

PARLIAMENT PROROGUED

The King on Irish Affairs. ROYAL ASSENT TO HOME RULE.

Unemployment Problems.

Parliament was prorogued last night, but the two Houses were so busy that it was not until 11-30 o'clock that the Commons were summoned to the Upper Chamber for the prorogation, when the King's Speech was read.

THE KING'S SPEECH. SCENE IN THE LORDS.

His Majesty and the State of Ireland. Midnight Sitting of the Royal Commission.

HOPE OF UNITY AND FRIENDSHIP. MANY NEW ACTS.

Mr. Lords and Members of the House of Commons. My relations with foreign Powers continue to be of a friendly nature, and throughout the year external policy has been conducted in close cooperation with the Allies.

LEAGUE MANDATES. A BRIGHTER BRITAIN.

I have accepted mandates under the Covenant of the League of Nations in respect of Mesopotamia, Palestine, certain parts of Africa, and other German possessions in the Pacific Ocean.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

I thank you for the provision made for the public service and for the redemption of debt. Obligations arising out of the great war and the disturbed conditions still prevailing in a large part of the world have been very heavy expenditure unavoidable.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The state of affairs in Ireland grieves me profoundly. I deplore the campaign of violence and outrage by which a small section of my subjects seek to sever Ireland from the Empire, and I sympathize with the loyal servants of the Crown who are endeavouring to restore peace and maintain order under conditions of unexampled difficulty and danger.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

My Government are giving careful and anxious consideration to the question of naval strength as affected by the latest developments of naval warfare.

OTHER LEGISLATION.

During the past session I have been glad to give my assent to a number of measures for the promotion of the well-being of the people.

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MINISTERS' SALARIES. COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

£5,000 Off the Lord Chancellor. PREMIER TO GET £8,000.

The report of the Select Committee on the remuneration of Ministers, issued last night as a white paper, prefaces certain recommendations by the observation that the standard rates of pay upon which the present rate of remuneration had been built up were very different from those obtaining to-day.

Considering its burdens and responsibilities, the committee consider that the remuneration of the office of Prime Minister is inadequate, and must be fixed at £8,000 per annum, whether or not he holds the office of First Lord of the Treasury, the remuneration for which, with the other three practically sinecure offices, should be abolished.

The committee also advise that the difference between the salaries attached to first and second class Ministers be reduced, and the distinction in the salaries of various Parliamentary and Under Secretaries, except in certain cases of special responsibility, should be abolished.

BOLSHEVIST DEMANDS. Refused by Bulgaria.

Reuter's Agency learns from a Bulgarian source that M. Dimitroff, acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, has refused a note to the Bulgarian Government protesting against the formation of an anti-Bolshevist force in Bulgaria territory, and demanding the immediate resumption of normal commercial relations between Bulgaria and Soviet Russia.

THE AIRCRAFT SURPLUS. Contract for Disposal Criticised.

Mr. Hope, in reply to Mr. Billing (Ind.) and Mr. Ross (Lab.), stated that the House of Commons yesterday passed a contract for the disposal of aircraft surplus to the Aircraft Disposal Co. Ltd. The date of the contract was £200,000, and the contract was for a period of six months from the date of the contract, and £200,000 in twelve months from the date of the contract.

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REBELS USE MACHINE GUN. IN CO. LIMERICK AMBUSH.

Remarkable Details of a Week's Outrages. CROWN LOSSES DURING YEAR.

Though there have been singularly few outrages in Ireland during the past few days, the week ended 20th December was noteworthy for a marked increase in the number of organized armed attacks on forces of the Crown.

Articles of the various crimes were given in the weekly review of the state of Ireland issued from Dublin Castle yesterday, as follows:— Seven ambushes took place during the week, and three attacks were made on police barracks.

The three police barracks attacked were Castlebar, County Mayo, and the barracks at Carrigrohane, County Wick. In all three cases the attack failed, and great credit is due to the police garrisons for their successful defence.

PERSISTENT AMBUSHERS. Surprised and Driven Into Hills by Military.

Details have been received at Dublin Castle of an exciting encounter on Wednesday between a police patrol and an ambushing party at Coolan, County Tipperary. The police were first attacked near the village. Taking cover, they returned to the village until the attack ceased.

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IRISH HOME RULE. WHAT THE ACT PROVIDES.

The New Parliaments. CONSTITUTION AND POWERS.

The following is a summary of the provisions of the Act as it will be put into operation:— The Parliament of Northern Ireland consists of a House of Commons of 52 members and a Senate comprising the Lord Mayor of Belfast and the Mayor of Londonderry, and 24 Senators elected by the House of Commons of Northern Ireland by proportional representation.

The Parliament of Southern Ireland consists of a House of Commons of 123 members and a Senate comprising the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the Lord Mayors of Dublin and Cork, 17 Senators representative of commerce, labour, and the professions, nominated by the Lord Lieutenant, and 44 elected Senators, including four Archbishops or Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, two of the Irish Free State, eight Irish Free State Senators, and 14 representatives of County Councils.

The Irish Parliaments are not empowered to make laws in regard to certain matters, such as the Crown, the Navy, Army, Air Force, or Air Force, or foreign relations, treaties, trade outside Ireland, submarine cables, wireless telegraphy, postage, legal tender, control of the police, or reserved for three years from the appointed day.

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGES TO ULSTER. Sir E. Carson's Affectionate Greetings.

THE NEW NORTHERN PARLIAMENT. Many Expressions of Goodwill.

Once again we have the privilege of publishing an interesting series of Christmas messages to the people of Ulster, including one from Sir Edward Carson, the tried and trusted leader of the province, who sends his affectionate greetings.

Amongst the contributors are the Marquis of Londonderry, the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, Viscount Massereene and Ferrard, and Sir James Craig; the heads of the Protestant Churches, the Lord Mayor of Belfast, and other representative citizens.

UNIONIST LEADER'S MESSAGE. To the Loyal People of Ulster.

Through "The Belfast News-Letter" I send affectionate Christmas Greetings to the loyal people of Ulster, and I cannot help reflecting, as one more year is passing away, how much I owe to the loyalty, and may I say affectionate friendship, which has existed now for so many years between myself and those who are pleased to trust me as their leader.

The Lord Mayor of Belfast. Looking Forward With Hope. The Lord Mayor of Belfast (Councillor W. F. Coates, J.P.)—We are just approaching the end of a year which has been full of events of supreme importance to the people of Ireland.

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