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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

PRINCE OF WALES TO VISIT CANADA.

London, March 5. It is officially reported that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales will visit Quebec in the last week of July next, on the occasion of the festival to be held in celebration of the 300th year of the city's existence. The Prince will be escorted by the Atlantic Fleet, and it is expected that a French and an American naval squadron will also be present during the festival.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S HEALTH.

London, March 5. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman passed a quiet day, and the slight increase in strength has been maintained. His Majesty King Edward visited Sir Henry yesterday afternoon to bid him farewell, previous to leaving for Biarritz.

THE LONDON PRESS ON THE ESTIMATES.

London, March 5. The following are extracts from comments in several Unionist and Liberal newspapers on the debate which followed the introduction of the Navy and Army Estimates: "The Government mean to reduce the Service Estimates even if they drag down the Empire with it. That is the threat, and the weakness which the Government displayed in the preparation of the Estimates, and displayed again yesterday in defending them, will simply invite a fresh attack next year."—*Telegraph*.

"The Government have been utterly exposed. They have committed themselves to a policy of reckless reduction, which they call economy, and their efforts to prove that all the while they have been careful to secure the defence of the country are merely deplorable."—*Standard*.

"There is something to be said for the man who would spend nothing upon the Navy and everything upon himself. There is no case for those who advocate expenditure upon an inadequate and unready fleet, because this is the worst form of waste. It is like the conduct of an engineer who should provide a fifty-foot bridge to cross a sixty-foot river."—*Daily Mail*.

"Do the Government or do they not intend to adhere to the two-Power standard? The country will be seriously alarmed and justly indignant unless in the debate on the Navy Estimates the deplorable ambiguity disclosed is once for all removed. Let us at least know where we are. Is the two-Power standard still in force or is it not?"—*Times*.

"Once more, by the modest scale of their present programme, Ministers have shown their desire to avoid any forcing of the pace. If hereafter additional naval expenditure has to be incurred, it will be not of choice on our part, but of necessity. Meanwhile, it is to the Army that economists should look with best hope for the future."—*Chronicle*.

"If our naval dominance is not excessive today it must have been criminally insufficient ten years ago, when the new Imperialism was urging the combined forces of the world to 'come on'."—*Daily News*.

THE EDUCATION BILL.

The Bishop of Manchester, calling upon the clergy and trustees of Church schools in his diocese to fight the new Education Bill as they did that of 1906, says that "as a specimen of class legislation, of unscrupulous rapacity, and of religious intolerance in the twentieth century, the Bill will no doubt deserve a place in historical archives by the side of racks, thumb-screws, boots, and other engines of torture."

That the Bill can ever find a place in the statute book of England he refuses to believe, but neither time nor trouble must be spared, he adds, "if it is to be defeated and relegated to its proper place in the limbo of legislative abortions."

EMPIRE EDITORS TO CONFER.

London, March 5. An Imperial Press Conference is being organised and in connexion with it a committee is being formed for the purpose of inviting to England the editors of the principal newspapers in the Empire. Lord Burnham has consented to act as president, and among those who have joined the committee are Lord Northcliffe, Mr. Harry W. Lawson, Sir George Newnes, M. P., Mr. C. Arthur



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STOP PRESS NEWS.

KING EDWARD'S DEPARTURE.

London, March 5. His Majesty the King left Victoria Station this morning at 11.30 o'clock en route to Paris, whence he will proceed to Biarritz.

DANGEROUS CRIMINAL ARRESTED.

Milan, March 5. In January 1907 an English lady, Miss Lowe, was found robbed and brutally assaulted in a railway carriage on the Turin-Modena line, but no arrest could be effected by the police at the time. Yesterday, however, a common railway thief was taken into custody, and was subsequently identified by railway officials as the assailant of Miss Lowe.

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MINERS ENTOMBED.

London, March 4. A coal mine is on fire at Hamstead near Birmingham, and 22 miners are in consequence cut off from the shaft.

London, March 5. It has now been ascertained that the fire in the Hamstead colliery was caused through the dropping of a miner's lamp onto some inflammable boarding in the mine. Five or six of the men managed to get through the flames and reach the cage in safety, but 13 or 14 were driven back to the galleries. The fierce conflagration renders it impossible to reach the entombed men.

THE COTTON CRISIS IN LANCASHIRE.

London, March 5. The crisis in the cotton industry in Lancashire has reached its highest point. The manufacturers' Unions in Colne and Nelson have decided upon a general lock-out, the effect of which will probably be to leave 60,000 looms idle.

THE SHIPBUILDING DISPUTE.

London, March 5. Mr. Lloyd George, the President of the Board of Trade, has stated, with re-

ference to the dispute in the shipbuilding yards on the NE. coast, that the result of the long-continued conferences which have been held will be a step towards the solution of the difficulties.

LAST DISPUTE WITH CHINA SETTLED.

London, March 5. A local journal reports the close of the negotiations between the Wai-wu-pu and the British-Chinese Company as to the Chenkiang railway loan. The text of the agreement which has been made has been laid before the Emperor for the issue of the necessary Imperial edict. The conclusion of this agreement settles the last out-standing dispute between the British and Chinese Governments.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

APPALLING CATASTROPHE IN CLEVELAND.

Cleveland (Ohio), March 4. In consequence of the overheating of a stove a fire broke out in the public school at Collingwood, a suburb of Cleveland, and within a few minutes the entire building was enveloped in thick clouds of smoke. When the outbreak occurred 400 children were present, and among these a fearful panic ensued. There were only two exits from the building; a great number of children becoming wedged in the doorways were trampled to death or severely injured. Shortly after the conflagration started the first floor collapsed, precipitating many of the children into the basement. It is estimated that in all some fifty to seventy-five scholars have lost their lives in the disaster. Many of the victims were of German parentage.

Cleveland, March 4. (Later.) The director of the school at which the fire occurred estimates the number of victims at from 75 to 150, most of whom were between 9 and 12 years of age.

Cleveland, March 4. (Later.) From the ruins of the burned-down school building 146 bodies have already been recovered. It is feared that a great many more children are dead, because immediately upon the outbreak of the panic the exits became blocked, so that there was no possibility of many of the scholars reaching safety through the dense smoke and fierce flames.

Frankfort o. M., March 5. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* reports from New York that 70 per cent of the children killed in the school disaster were German. A father of one of the pupils rescued 18 children from the building, only to receive fatal burns himself. Two lady teachers were crushed to death, but seven others managed to save themselves.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

New York, March 4. The Republicans in Ohio and Kansas are strenuously working for the nomination of Mr. Taft as Presidential candidate.

In Washington press circles it is believed that Mr. Taft's chances of securing the Republican nomination have increased considerably during the last few weeks. His friends, however, are not taking any chances, and are working hard, especially in the South, where the Republican negroes have been incensed by President Roosevelt's speeches and actions in connexion with the disbandment of the coloured regiment at Brownsville for alleged participation in the riots which occurred there a year or two ago.

As far as can be ascertained, the majority of the Southern delegations will go to the Chicago Convention either uninstructed or actually opposed to Mr. Taft, and this is a serious matter for that gentleman, especially in view of his growing weakness in most of the Eastern States.

Mr. William Jennings Bryan will certainly be the nominee of the Democratic National Convention at Denver; as a matter of fact, there does not appear to be another Richmond in the Democratic field. But Mr. Bryan is regarded more or less with suspicion by many Democrats who would unhesitatingly support a candidate not advertised to quite such an extent as the Nebraskan orator. As one of his party bluntly put it the other day,—"We want something a little more satisfactory than a walking phonograph!"

The National Independence League is the only other factor of importance on the horizon. This organisation is proselytising among the rank and
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