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THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

At Tuesday's sitting the Government Bill for the reinstatement of the evicted tenants in Ireland passed the second reading.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Mr. Richards, Labour Member for Wolverhampton, asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he could give the Russian Government to understand that England would feel it necessary to reject an alliance with Russia, of whatever kind it might be, unless better treatment was meted out to the Russian people. Mr. Runciman, on behalf of Sir Edward Grey, replied to the question in the negative. He had already explained, he said, that the internal affairs of Russia could not be taken into consideration in negotiations between the two Governments. Besides, the question of an alliance had not been raised.

THE BELFAST DISQUIET.

TRADE LEAVING THE PORT.

At a meeting of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners on Tuesday, it was announced that 50,000 tons of goods had been diverted from the port during the last fortnight as a result of the strike. The Commissioners have memorialised the Lord Lieutenant asking for adequate police protection, and have also decided to convene a public meeting of citizens to consider what action should be taken. The situation in Belfast has much improved. The strikers are no longer seriously molesting the carters. A few factories have resumed work.

YACHTING AT COWES.

The race for the Cup presented by His Majesty the German Emperor was won by the Earl of Dunraven's yacht "Cariad".

PRESENT OF A SILVER CRADLE.

The Earl and Countess of Shaftesbury were presented by the Belfast Corporation on Tuesday with a silver cradle, on the occasion of the birth of a daughter during their term of office as Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. It is twenty-five years since a similar function took place at Belfast. Lord and Lady Shaftesbury subsequently gave a garden party at the Botanic Gardens, at which the guests included the officers of the Second Division of the Atlantic Fleet, now anchored in Belfast Lough.

THE HAGUE CONFERENCE.

In the Fourth Committee, presided over by the Russian Secretary of State M. Martens, M. Sotchinikoff (Russia) advocated the right of belligerents to destroy prizes, particularly when States were concerned that had not a sufficient number of harbours at their disposal to which they could take their prizes. Sir E. Satow (England) put forward the view that destruction of prizes would be contrary to the fundamental principles of neutrality. A vote was not taken at this stage. The Committee proceeded to discuss the French proposal with regard to the abolition of the right to take prizes and to the establishment of the principle of compensation. M. Renault (France) amended the proposal to the effect that the States should not be invited to adopt measures but to endeavour to find ways and means of reaching the end suggested. In consequence of some reservations, a vote was taken on each part of the proposal separately. Freiherr v. Marschall (Germany) expressed himself in favour of the first part concerning the abolition of the right of capture, but made reservations with regard to the principle of compensation. The result of the voting was: On Part I, Ayes 16, Noes 4, and 14 abstentions; on Part II, Ayes 7, Noes 13, and 14 abstentions. Twelve Delegates were absent at the time of the voting. England had declared that with regard to the right of taking prizes she was not willing to



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After a short discussion on the capture of fishing vessels, the sitting was adjourned.

At the sitting of the sub-Committee of the Second Committee on Wednesday afternoon, the Belgian proposal concerning the renewal of the Convention of the year 1899 was discussed. This prohibits the throwing of missiles from air-ships. The German Delegates had declared their willingness to vote for the proposal on condition that at the voting unanimity was attained. The voting proved, however, that 27 votes were recorded for the proposal without reserve, 3 in favour of it on condition of unanimity, and 5 against it. Thus unanimity was not attained. A compromise proposed by Italy was then discussed, which provided that: (1) it shall be forbidden to bombard undefended towns and villages from air-ships, and (2) that a balloon used for war purposes shall be dirigible and manned by a military crew. This proposal was put to the vote, article by article. The result was: On Article I, 21 for and 8 against, with 6 abstentions and 8 absentees; on Article II, 30 votes in favour of it and 2 against it, while 3 Delegates declined to vote and 9 were absent. The Delegates present then explained the reasons by which they had been influenced in giving their votes. Herr v. Gündell (Germany) expressed the view that no special rules could be prescribed for steerable air-ships. Non-dirigible balloons could also be used in case of war, and rules could be made for their employment with regard to the direction of the wind, &c. In his opinion there was no reason for excluding non-dirigible balloons. General Amourel (France) associated himself with Herr v. Gündell's views. Before the conclusion of the sitting Lord Reay (England) said that England took her stand on the ground of the Conventions of 1899, which forbade the employment of poisonous gases and explosive bullets.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

VENEZUELA.

The American Envoy Extraordinary in Caracas has cabled to the State Department in Washington that the demeanour of Venezuela is highly satisfactory.

As regards the prompt payment of amounts awarded by the Mixed Commission as compensation to the so-called pacific or non-blockading nations, the Envoy has again been instructed to inform Castro's Government of America's demand that the five American claims which had already been presented to Venezuela without effect, should now be submitted to the Hague Tribunal.

THE BRASILIAN COFFEE LOAN.

The Brazilian Senate has consented to a loan of 3,000,000 pounds being raised for the coffee valuation.

This, no doubt, is the same loan passed by the chamber of deputies some weeks ago.

STORMS IN THE WEST.

A cable received from St. Paul, Minnesota, reports storms of rain, hail and lightning having caused great damage in Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin, on Tuesday night.

THE STRIKE IN ANTWERP.

The tug boats have again refused to convey the English workmen on board the sea-going steamers. The Burgomaster proposed to the workmen's delegates that they should refer their case to a Court of arbitration presided over by himself. If the delegates accepted the proposal, the first sitting of the Court was to be held yesterday.

NEWS FROM FRANCE.

MOROCCAN AFFAIRS.

According to a private cable-message received in Paris from Tangier the French Embassy in Tangier has chartered the S. S. "Emir" and sent her to Mazagan with instructions there to take on board all the French and other European settlers. The natives in Tangier are greatly excited over the bombardment of Casablanca, and the French colony, fearing an outbreak, are anxious that a warship should be sent to Tangier also.

The *Agence Havas* says that the Powers signatories to the Algeiras *Acte* were informed on Wednesday by the representatives of France that the happenings at Casablanca had anticipated the measures of which the Powers were to be duly notified. The Note adds that it is an imperative necessity that the Police in Moroccan harbours should be organised, and again affirms France's firm intention of upholding the Sultan's authority and of maintaining the independence and inviolability of his empire.

The Paris papers consider the bombardment of Casablanca entirely justified and express the conviction that all Powers will share this opinion. Doubtless the bombardment is a measure not provided for in the Algeiras *Acte*, but that conference could not foresee the repeated attacks on European colonists; and the measure became imperative when the lives and the property of Europeans were in danger.

AN ACCIDENT TO A SUBMARINE.

The report of the sinking of the submarine "Castor" off Rochefort is not confirmed; as a matter of fact she grounded when she was leaving the basin and sprang a big leak which, however, was immediately stopped by the artificers on board.

NEWS FROM RUSSIA.

CHOLERA REPORTS.

35 cases of cholera were reported from Samara for the week ending August 4, 10 of which were fatal. Precautionary measures are being taken in St. Petersburg. Yesterday 12 new cases occurred at Samara.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

The Minister of Education has received a petition from 125 Semstvos, asking for the immediate introduction of compulsory education. The Semstvos ask also for aid from the State to the amount of 7½ million roubles for this year and 5 millions yearly.

THE OUTRAGES.

In Mitau two Letts were condemned to be hanged for robbery. 8 others have already been hanged and one poisoned himself with strychnine before the execution.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FLEET.

The Marine-department intends to build in the course of this year two ironclads of a new type with a displacement of 19,970 tons and with turbine-engines designed to obtain a speed of 21 knots. The main armament will consist of 10 12-inch guns.