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THE TRANSVAAL RECONSTRUCTED

British and Boers Repairing Wars Ravages.

What Has Been Already Done - People are Fairly Careful - Two Classes of Dangerous Dutchmen Remain.

A repatriation officer, whose duties have taken him to all parts of the Transvaal since the close of the South African war, writes as follows in the London Times concerning his observations:

"In a little over twelve months no one can expect the ravages of a nearly three years' war to be thoroughly repaired; but to one like myself, who traveled over the country immediately after the declaration of peace, who has been continually traveling over the country since, watching the progress of the work of restoration, and who has been over it once again quite recently, the extraordinary rapidity with which the recovery has been made is astounding. The first trek revealed nothing but devastation, desolation, blockhouses, and barbed wire.

The Reconstruction.

"The last trek revealed houses built up; cattle, horses, and live stock of all descriptions grazing on the vast immense tracts of ground ploughed up; roads and drifis repaired; outlying towns, formerly in ruins, now not only rebuilt and prosperous, but growing with extraordinary rapidity. One found all the paraphernalia of local Government - police magistrates, and officials of all kinds. One found everywhere prospectors and others bent on the development of the country, no doubt for the sake of their own and for their principals' pockets, but at the same time benefiting the State. One saw schools full of happy children. One came across new settlers, full of courage, enterprise, and hope. One visited settlements of Dutch and British side by side, determined to take their part in the building up of successful communities. There was the country, hardly free from the visible signs of war, and in spite of all the setbacks and difficulties encountered since its conclusion, beginning to assume the aspect of a flourishing colony inhabited by a hopeful and determined people.

"The policy of looking upon the Boer as a British subject from the moment he became one has been carried out from the beginning. Great Britain, at any rate, can rest content with her work of resettling the former inhabitants of her new colonies.

"But there is still another side of the question to be considered. How do the Boers themselves look upon what has been done for them and what are their feelings toward their new Government? The answer to this question must to a very great extent guide our future policy in the new colonies.

The Boers Grateful.

"Personally, I believe that the average Boer has a distinct feeling of gratitude for what has been done for him, and that he is fully aware of the magnanimity of his new Government. But his gratitude is to a degree discounted by the uncertainty of the future. The great majority are in the Government's debt, and it is the doubt as to how far their share of the free gift of £3,000,000 will get them out of debt which looms largely in their minds. "To my mind the hardest task is still in front, namely, the collection of debts, the just assessment of claims, and, above all, the fulfilment of promises made. It is the manner in which this work is carried

out which will determine the attitude to be adopted by the greater proportion of the Boer population. It must be carried out with the most scrupulous fairness and the utmost tact, and no promise made by us must remain unfulfilled. "The Boers do not accept the new order of things without considerable misgiving, and the hurt to their national pride cannot be at once healed; but I fully believe that for the most part they have faith and confidence in their new Government, and that their confidence will be kept so long as we carry out our professed principles of integrity and fair play. But, if once lost, it will be well-nigh impossible to regain. It is a difficult task which faces the Administration, but one which, if carried out well, will have a lasting effect on the future of the country.

They Wear a Mask.

"What I have stated above applies to the average country Boer; but there are two other classes still to be considered. First, there are the 'temporary irreconcilables,' and these, I am afraid, exist to a very considerable number. They are led by clever men, and their attitude is hidden by an outward mask of passive acceptance. So long as anything can be got out of the Government their true feeling will be kept in check, but when once they have obtained all they think possible they may be expected to show their hands.

"This class requires governing with the greatest firmness, and any indication of sedition or open disloyalty must be instantly suppressed. It is only by firm, though scrupulously just, handling that these quondam irreconcilables will in time fall into line with the rest. But if they are allowed a free hand, and open sedition is winked at, they will become a source of considerable political trouble in the future.

"There is yet one other class, although but a small one. These we may call the 'permanent irreconcilables.' And it is from these that the chief danger may arise. They still share with their cousins of the Cape Colony the aspiration of some day seeing a great Afrikaner Republic in South Africa. The idle dream of obtaining this by the sword has been put aside; but the dream

social feeling which is one of the most distinctive marks of the British House of Commons. It has been called the best club in London, and if not quite as clubbable in these ultra democratic days, it retains enough of the temperament, manners and habits which render it still so fascinating to all who come under its spell.

Who Goes Home.

At the conclusion of business the old cry still resounds through the corridors, "Who goes home?" reminiscent of the time when it was dangerous to walk London's streets in the small hours unaccompanied. Then the opposing whips, always the best of friends, hold a confidential confabulation and compare notes. Seldom, indeed, does personal animosity enter into the political life of the House of Commons in these days. The finest feature of the House is the anxious care with which all parties seek to conserve its traditions and to maintain all that makes for the firm and fair conduct of debate. They have been greatly aided in this by a succession of Speakers conspicuous for strength of character, clearness of judgment and an impartiality unquestionable and unquestioned. While this temper exists the House of Commons will remain the finest fruit of an enlightened party system and in this respect a model for popular assemblies throughout the world.

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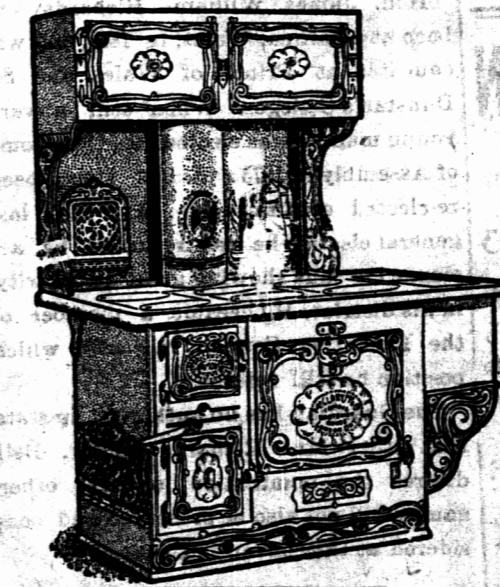
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