

When Congress met on the 6th, Congressman Sulzer (Democrat) of New York introduced resolutions declaring it to be the duty of the United States to demand the arrest and punishment of President Zelaya for murdering Cannon and Groce, to exact an apology and damages, to use the army and navy as far as necessary, and to establish in Nicaragua a responsible government republican in form.

+

President Zelaya was reported on the 4th from the Nicaraguan capital, Managua, to have asked the United States to send an investigating commission to Nicaragua, promising that he would resign if it should report against his administration.

+ +

General Railroad Strike Imminent.

A railroad switchmen's strike, beginning in the Northwest last week, may be the forerunner of a general railroad strike, which is predicted in railroad circles, for a 10 per cent increase of wages to meet the increased cost of living. The switchmen's strike now in progress is for an increase of 6 cents an hour, and double pay for work during meal hours, holidays and Sundays. Large numbers of strike breakers have been contracted for by the railroads and shipped to the seat of the strike. The railroad officials report that the supply appears to be ample.

+ +

The British Elections.

When the House of Lords had vetoed the land tax Budget on the 30th (p. 1160), the Prime Minister called a cabinet meeting which convened on the 1st. Immediately afterwards the House of Commons met and the Prime Minister gave formal notice that on the following day he would offer this resolution:

That the action of the House of Lords in refusing to enact into law the financial provisions made by this House for the year is a breach of the Constitution and a usurpation of the privileges of the House of Commons.

The sitting of the Commons on the 2nd, when this resolution came up, was exciting but brief. Mr. Asquith supported his resolution in what the dispatches describe as a speech in which he surpassed himself. He fortified his position with quotations from a speech of a year ago by the Tory leader, Mr. Balfour, in which Mr. Balfour had said: "It is the House of Commons, not the House of Lords, which settles uncontrolled our financial system. If the House of Lords could touch the money bills the whole executive machinery of the country would be brought to a standstill." After quoting other authorities to the same effect, Mr. Asquith closed his speech by saying:

We are living under a system of false balances

and loaded dice. When democracy voted for a Liberal government the dormant second chamber awoke from its slumbers and nullified the work of the House of Commons. We shall ask the House by this vote, and we shall ask the constituencies at the earliest possible moment, to declare that the organ, the voice of the free people of this country, is to be found in the accredited representatives of the nation.

Mr. Balfour in reply said he hoped the instances when the Lords would refer such a question as this Budget to the country would be most rare, but he hoped also that the Lords would never abandon the essential point of the controversy, which was whether the Lords in declaring that the constituencies should be consulted had gone beyond the functions which ought to be left to the second chamber, however rarely they might deem it proper to exercise them. No response was made in behalf of the Irish party, the Parliamentary members of which had for reasons peculiar to Irish politics, refrained from participating in the discussion and the vote. But Arthur Henderson, M. P., spoke for the Labor party, declaring that the continuance of the second chamber as constituted at present is absurd and logically indefensible; that the Lords, no longer content with their long record of obstruction and mutilation and destruction of legislation through which they had defrauded the people of many fruits of self-government, had become emboldened sufficiently to try their hand at usurpation of the rights of the House of Commons in regard to matters of finance. All the power that the Labor party possessed, he added, would be used to assist in securing an emphatic verdict from the country in the sense of the resolution presented by the Prime Minister. The vote for Mr. Asquith's resolution, quoted above, was 349 to 134.

+

Meanwhile the National Liberal Federation had issued a manifesto concentrating the attention of the country upon the usurpation of the House of Lords. "If the present action of the Peers is not repudiated swiftly by the people," it says, "the rights and privileges won so dearly by our forefathers in the great struggles for freedom are all surrendered." The manifesto declares the Peers' power of veto must be restricted so that the last word on all legislation will rest with the House of Commons; that otherwise no Liberal ministry can again assume the responsibilities of office. "In the fight forced upon us," the manifesto continues, "the electors will have to decide whether they wish to govern themselves or be governed at second hand by a few hundred hereditary Peers, who have thrown the Constitution into the melting pot in order to shift the burden of taxation from wealth, land and liquor to food and the necessities of life."

According to London dispatches of the 1st, the advantages the Tories might have from triangular contests—Tory, Liberal, and Labor—have been nullified by the voluntary withdrawal of Labor candidates from districts where the Liberal party is the stronger and of Liberal candidates from those in which the Labor party is the stronger.

+

The King signed an order on the 2nd, at the request of the cabinet, proroguing Parliament until January 17, 1910, and on the 3rd the King's speech, formal and colorless, was read to both houses in the Lords' chamber. The recess then began. An order of dissolution will probably be proclaimed late in December, and the elections will take place on different dates about the middle of January. When Parliament reassembles on the 17th of January, the House of Commons will be wholly composed of new or reelected members.

+

Although the campaign has been long in progress in expectation of dissolution, it is now at fever heat everywhere. An enormous meeting, some 20,000 people, gathered on short notice at Trafalgar Square on the 4th—under the call of the National Democratic League. It was composed principally of workingmen and was addressed by Dr. Clifford, who is described as "the revered leader of the Free Church," and by Wm. P. Byles, M. P., and a score of other members of Parliament. There were over 50 speakers in all. The demonstration is described by the Tory press as one not to be belittled. In a speech at Manchester on the 6th, Winston Churchill pointed out that the imposition of a tariff would exclude imports which the Manchester canal was built to encourage, and instanced the quintupled value of the land in the vicinity since the canal was built as a justification for placing the increment tax in the Budget.

+

Numerous instances of attempts by physical force suffragettes to break up Liberal meetings since the action of the Lords, are reported. Some of these attempts were directed at the Trafalgar Square meeting, but it was too large to be affected. At Southport, however, Winston Churchill's meeting was interrupted, as was Sir Edward Grey's at Leith. One of the London dispatches of the 4th, states that the suffragettes "have raised a big fund to oppose the Liberal candidates in every constituency."

+

The immediate issue in the election could hardly be more clearly or correctly described than in the following extract from the "special" of T. P. O'Connor, M. P., in the Chicago Tribune of the 5th:

The proposals of the Budget still, of course, excite

both attention and controversy, but the Budget, from this time forward, sinks into a subsidiary position in comparison with the question of the House of Lords. To make the election turn on the Budget only would be exactly what the Tories and especially the House of Lords want, but is exactly what the Liberals are determined to prevent. For if the election turns on the Budget alone, and even if the Liberals, and, therefore, the Budget received the approval of a majority of the constituencies, the House of Lords could accept the situation with bland equanimity. They would then say that they had referred the Budget to the verdict of the people, that the people had given their verdict, and that they bowed to the verdict. But, as will be seen in a moment, that would leave undecided the far more momentous question behind the Budget—namely: whether the Lords had the right to interfere with the finances of the nation. Indeed, if that construction of the purpose and meaning of the general election were accepted by the Liberals, the election, whatever its verdict, would be a verdict for the Peers. For the right of the Peers to refer a Budget to the constituencies would mean that the House of Lords would be supreme in the Constitution. Every ministry has to pass its budget or die: every ministry has to bring a budget every year; and if, therefore, the House of Lords were entitled to hang up or reject a budget, then the House of Lords would have the fate of every ministry absolutely at its disposal. It would establish a single chamber system, and the single chamber would be the unrepresentative House of Lords and not the representative House of Commons.

NEWS NOTES

—William J. Calhoun of Chicago has been appointed minister to China, in place of Charles R. Crane (pp. 1009, 1016, 1018).

—The Reichstag, the Imperial German parliament (p. 1066), was opened at Berlin on the 30th by Kaiser Wilhelm in person.

—Henry L. Bliss will address the Chicago Single Tax Club on the 10th in Room 508, Schiller Building, his subject being "The Use and Abuse of Statistics."

—In the Gompers-Morrison-Mitchell case (p. 1162) the Supreme Court of the United States granted on the 6th, a writ of certiorari bringing the record up to that court for review.

—In a suit for damages, a blacklisted cotton mill operative, O. M. Rhodes, secured a verdict on the 5th, in the Richland county, South Carolina, Circuit Court, against the Granby Cotton Mills of Columbia, for \$10,000.

—The National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education held its third annual convention at Milwaukee on the 3rd. George N. Carman, Anna Garlin Spencer, Mrs. Raymond Robins and Arthur D. Dean were among the principal speakers.

—A Henry George association was organized at Youngstown, Ohio, on the 27th, with Thomas Taylor for president, Singleton King for vice-president and Charles C. McGovern for secretary-treasurer. At a meeting on December 18th the New York system of