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THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE NAVY.

In explaining the building programme of the Government, Mr. Robertson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, said he would not allude to the building of battle-ships, as he had nothing to add to the statements he made on the subject last year and at the beginning of this session. The building programme provided for three new ships and the third would be also laid down unless the results of the Hague Conference should justify a change of plan in that respect. With regard to the building of torpedo boat destroyers, Mr. Robertson remarked that the Admiralty acted on the principle that the requirements of Great Britain in torpedo boat destroyers must be fixed in accordance with strategical considerations and that the so-called two-Power standard did not apply in this case. He then gave particulars of the torpedo boat destroyers possessed by Great Britain as compared to the number of destroyers in foreign Navies and showed that the British destroyer fleet is superior to those of other Powers. In alluding to the cruisers, Mr. Robertson entered into details as to the number, size, and cost of the large armoured cruisers lately completed and under construction, and pointed out that the endeavour of the Admiralty had been to establish the desired superiority over other Powers, and that they could now turn their attention to other classes of cruisers. The Admiralty were engaged in considering the question whether, instead of cruisers of the "Edgar" class, it would not be better to build cruisers of the "Boadicea" type.

Mr. Lee, Unionist, Member for the Fareham division of Hampshire, asked the Government for a distinct statement whether the third battle-ship provided for in the building programme of the Government was to be built or not, as the Government could not possibly be any longer in doubt as to the attitude of the Hague Conference with regard to the disarmament question.

Sir Charles Dilke, Liberal, Member for the Forest of Dean division of Gloucestershire, defended the policy of the Admiralty with respect to battle-ships, but doubted whether there was any necessity for the special exertions which the Admiralty had in view with regard to the building of submarine vessels, torpedo boat destroyers, and cruisers. The German fleet was at present unimportant, except in respect of the rapidity with which ships were intended to be built in coming years. If any danger from Germany existed for England, it was not the danger of an invasion or of a great fleet but the growing superiority of the Germans in the technical equipment of their fleet. The information given yesterday by Lord Tweedmouth with regard to the extensive building of cruisers was, of course, the answer to the building of such ships in Germany. He was, however, of opinion that it was not necessary to endeavour to compete with these German cruisers, especially since the policy of destroying commerce was a matter of the past.

In the further course of the debate the policy of the Admiralty was generally approved. The motion of the Radicals to reduce the expenditure for the fleet was rejected by 263 to 86 votes and the estimates were finally passed.

THE BELFAST DISQUIET.

Another regiment of troops with a Maxim detachment has arrived in Belfast on Wednesday afternoon. There are now 6,000 troops in the town.

The troops have been brought into the town in case the police should go on strike next Saturday when the disaffected elements among them expect an answer to their complaints. The leaders of the movement profess to be in possession of letters from discontented policemen from numerous districts.

The strike of docklabourers and drivers still continues. The wagons which proceed under police escort continue to be attacked.



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NEWS FROM FRANCE.

THE STRIKE MOVEMENT.

It is reported from Raon l'Étape that an agreement has been come to between M. Amos, the owner of a shoe-factory, and the representatives of the strikers. The former has declared his readiness to recognise the syndicate and to take back the dismissed workmen. A meeting of the strikers was to take place on Wednesday.

In Paris some hundred carpenters on strike had a collision with the police. Four of the latter were seriously hurt, while several of the strikers were arrested.

THE HAGUE CONFERENCE.

The Fourth Committee of the Peace Conference adopted the English proposal with regard to the abolition of contraband by 25 votes to 5, four Delegates abstaining from voting; the minority was composed of Russia, Germany, America, France and Montenegro. The proposal was therefore set apart for consideration of the whole Conference, and referred to the examining committee together with all the other proposals relating to this subject. Freiherr von Marschall said that such an eventual final adverse vote on the part of the German Delegates would have to be attributed to their wish to protect the interests of the neutral States that were prejudiced by a state of the law under which the abolition of contraband would have as counterpart a definition of auxiliary ships that would give the right, not only to search neutral vessels but to take possession of them without any previous search, and even without giving them a chance of making an objection. Hereupon the voting on the question of settling an interval for merchant ships to leave hostile ports at the beginning of hostilities unmolested, was deferred until after the debate in the committee. Finally the question of blockade was also referred to an examining committee. Germany and Austria declared their unreserved assent to the Italian proposal which endeavours to establish the principle that a blockade is a military operation not directed against the free exercise of commerce.

The sub-committee for considering the question of the usages of war on land adopted several proposals and referred them to the drafting com-

mittee, viz.: a proposal of Germany that the treaty obligations of an enemy's country shall be respected by the belligerents; a further proposal by Germany that the States shall be responsible for breaches of the rules concerning the laws and usages of land-war committed by their military forces; finally a Belgian proposal forbidding that inhabitants of occupied territory shall be compelled, directly or indirectly, to participate in military operations against their own country, and that from them information regarding such operations shall be demanded.

KAISER AND CZAR TO MEET.

A meeting of Emperor William and the Czar has long been prepared, but very naturally the arrangements have been kept strictly secret. It is supposed that the Czar left Zarskoje Selo yesterday to proceed to the Baltic, while the Emperor has already returned from his trip North. The meeting of the two monarchs will take place in the presence of the German fleet just now manoeuvring in the Baltic.

NEWS FROM RUSSIA.

ANOTHER GENERAL STRIKE.

Reports received from Lodz bring information of a protest against the numerous arrests lately effected. A general strike is to be proclaimed. In the Poznanzki factory three departments are on strike already.

According to later news 20,000 men have struck work in 40 factories. Those willing to work were dispersed by agitators. In the factory of Dobranitzky Brothers three agitators demanded of the engineer to stop the engines. Some of the workmen attacked the agitators who fired, wounding one workman fatally and another slightly; work continues in this factory. The tramcar service has had to be suspended in consequence of the men at the Electric Power Station having struck. The cars are being guarded by troops. A workman of Messrs. Richter's factory was murdered in the street. A shopkeeper who refused to close his shop was shot dead by the infuriated ringleaders.

Later, on Wednesday, the tram service was resumed. Comparative quiet reigns in the town since the streets are being patrolled by cavalry and infantry detachments.

UNREST EVERYWHERE.

In spite of the opposition of the National parties the strike in Warsaw has extended; in 46 factories 32,000 men are out on strike. The trams stopped running on Wednesday at noon. The strikers pelted the cars with stones, and injured many people.

In the train between Seitler and Grammatikovo 20,500 roubles were taken from two cashiers by robbers who then stopped the train and escaped.

At Novarossisk the strike in the cement factories is at an end, while dock and railway hands have gone out on strike.

MOROCCAN AFFAIRS.

KAID MACLEAN.

The British Envoy at Tangier, after receiving Kaid Maclean's letter informing him of Raisuli's threats, requested a postponement of the operations against the latter. Orders to that effect have already been issued.

SERIOUS COMPLICATION.

Advices from Casablanca state that three tribes who are excited about the harbour and railway works made their way into the town proclaimed a holy war, and threatened the foreign inhabitants. Six Frenchmen, two Italians, and a Spaniard were murdered. The natives had announced on the previous day that the tribes in the neighbourhood would come into the town in a few days and kill the builder of the fort. The victims were beaten with sticks and stabbed to death with knives, and their bodies were burnt. A few Europeans succeeded in escaping from the town in the evening; the French Consul remained at his post.

A French doctor who escaped from Casablanca, M. Merle, gives the following further particulars of what occurred. A number of natives came into the town on the pretext of wishing to buy corn in the market, assembled at the harbour at midday, maltreated the native watchmen, and murdered some workmen. Europeans who had armed themselves and hurried into the streets were attacked and overcome. The Jews closed their shops, and sought refuge on board a ship. The blame for