

## Baldwin Regime in Britain Comes Out for Protection in Guise of Safeguarding

by Walter G. Fuller (*Special Correspondent of The Eagle*)

London, Dec. 26 — The new British Conservative Government has not been slow in giving the British public a taste of its quality. The new Ministers had hardly finished kissing the King's hand on taking over the seals of office before the Egyptian bombshell burst, and the British public, which had put the Tories into power in such a panic a few weeks before, were treated to a bit of rough stuff in the good old pre-war imperialistic style.

Next came a more polite but very decided rejection of the treaty which Ramsay MacDonald had negotiated with the Russian Government with so much trouble and tribulation. Then the official attitude towards the Communists became noticeably stiffer and more watchful than it has been hitherto.

### Hand More Plainly Shown

And then with the opening of Parliament the new Government showed its hand more plainly. It had come into power with a record majority and it clearly meant to make full use of the its opportunities. The Labour party in Commons, 150 strong, was quickly put in its place as an impotent minority, and as for the pathetic little band of 43 MPs known as the Liberal party, in Conservative eyes they are regarded as so many good children in a Victorian drawing room who are merely there to be seen and not heard.

Meantime the Government has been busy planning its legislative programme, and for a start, as every student of politics had foreseen, the British nation is going to be given by its new masters a good strong dose of Protection.

### Protection Disguised as "Safeguarding"

Of course it isn't called Protection in the best circles; it is called "safeguarding." Protection has a bad sound in English ears. It savours of the bad old days in early Victorian times when foreign corn was taxed. Those dark days of the "hungry forties" have passed into legend, and in consequence the word "Protection" in England is, as Disraeli once said, not only dead; it is damned.

And so even today, in an England as different from the old England of the middle of the last century as a modern ocean liner is different from Robert Fulton's first steamboat, an overwhelmingly Conservative Government dare not

come out openly for Protection or use that hated word.

### A Clever Move

No, it is "the safeguarding of British industry" that Premier Baldwin and his colleagues propose. It is a clever move. It is a pleasant-sounding word, "safeguarding." Who could object to it? Surely no patriotic Briton would dare to criticize such a laudable desire to help and encourage British industry and to cure the cancer of unemployment.

And with this "safeguarding" goes the equally appealing cry of "Imperial Preference" — in other words, just a little tax to help the infant industries of Britain's kith and kin in the dominions across the seas. Surely here is another desirable object worth all praise, an object which only a contemptible anti-Imperialist "Little Englander" would think of opposing.

Well, that's how things stand with us today. The new Premier himself announced this revolutionary change in British fiscal policy to an expectant House. It was a momentous occasion, and the green benches were crowded with a closely attentive and eager mob of MPs.

In the debate that followed the Premier's declaration of policy, the little band of Liberals, led by Lloyd George, easily took the lead. The most effective attack from the Labour benches came from that convinced Free Trader, Philip Snowden.

### New Issue Definitely Raised

Clearly a new issue in British politics has been raised by these fiscal proposals of the new Government, and what the effect will be upon the present party alignment it is hard to say. It is certain, however, to result in some important changes. Certain industrial sections of the country regard — rightly or wrongly — some such policy of protection or "safeguarding," as the Conservatives are now proposing, as absolutely essential if certain of their principal industries are to live. Other parts of the country — notably densely-populated Lancashire and Yorkshire — are still, in the main, strongly Free Trade and look upon any meddling with the present state of affairs as dangerous to their particular interests.

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