

Berlin Office:
W. Potsdamer
Strasse 10/11.
Telephone:
VI 1079.

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Dresden Office:
A. Struve
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Telephone:
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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE GERMAN EMPEROR AND LORD TWEEDMOUTH.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

In expectation of Lord Tweedmouth's declaration concerning the Emperor's letter the House was crowded with members on Monday, while the public and diplomatic galleries were full to their utmost capacity. When Lord Tweedmouth rose to speak there was tense silence and a subdued but marked air of excitement.

"I hear," said his Lordship, "that several members of this House are disposed to ask questions regarding the extraordinary commotion which has occurred in the Press during the last few days, and I want to anticipate every inquiry which may be raised. It is a fact that on the 18th of February I received a letter from His Majesty the German Emperor, which reached me through the post in the ordinary way. The letter was private and personal, and was couched in very friendly terms quite free from restraint. Upon its receipt I showed the communication to Sir Edward Grey, who agreed with me that it should be considered as a private letter,—not as an official document. In conformity with this view I sent an answer to His Majesty the Emperor on the 20th of February, written in the same friendly, unconstrained tone that characterised his own letter. All that I can say further is: I beg the House to rest assured that my conduct in this matter was good and politic, and was based upon that which we all so much desire, namely, the promotion of a good understanding between the German Empire and ourselves so far as it lies in our power."

Lord Lansdowne stated that in his opinion Lord Tweedmouth had, in any case, done well to make some explanation of the remarkable episode which had engaged public attention during the last few days. "Lord Tweedmouth has not, it is true, said much in reference to this correspondence, but he has thrown some light on the affair. We know firstly that letters were actually exchanged between the German Emperor and him; that the correspondence began with a letter written to him by the Emperor, a letter which, I assume, was not invited by Lord Tweedmouth and did not constitute part of a long continued correspondence." (Here Lord Tweedmouth nodded his assent.) Lord Lansdowne then dwelt upon the private character of the letter, its unofficial form and friendly tone towards England, as shown by Lord Tweedmouth's declaration, and said that such a communication was a counterpart to the oral communications that are exchanged between a great Sovereign and a British Minister in conversation on occasions that occur from time to time when British Ministers are brought into touch with the rulers of foreign countries. He was bound, continued Lord Lansdowne, to say on behalf of his friends that they would bring no pressure to bear on Lord Tweedmouth to publish the letter if he did not think of doing so. It would indeed be intolerable if, besides the official, an extra-official correspondence should exist. There was a rule that should be observed on both sides of the House, with reference to any irregular correspondence which was actually to be treated as private, that that private character should be respected.

"I consider it my duty," remarked his Lordship, "to say that Lord Tweedmouth betrayed his own secret, or let some one else betray it. The result has been very unfortunate; public opinion has been very much roused. I am sure that all who wish Anglo-German relations to bear a friendly character must regret this incident."

Lord Rosebery then rose, and said: "I have only one fear with regard to the affair, viz. that we as a nation may have made ourselves somewhat ridiculous by the noise which this episode has created. I am quite sure that it never entered the mind of the German Emperor, nor the mind of any educated person in Germany outside the walls of a lunatic asylum, to believe that an influence could be exercised on the extension of British armaments by means of a private communication to Lord Tweedmouth. There is no reason in the world why our friendship with France should involve a hostile



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attitude on our part towards Germany. The English and German Press should therefore not throw the two nations into a state of irritability. This consideration arises out of the constitution of the German army, which really consists of the German nation. The German Government can only declare war against a country when it has the support of the nation behind it, and when the feelings of the nation are so united that further peaceable relations are impossible." (General cheering.)
The House then adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Mr. Asquith, Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared that he had nothing to add to his utterance of Friday last except that Lord Tweedmouth, immediately upon receipt of Emperor William's letter, showed the communication to Sir Edward Grey, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and they mutually agreed that, as the letter was not of an official character, it should be treated as a private communication. (Applause.) There could be absolutely no question of laying private, personal correspondence upon the table of the House.

In the course of Monday's debate on the Navy Estimates Mr. Robertson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, stated that in the year 1910 England would possess 9 battleships of the "Dreadnought" type and 3 cruisers of the "Invincible" type; France would possess 3 battleships of the type in question but no armoured cruisers; Germany would have 4 battleships and 2 armoured cruisers. In the Spring of 1911 England would have 14 such vessels, as against the 12 ships of the same type belonging to France and Germany together. The shipbuilding programme of last year was quite adequate to maintain the two-Power standard. The House accepted the proposed strength of the effective Navy personnel for the current year, viz. 128,000 men.

In parliamentary circles the opinion prevails that the discussion regarding the Tweedmouth episode is now closed.

MORE PRESS OPINIONS.

The London papers of yesterday unanimously agree that Lord Tweedmouth acted very wisely in at once showing the Emperor's letter to Cabinet Ministers. The *Daily Chronicle* says: "After Lord Tweedmouth's explanation we may be permitted to close the episode. Lord Tweedmouth's and Sir Edward Grey's assurances with regard to the character of the letter will satisfy all reasonable men. Before we finally leave the affair it must be acknowledged that an injustice has been done the German Emperor which, in some way or another, ought to be atoned for. It would be very regrettable if a lasting discord has been provoked among the German people, and it would be still more deplorable if an impression had been created that the generosity and courtesy of the English people were on a lower plane than its patriotic sensitiveness. The entire affair has been an indiscretion, but no harm has been done." The *Daily Telegraph* says: "The incident has been a most unfortunate one from beginning to end, and we fear that it has already caused a good deal of damage. It would be extremely regrettable if the absolutely false idea that the Emperor had sought to exercise any coercion on a British Minister is not eliminated at once. We confidently hope that the incident is now dropped once and for all. It is most annoying to reflect that it never could have occurred if even ordinary discretion had been exercised."

FRENCH SYNDICATE'S DEPOSIT ANNEXED.

Several months ago a French syndicate entered into negotiations for the purchase of three collieries and the patent briquette manufactory in the Swansea Valley, South Wales. £250,000 was the amount mentioned as the purchase money, of which £6,000 was deposited when the negotiations were opened. As the negotiations have now fallen through, this deposit has been confiscated by the English principals.

TO COMBAT THE SLEEPING-SICKNESS.

The first sitting of the International Conference for the investigation of the sleeping-sickness took place in London at the Foreign Office on Monday. Lord Fitzmaurice greeted the delegates in the name of the Government. A discussion then commenced with regard to the measures already elaborated by the British and German Governments.

AMERICAN NEWS.

THE VOYAGE OF THE ATLANTIC FLEET. A SENSATIONAL SPEECH.

Not alone the American Yellow Press, but also official Washington, if we are to credit James McCleary, Assistant Postmaster-General, was filled with grave misapprehension that America's fleet, on its way to the Pacific, would be made helpless at the Straits of Magellan by an attack of the battleships of Japan. It was in the course of a speech at the dinner of the New York State Postmasters' Association, held in New York on Saturday, that he imparted this startling information. Mr. McCleary's speech, says the New York correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, was taken as confirmation of the information and rumours mysteriously published here in our saffron organs, to the effect that dynamite, presumably Japanese, was found in coal intended for the American fleet; that a plot, presumably Japanese, was unearthed to blow up one or two American battleships before the Straits of Magellan were reached; and that there was a possibility of efforts—presumably Japanese efforts—being made to harry and destroy the American fleet before the Straits of Magellan "were rounded."

Mr. McCleary's speech was in that strain, and was delivered, despite the official statement which Mr. Takahira, the new Japanese Ambassador to Washington, made in New York the other day, that the most friendly relations existed between America and Japan, and that the voyage of the American fleet to the Pacific was not in the least resented by his people. I heard the long and pacific statement which Mr. Takahira made a few hours after he disembarked here, last Sunday week, and it was printed verbatim in the American Press next day.

(Continued on page 4.)