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THE KING'S HOLIDAY.

The royal yacht "Victoria and Albert" with King Edward and Queen Alexandra on board arrived off Palermo on Tuesday afternoon.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Mr. W. Ashley, Conservative, Member for Blackpool, asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he had been informed that the Moroccan Government had entrusted public works to a German firm, and whether the circumstances under which the contract came into existence was a breach of the Algeiras Decrees, and if so, what steps the Government intended to take. The Secretary of State, Sir E. Grey, replied that a question of that sort with reference to a certain contract, which was doubtless the one Mr. Ashley had in his mind, had been discussed. It was a question which, without doubt, would find solution on the spot in accordance with the terms of the Algeiras Decrees, which all the Powers were endeavouring to see adhered to.

The House then resumed the debate on the Territorial Army proposals. Mr. J. A. Macdonald, Labour Member, Falkirk District, said that he cherished the fear that the new proposals formed the first stage toward general conscription. The Government should try to settle the military question, not by continually increasing armaments but by an international agreement upon limiting the same. The labour party opposed the Bill, because it did away with the civilian character of the volunteers, and if Mr. Haldane's proposals were unsuccessful in creating a volunteer army, the country would fall a victim to conscription.

Mr. Haldane pointed out that the Prime Ministers of the Colonies had unanimously declared that his, Mr. Haldane's, proposals formed the best plan for the organisation of the Army, and they had proposed to take this plan as a pattern for their own home forces; so that not only the 300,000 men which formed the English territorial army would be available, but that in the whole Empire there would be a chain of territorial forces which would give a real feeling of security. The Government regarded the proposal as a bulwark against conscription.

The House decided, by a large majority, that the Bill should be read a second time.

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE.

At its Tuesday's sitting the Colonial Conference continued the discussion of Imperial defence and at the instance of the Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, accepted without amendment a resolution relating to the organisation of a General Staff. It was recommended that officers from the whole Empire should be employed on this Staff.

The Secretary of State for War, Mr. Haldane, pointed out that the South African war had shown how necessary it was to be prepared for war, and alluded to the desirability of a comprehensive plan for a military organisation of the whole Empire. The General Staff, as proposed by the Conference, will prepare plans for defence and will give advice as to the training and organisation of troops of the Crown in every part of the Empire.

The Conference then turned to the subject of naval defence, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Tweedmouth, expounding the defensive plans of the Admiralty. He laid especial stress on a uniform control of the fleet, and said that one of the aims of the Admiralty was to keep the naval strength at such a pitch that the naval supremacy of England would be assured in any event. He did not wish to press for further grants of money, but the cooperation of the Colonies in the way most agreeable to themselves would be heartily welcomed by him. After a general discussion.

It was decided to postpone the discussion of this subject, and that the representatives of the Colonies

should meanwhile separately confer with the Admiralty.

The Conference adjourned until Thursday.

H. M. S. "NATAL."

PRESENTATION OF PLATE BY THE COLONY.

The armoured cruiser "Natal", now lying at Chatham, was the scene of a most interesting function on Tuesday afternoon, when the service of plate presented by "The People of Natal," as the inscription states, "as a token of their interest in His Majesty's Navy, and of their goodwill towards the ship bearing the name of the Colony," was formally handed over to the commanding officer. The presentation comprised a fine centre-piece, in which portraits of King Edward VII and Lord Nelson and a picture of the "Natal" were cleverly worked in colours, a splendid candelabra, a handsome trophy for shooting, and a regulation ship's bell in bronze. Accompanying the service of plate was a framed dedication agreement, enumerating the articles presented, and stipulating that in the event of there being no ship "Natal" in the Navy at some future time, the plate and trophy shall be held by the captain of the Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham. The document was signed by A. W. Kershaw, Mayor of Pietermaritzburg, chairman of the presentation committee, and countersigned by F. R. Moor, Prime Minister of Natal. The presentation also included a sum of £100 to provide prizes for the winning team of the shooting trophy. The presentation was made by the Hon. Sir William Arbuckle, Agent-General for Natal, and duly acknowledged by Capt. Stuart Nicholson.

THE "BERLIN" ENQUIRY.

The Board of Trade enquiry into the circumstances attending the wreck of the Hook of Holland S. S. "Berlin" was finished on Tuesday. The Board found that the vessel left Harwich in good condition and with the necessary life-saving apparatus on board. The cause of the wreck was an error on the part of the unfortunate captain, in attempting to enter the new channel under the weather conditions that prevailed at the time, and in underestimating the strength of the tide. The heavy sea made it impossible for the lifeboat crews to approach the ship, but certainly everything that was possible in this direction was done. The ship was not navigated or commanded in a manner suitable to every emergency that might arise.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE U. S. AND THE PHILIPPINES.

The *Globe* learns from its New York correspondent that it is understood that it has been decided to maintain the American military force in the Philippines at its present strength of over 20,000 men. This decision has been reached in spite of the strong protests of the anti-expansion section of the Democratic party, and that group of the Republicans who look with misgivings upon the growing disposition to extend the borders of the United States with the consequent necessity for the keeping of a very large Navy.

Had the decision been otherwise, it is certain that it would have been followed by the resignation of Major-General Wood, now in command at Manila, who in a recent report to the War Department declared that the present force, however it might be concentrated, would be "barely sufficient" to defend the Philippines against attack. The name of Japan is never, of course, officially mentioned in this connection, but everybody knows well enough that the Japanese are the only possible enemy in the Far East at the present time at any rate.

But apart from outside aggression, the internal condition of the country has to be borne in mind.



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It has doubtless considerably improved during the past twelve months, but is far from satisfactory generally, and all officials who have had experience of the Filipinos are of opinion that it would be really dangerous to reduce the present strength of the garrison. Little is heard nowadays of the question of Home Rule for the Filipinos. Competent critics say that the people of the Philippines will not be fit for even a small instalment of self-government for a generation to come.

THE EARTHQUAKES IN CHILI.

Violent volcanic disturbances are continually taking place in the Southern portion of Chili. Heavy showers of ashes have fallen on the town of Valdivia.

NEWS FROM FRANCE.

THE FIRE AT TOULON ARSENAL.

Two pieces of fuse of a kind not used in the navy have been discovered near the scene of the conflagration and confiscated by the police.

The number of those who were injured while employed in salvage work, amounts to 30; 17 of them have been received in the naval hospital.

Several journals announce, with all reserve and merely as a rumour, that the fire at the arsenal broke out at several places in the oakum and wood stores at the same time. With regard to the slow match found at the scene of the fire, it is said that it was made of twisted hemp and lay close to a building in which a considerable quantity of petroleum, oil, candles and other very inflammable matter was stored. At the same moment as the fire at the arsenal broke out, another large fire occurred at the other end of the town in the *Maison neuve* quarter.

THE LABOUR TROUBLES IN PARIS.

The bakers' assistants who are on strike assembled on Tuesday morning in the Place de la Concorde, intending to hold a demonstration and then proceed to the Labour Exchange. The police, however, dispersed the crowd and made several arrests. Disturbances also took place in front of the Labour Exchange, which is being guarded by troops.

CONSULTING A NEIGHBOUR.

The Colonial Minister M. Méliès-Lacroix has gone to London in order to study the methods employed at the English Colonial Ministry.

NEWS FROM RUSSIA.

THE DUMA.

The interpellation on the Riga occurrences, as related in a special report of the illegal tortures inflicted by the police administration in Riga and other Baltic towns, came up for discussion on Tuesday. The Assistant Ministers of the Interior and of Justice made statements.

The former, M. Makaroff, admitted the truth of most of the cases in the report relating to the secret police and said that the Minister of the Interior had ordered an enquiry with a view to the punishment of the guilty parties; the result of his enquiry should be awaited. The Assistant Minister of Justice, M. Lutze, said that the report, as far as it related to Government officials was exaggerated. (Sensation.)

The debate was adjourned, although 13 more members had announced their desire to speak.

The President informed the House that 46 members had brought in a motion relating to the autonomy of Poland.

M. Purishkevitch cried out "That is impossible, it would be a scandal for the Duma to busy itself with such questions". (Uproar, cries of "No, no.")

The House adjourned at 6.10 p. m.

In the special report alluded to above it is stated that with the commencement of the punitive expedition into the Baltic provinces began the torturing of prisoners, in order to force them to make confessions which sufficed to justify their being shot. In Riga a committee was formed for this object; it received special instructions from the State attorney and police administration and was armed with the right of killing political offenders without trial. The martyrdoms and atrocities inflicted on the prisoners had the cognizance of the administrative authorities and the Colonel of Gendarmerie. One prisoner was thrown down by a Police Commissioner who jumped up and down on the prostrate man's chest until all his ribs were broken, and, in fearful agony, he was allowed to remain for several days without nourishment and was then shot. Another prisoner was beaten on the calves of his legs until all the flesh was off the bones; a third had a confession literally