

The Daily Record

and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

No 378.

DRESDEN, SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1907.

10 PFENNIGS.

The First Daily Paper published in Germany
in English.

Office: Dresden, Steube Strasse 51.

Telephone: 1755.

Subscription for Dresden and the whole of
Germany and Austria:

1 mark a month.

KING EDWARD IN PARIS.

H. M. King Edward called upon President Fallières on Wednesday; the President shortly afterwards paid a return visit to the King at the British Embassy.

THE QUEEN'S CRUISE.

The Royal yacht "Victoria and Albert" with H. M. Queen Alexandra and H. R. H. Princess Victoria on board left Naples on Wednesday for Athens.

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE.

The discussion of Colonial Preference was continued on Wednesday. General Botha opposed Mr. Deakin's proposals and expressly declared that it would be necessary for his Government to impose duties on British as well as other goods. He protested against any attempts to bind individual Governments and deprive them of their freedom in tariff matters. Mr. Mac Kay, representing India, pointed to the risk and injury which would result to Indian trade from retaliatory measures adopted by any foreign Power. India would derive no advantage from the proposed alterations, but, on the other hand, the risk and the sacrifice for India would be too great to enable her to accept them. The United States, Germany and France could, as a matter of fact, complain of India, since they drew more from her than they sold to her, but they had nowhere heard anything of any such complaints. Mr. Asquith, Chancellor of the Exchequer, said that the Government would embark upon no breach of the policy of free trade. He pointed out that, as a matter of fact, Great Britain enjoyed the same privileges as the most favoured nations, and in markets enjoying Protection found herself in a stronger position than the countries which imposed protective tariffs; thus Germany, next to India, was the best market for British goods. He pointed out how unimportant the advantages would be which would accrue to British trade from Preference, and even if individual Colonies granted the Motherland preferential tariffs that would not enable her to compete successfully under like conditions with home products. Any preferential rate granted to Great Britain, if it was to have any value, must relate to raw material and foodstuffs. It was merely a question of principle, and no compromises such as various speakers had proposed were possible. He said that the discussion had shown that trade relations of individual parts of the Empire could be bettered, especially by improved steam-ship service, increasing the number of trade agents in the Colonies, and by the abolition or lowering of the Suez Canal dues. The Government was ready to consider every practical proposal.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Sir Edward Grey described the reports which have again cropped up in the Press as to the visit of a British squadron to Cronstadt in May, as entirely without foundation, and said that no such visit had been even discussed by the Government.

The Prime Minister announced that the House would adjourn for Whitsuntide on May 16th, and gave a summary of the measures to be settled before the Whitsun holidays. The Government proposals with reference to the Upper House would not be introduced before the holidays.

To a question respecting the disturbances on the Island of Santa Lucia, the Under Secretary for the Colonies, Mr. Winston Churchill, replied by reading a cable despatch from the Governor to the effect that the factories were still being guarded, and that the temper of the populace still gave cause for anxiety. Mr. Churchill also informed the House that the cruiser "Indefatigable" arrived at Santa Lucia on Wednesday night.

Sir Gilbert Parker, Conservative, Member for Gravesend asked if the Government, in view of the recent occurrences, would consider the advisability of affording increased naval protection to the West Indies; Mr. Churchill replied in the affirmative.

In answer to another question Mr. Churchill stated that the Government had determined to give their assent to the law recently passed by the Transvaal Parliament placing severe restrictions on English, Asiatic or Indian subjects residing in the Transvaal. Similar measures had been adopted in the previous year by the Transvaal Legislative Council, but had not been confirmed by the British Government. The Government had now given their assent because they were backed up by the unanimous authority of the Parliament recently elected by a Colony upon which responsible self-government had been conferred.

Mr. Lea, Liberal, Member for E. St. Pancras, asked the Government whether it was in accordance with constitutional usage that at all meetings of the King with foreign Sovereigns or Ministers at which State affairs were discussed a Minister responsible to Parliament should be present and whether during the meeting of the King with foreign Sovereigns and Ministers during his Mediterranean cruise any agreements as to State affairs had been come to.

Sir E. Grey read a written reply stating that the custom that the King during his absence from the capital should be always accompanied by a Minister had never been strictly adhered to. The visit of the King to Cartagena was a ceremonial return visit to that paid by the King of Spain to England; on the other hand, the visit to Gaeta was a purely private one. In all negotiations relating to State affairs constitutional usage and the responsibility of Ministers had been fully upheld.

THE LORD MAYOR TO VISIT GERMANY.

At a meeting of the Common Council held in the Guildhall on Wednesday the Lord Mayor read a letter from Oberbürgermeister Kirschner of Berlin extending a cordial invitation to the City Corporation to visit that city. It was decided to accept the invitation, and June 16 was provisionally fixed for the visit. Seven aldermen, 40 Town Councillors, the Sheriffs and two higher officials will take part in the trip.

DELAGOA BAY AND THE RAND.

The London Standard learns from Durban that a syndicate has been sitting in all secrecy in Johannesburg and has been occupied with negotiations as to the possibility of the acquisition by the Rand of Delagoa Bay in the interests of trade. The greatest secrecy is being observed; still, it is rumoured that no agreement has been arrived at, though considerable progress was made last month.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND THE NAVY.

President Roosevelt is reported to have expressed himself with some freedom to the officers of the foreign warships now at Jamestown. He is, of course, an enthusiastic advocate of a greater American Navy, and he did not hesitate to enter into conversation on this rather delicate topic with America's naval visitors. The appropriations for naval purposes voted by Congress last Session were fairly generous, although by no means as large as either the Secretary for the Navy or Mr. Roosevelt desired.

Naval officers have discussed the matter of the "meanness" of Congress in this respect in indignant language, and Admiral Dewey, in particular, has upon more than one occasion almost passed the bounds of respect in his criticisms. There appears to be a strong belief in official quarters at Washington that Congress will be much more liberal next Session, but why this should be so is not explained. The Democrats as a party are opposed to excessive naval expenditure, because they regard it as part and parcel of the Republican policy of expansion and Imperialism, as illustrated in the acquisition of Hawaii and the Philippines.

STROMBOLI'S ACTIVITY.

The Catania observatory reports that the whole of Wednesday a shower of ashes accompanied by an unintermittent rumbling sound proceeded from Stromboli. A broad stream of lava is flowing

from the new crater of the volcano, the extraordinary activity of which continues. The populace remain undisturbed. The usual clouds of smoke are to be seen on Mount Etna.

AN ITALIAN VIEW OF PRINCE BÜLOW'S SPEECH.

The Rome *Tribuna* in commenting on Prince Bülow's speech says: "The meeting in Gaeta was considered by many people to be the best of proofs that the triple Alliance had lost all justification of its existence. The Chancellor's speech has proved the contrary."

NEWS FROM RUSSIA.

THE FAMINE.

The Imperial Council has agreed to the proposal of the Duma, that a sum of 6,000,000 roubles should be devoted to the relief of the famine-stricken provinces.

A TREATY WITH JAPAN.

On Wednesday took place, in the Ministry of the Exterior, a meeting of the Russo-Japanese Conference with reference to the conclusion of a commercial treaty. At this meeting the text of the treaty itself, as well as that of the separate articles, the protocol, and the diplomatic notes as to the special concessions to be granted by either side, were settled. The formal signature of the treaty by Japanese and Russian plenipotentiaries will take place in the near future.

RIOT IN A PRISON.

On Wednesday disturbances, soon suppressed, took place in a prison in the Viborg quarter of St. Petersburg. They were, however, again renewed on Thursday in more violent form. Political prisoners made certain demands, broke the windows, smashed the doors and created an uproar. Soldiers were obliged to fire upon them; one prisoner was killed and several wounded. Order was at length restored, and an enquiry has been instituted.

UNREST IN CHINA.

The *Standard* announces from Tientsin that in the native quarter of the city the doors have been bedaubed with blood as in the last Boxer rebellion. The greatest unrest prevails among the inhabitants. The native Press warns the authorities of a recurrence of the Boxer troubles, if this custom is allowed to continue unchecked.

LOCAL.

There have been rumours afloat as to scandalous conduct by an American visitor to Dresden, who, it was stated, had insulted German officers &c. The facts of the case are that a man who claimed to be an American citizen, but was born in Munich, created a disturbance at the Kaiser Palast on the evening of the 27th. He was arrested, but was treated with great leniency and discharged with a caution.

The programme of this evening's orchestral concert at the Royal Belvedere will be as follows:

- (1) Overture, "Zauberflöte" Mozart.
- (2) Impromptu Schubert-Kempler.
- (3) Paraphrase of "Frühlingszeit" R. Becker.
- (4) Czardas, from "Der Geist der Wojewoden" Grossmann.
- (5) Overture, "Rienzi" Wagner.
- (6) Legende, for violin and cello Weiss.
- (7) Ballet Music, from "Le Cid" Massenet.
- (8) Prologue to "Pagliacci" (Der Bajazzo) Leoncavallo.
- (9) Ave Maria Schubert.
- (10) Intermezzo from "La Source" (Nails) Delibes.
- (11) Waltz, "Wiener Blut" Strauss.

The guards in the city today are furnished by the 1st Grenadier regiment No. 100. There will be no music at the guard-mounting.

FERRY ACROSS THE BALTIC.

It will soon be possible for passengers to travel from Germany into Sweden without changing cars. A ferry which will carry an entire train is to be run between the two countries across the Baltic.

The distance of the ferry route is about seventy miles, which will be covered in four hours. This will be the first ferry to cross the open sea, and may set an example for ferries between English ports and the Continent.

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