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THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

Lord Brassey discussed the fleet construction programme and expressed his approval of the policy of the Admiralty.

Lord Ellenborough considered that by the reduction of the English programme Germany would be encouraged to greater efforts, and later on England would find herself obliged to make corresponding efforts on her side.

The First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Tweedmouth, said that the policy pursued by the Admiralty was based upon three points of view, all of which were approved by all parties in the country. The first was that England must maintain her supremacy at sea without any regard to the cost. The second was that England unquestionably found herself in this position at the present time, thanks to the efforts of various Governments for twenty years. Thirdly the burden of naval expenditure was very great, since the naval programmes had already developed into too bitter rivalry in the matter of expenditure among the individual Sea-Powers. Lord Tweedmouth went on to expound the Admiralty programme and laid stress on the fact that at the beginning of 1909 England would possess nine new large battleships including four of the "Dreadnought" class, while no other Power in Europe would be able to point to even one completed ship equal to these; the only Power that would in that period have constructed ships of the "Dreadnought" type would be Japan, their ally.

After defending the policy of the Admiralty Lord Tweedmouth turned to the question of the limitation of naval armaments and said that, as far as the Hague Conference went, the Government had expressly declared their readiness to come to an agreement of this kind, provided that the other Powers were ready to negotiate and to consider themselves bound by the decision of the Conference. If, however, the Powers should decline this, England would attend the Conference absolutely unhampered, with the understanding that, should the Powers extend their ship-building programme, England would on her side increase her programme to maintain her relative position among the Naval Powers (applause).

Lord Cawdor, an ex-First Lord of the Admiralty, expressed his warm approval of Lord Tweedmouth's speech.

In reply to a remark of Lord Brassey's that the average costs of armoured cruisers had increased, Lord Tweedmouth said that the opinion of naval experts in these latter days was that large armoured cruisers were of greater utility than small cruisers. He did not believe that any foreign cruiser was in a position to hold up a cruiser of the "Invincible" type.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

In answer to a question with reference to the carrying out of the German shipbuilding programme in 1906 and 1907, the Under Secretary for the Admiralty, Mr. Robertson, replied that if the two battleships contemplated in the programme had been already laid down, it was done, he believed, only within the last few weeks, while the armoured cruiser was laid down in February last. Mr. Robertson said that the English navy had never been so efficient or ready for war as at present. The Government were determined to maintain England's existing naval supremacy. In case the Hague Conference should prove barren of results, measures would be taken to secure to the fleet its position.

The Attorney General introduced a Bill for the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal, one of the clauses of which provides that convictions for criminal offences should be subject to revision.

SEDITION IN INDIA.

In the case of the appeal against the sentence passed on the proprietor and the editor of the journal, the *Punjabi*, for inciting the natives to excesses against Europeans, the High Court of

Appeal in Lahore has confirmed the conviction, but has mitigated the punishment of imprisonment with hard labour to simple imprisonment. The judge said he would gladly have yet further mitigated the sentence, had the accused shown any regret.

An excited mob of natives forced the carriage, in which the prisoners were being conveyed from the court-house to the gaol, to halt, threw mud at the police and decorated the prisoners with garlands. Later the mob formed a procession and attacked several Europeans that they happened to meet alone in the road, until they were dispersed by the police.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE CENTRAL AMERICAN REPUBLICS.

The news from Central America is considered to be more satisfactory. The Government of Nicaragua has made a re-assuring statement with respect to the designs of aggression attributed to that Republic, and negotiations are in progress under what amounts to the supervision of the United States. There is again talk of a federation of the Central American Republics and the inauguration of an era of peace and prosperity. The same talk was current a couple of years ago, but it was followed within twelve months by insurrections in more than one Republic, and, finally, by open war between Nicaragua, San Salvador, and Honduras. The outlook at the moment is, however, declared to be really satisfactory. Meantime, United States warships will remain off both Eastern and Western shores of Central America, until the seething cauldron has really settled down.

THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

A resolution of the National Peace Conference lays down that the Hague Conference should be a permanent institution, that the Hague Tribunal should be open to all nations, and that an arbitration treaty should be worked out by the next Hague Conference whereby all international disputes, not to be settled by diplomacy, should be referred to the Hague Tribunal.

THE ORLEANS FÊTE.

Paris, April 18.

It is reported from Orleans that the majority of the inhabitants are much pleased at an agreement which has been reached between the Minister of the Interior and the Communal Council, whereby the Joan of Arc fête may be held as hitherto, but on condition that its prevailing character is secular, that officials do not take part in it in their official or corporate capacity and that they take precedence of the clergy, that the latter carry no religious symbols in procession, and that the procession itself starts from the Town Hall and not from the Cathedral. The Nationalist and Conservative papers scoff at M. Clémenceau, for resorting to such petty measures in order to mask his retreat in the Joan of Arc Festival question.

THE HAGUE CONFERENCE.

The *Nordd. Allg. Zeitung* in order to prevent any further spread of the erroneous ideas prevailing as to the despatch which with reference to a question in the *Tribune* touching Germany's attitude to the Hague Conference, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs sent to this journal, has now published the text of the despatch. The question of the publisher of the *Tribune* was caused by the fact that the statement of the *Paris Temps* that Germany would refuse to attend the Conference if the British proposals in the matter of the limitation of armaments were to be discussed, had called forth very unfriendly comments in England. The editor of the *Tribune* requests to be allowed to state that the attitude of the German Government has been falsely represented. The telegraphic enquiry concluded with the wish that Anglo-German relations might continually improve. The despatch in question ran "Berlin, March 30. To the Editor of the *Tribune*, London. Thanking you for your telegram I authorise you to state that the remarks of the *Paris Temps*, that Germany would refuse to attend the Hague Conference should England propose to discuss the limitation of armaments, are without foundation. I trust that in spite of all

misrepresentations of Germany's attitude a closer relationship between England and Germany may make continual progress."

The object of the despatch was, adds the *Nordd. Allg. Zeitung*, to contradict the extraordinary statement of a Paris journal which relied on the authority of Professor de Martens, that Germany made her participation in the Hague Conference dependent on England's refusal to discuss the disarmament question at the Hague. The despatch contains no word as to the attitude Germany may adopt at the Conference toward this question.

The close of the despatch is merely a suitable reply to the friendly sentiments expressed in the interrogatory telegram.

THE LABOUR TROUBLES IN PARIS.

The waiters of the large restaurants and Cafés have received a circular from the Syndicate Committee, ordering them to strike; these orders will be obeyed by most of them. The restaurants where the personnel decline to strike, will be guarded by the police.

THE AUSTRIAN EMPEROR IN PRAGUE.

On Wednesday morning the Emperor Franz Joseph laid the coping-stone of the new Moldau bridge in the Assanierungs quarter.

In reply to the Mayor's address, the Emperor expressed the wish that this important building might introduce a very eventful epoch in the development of Prague.

The Emperor then, amid the enthusiastic cheers of the crowd, visited the Art Academy and the Modern Gallery which was called into existence at his instance. In reply to an address by the President, the Emperor said that he hoped that the artistic gifts of the nations of Bohemia, possessed in such wealth by both of them, might be united in friendly rivalry for the honour and glory of the Fatherland.

NEWS FROM RUSSIA.

THE BAKU DISTURBANCES.

The Committee of the Duma appointed to deal with interpellations, has discussed the interpellation of the Social Democrats with reference to the despatch of General Taube to Baku, and has come to the conclusion that no sufficient grounds exist for interpellating the Government. The Committee decided to reject the motion, but at the same time to request the Government, in view of the importance of the Baku petroleum industry for the whole realm, to explain to the Duma the situation in Baku, without reference to the question raised by the Social Democrats of the interference by the Government in the struggle between capital and labour. The representative of the Social Democrats declared himself satisfied with the decision of the Committee.

THE MURDER OF AN AMERICAN CONSUL.

In the criminal proceedings at Tiflis concerning the murder of Mr. Stuart, United States Consul at Batum, the murderer Rossim Dehidchavadse was condemned to be hanged, but in view of his free confession and his youth, the sentence was commuted to one of ten year's imprisonment. The two other men accused of the crime, were acquitted.

LABOUR RIOTS.

On Wednesday as a detachment of the fighting organisation of the Union of Really Russian People was passing along the Levascheff quay in Odessa, they were greeted with whistling and groans by a group of labourers of about the same strength in point of numbers; about 30 revolver shots were fired, 5 workmen being wounded, two of them mortally. The military hurried to the scene and made some 13 arrests.

The fighting between the various parties in Lodz still continues. Five men were killed on Wednesday and six wounded. Shops and offices are being attacked and looted. Thirty more arrests have been made.

BRITISH AND AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES.

THE BRITISH LEGATION: Elisen Strasse 5 c.
Minister Resident: *The Viscount Gough.*

THE BRITISH CONSULATE: Altmarkt 16.
British Consul: *H. Palmié, Esq.*

THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL: Ammon Strasse 2, p.
American Consul General: *T. St. John Gaffney, Esq.*

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