taxation to a Parliament of "shoneens" sitting at Dublin. Let Irish working men ask themselves what they have to expect from an agricultural oligarchy such as the Wyndham scheme must necessarily bring into existence. If land monopoly and the taxation of food are bad things for the poor of England, can they be good things for the poor of Ireland? Have Irishmen forgotten that bells were tolled in Ireland as a token of popular delight when the Peel Government abolished the bread taxes in 1846.

THE HUMOUR AND HARDSHIP OF SMALL HOLDINGS ACT.

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS ON APRIL 14TH.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether it had been finally decided that Mr. Clark, whose farm at Welwick was taken for small holdings, was not to receive compensation for disturbance out of the Small Holdings Fund; and whether the Government intended to bring in a Bill to prevent similar cases of hardship in the future. He apologised for bringing the case again before the House, but said that unfortunately the question to which it gave rise had not yet been settled. A day or two ago a cutting from the YORKSHIRE HERALD reached him in which it was stated:—"We are informed that the President of the Board of Agriculture has given Mr. Clark £50 out of his own pocket, and has said, 'For God's sake do not let us have any more about this wretched business!'" (Laughter.) That might or might not be true; but it was just the kind of thing that the good-natured President of the Board of Agriculture would do. (Renewed laughter.) There was a French saying, "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre," which was applicable to such a case.

THE EARL OF CARLISLE mentioned a case within his knowledge in which it was proposed to acquire a farm compulsorily against the will of the tenant, and asked whether compensation would be paid.

EARL CARRINGTON, in reply, said it had been definitely decided that Mr. Clark was not to receive any compensation from the Small Holdings Fund. There was no provision in the Small Holdings Act to enable compensation to be paid; and when the Land Tenure Act was passed it was considered that it would not be fair to take out of the public purse money for compensation in cases in which it would not be paid by private landowners. But a great deal of water had flowed under the bridges since that time. Small Holdings were now supposed to be to some extent a success. During the two years in which the Small Holdings Act had been in operation 75,000 acres of land had been acquired, of which only 11,000 acres were taken compulsorily. That showed that landlords recognised what a great boon small holdings were to the agricultural population. As he thought Mr. Clark's was an extreme case in which compensation might fairly be paid he wrote to him, and in December last he went to Hull and attended a farmers' "At Home." About 150 farmers were present and joined him in smoking cigars. (Laughter.) Mr. Clark's case was the chief topic of discussion. They had a conversation which lasted nearly three hours—(laughter)—and at last they came to a decision. He said to Mr. Clark, "There is going to be an election next year—(laughter)—and nobody knows how the election may turn out. I should be very sorry that anybody should be left on the Crown estate with a nasty taste in his mouth so far as I am concerned. (Renewed laughter.) I honestly believe that you are entitled to compensation, and I have tried to get it from the Treasury; but as I cannot do so, and as I suppose I am morally responsible for your displacement from your farm, I shall be happy as Crown Commissioner to make you a present of £50 myself, and I hope you will accept it in the spirit in which it is offered." (Laughter.) The farmers said emphatically, "We will not stand that." Will