

Hungarian Franchise Bill. A new Hungarian Franchise Bill was introduced in Parliament shortly before Christmas. The advocates of reform are by no means enchanted with the bill as actually produced; but it admittedly represents a very considerable step forward. It enfranchises all literate men of twenty-four who have ever attended four classes of an elementary school, or paid not less than 10 crowns in direct taxes, or possess a trade license, or are permanently employed in industrial or agricultural work. In the case of men who have been two years in active service during this war, or who possess either the medal for valor or the Charles cross, the vote is granted irrespective of age. Women who have attended four classes of a middle school, or have for two years been members of a scientific or literary society, or whose husbands died in war service, also obtain the vote. There are various provisions for checking the appalling electoral corruption which has hitherto prevailed in Hungary, judicial officials being appointed on all the registration and polling booth committees by way of controlling the more than partial county officials, the candidates being in future forbidden to pay the traveling expenses and food bills of voters, and the sale of liquor being prohibited on the eve and day of elections. On the other hand, the ballot is only to be allowed in sixty-six municipal constituencies; public declaration is to be retained in all the country districts, and, consequently, among the non-Magyars, with the obvious motive of still controlling elections.

It has been calculated that this bill will raise the number of electors from 1,800,000 to 3,150,000 men, and will also add 260,000 women. The Hungarian press openly congratulates the cabinet on having so manipulated the reform as to secure to the Magyars at least 3 per cent more of the votes than they were previously entitled to; and it was announced that a redistribution bill would be introduced such as would make it practically impossible for the non-Magyar races (who on a merely numerical basis are entitled to 198 seats out of 413) to be represented by more than a dozen or so.¹

The Irish Convention. Since the Act of Union in 1801 there has been a continuous demand on the part of the Irish Nationalists for a repeal of that act and for some form of home rule. But the Irish question did not rise to first-class importance until in 1885 Gladstone declared that if returned to office he was prepared to "deal in a liberal

¹ *The New Statesman*, January 26, 1918.