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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A good deal of interest was aroused at Friday's sitting by the debate on the Unemployed Workmen's Bill, which was supported by the Labour party and a few extreme Radicals. The Bill charged local authorities with the duty of finding work for every unemployed labourer or of supporting him; it also provided a mode of dealing with those who are unwilling to work. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald (Lab. Soc. Leicester) said that the Labour party represented the principle of the right to employment.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Asquith, opposed the Bill on the ground that it introduced a new principle which, if it were accepted, would lead to consequences undreamt of by many members of the House, and would render the problem of the unemployed much more difficult. The Government, however, were not satisfied with the existing law on the subject and, although he could not bind himself to bring in a Bill, he could assure the House that the Government would not desist from their earnest wish to introduce some practical measure to cope with this burning and chronic evil.

The second reading of the Bill was negatived by 263 votes to 116. A resolution moved by Mr. Maddison (Rad. Burnley) "that the House, although prepared to take into consideration any practical proposal for coping with the evil of want of employment, cannot take up any measure that would make more persons idle than could be supported; the House hopes, however, that the Government will at once proceed to consider the measures that will be proposed in the forthcoming Report of the Poor Law Committee with reference to the unemployed," was adopted by 241 votes to 95.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE ON STRIKES.

The President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Lloyd George, speaking at Carnarvon on Friday, said the new Patent Law would create opportunities of work for many thousands of British workmen. Strikes and lock-outs must cease. He was strongly in favour of establishing Courts for the amicable settlement of labour differences.

FIGHTING THE SLEEPING SICKNESS.

All hopes which were entertained for a uniform action of the Governments concerned in the question of the sleeping sickness, have come to nothing. The conference which went on at London was closed on Saturday, since no agreement as to the location of the Central Bureau could be arrived at. Italy and France demanded that Paris should be selected, the Congo wanted Brussels to be chosen; and so England and Germany, who considered London the right place for so important a centre, have decided to make separate agreements regarding the fight against the terrible disease in Central Africa. In view of the persistent rumours of stringency existing in the relations between the official departments of Great Britain and Germany, it is satisfactory and significant to observe that these two Powers co-operated in this question.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

FALL RIVER STEAMER ON FIRE.

The Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger received a cable from its New York correspondent that the S.S. "Providence," from Fall River to New York, caught fire Friday night at 12 o'clock. 600 passengers were transferred to another steamer in the Long Island Sound in the morning. All passengers were saved, although many were already asleep.

THE VOYAGE OF THE ATLANTIC FLEET.

It has been officially notified that the fleet of battle-ships, after leaving San Francisco, will visit Hawaii, Samoa, Melbourne, Sydney, and the Philippines, and will then return via the Suez Canal to New York.

GREAT FIRE IN BRAZIL.

A New York telegram of yesterday reports that a devastating fire had occurred in Bahia, involving the destruction of 33 buildings in the business quarter of the town and the loss of several lives.



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STOP PRESS NEWS.

A UNION-CASTLE LINER ASHORE.

Durban, March 14. Lloyds Agency reports that the Union-Castle liner "Newark Castle" has gone ashore in Richard Bay, at the mouth of the Umblatuzi River. Part of the crew has been landed here. A Government tug has been despatched to the liner's assistance.

THE SPANISH ROYAL FAMILY.

There is every reason to believe that a happy event may be expected in the Spanish Royal Family in the early part of May.

SHARP FIGHT IN MOROCCO.

Algiers, March 14. From Bechar in South Oran it is reported that a scouting detachment of French troops came into collision with some Berber tribesmen, and in the fight that ensued the French were thrown into confusion, losing one officer killed and two privates wounded. Authentic details of the affray are not yet to hand.

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CONSULAR SERVICE REORGANISATION.

The Committee of Congress on Foreign Affairs has recommended that the Bill for the reorganisation of the Consular service be accepted. The Bill provides for doing away with 28 Consulates, among others, of those at Crefeld, Düsseldorf, Glauchau, Freiberg, Annaberg, Zittau, Eibenstock, Bamberg and Mainz.

GERMAN TORPEDO BOAT SUNK.

At 2 o'clock on Saturday morning the torpedo boat "S 12" was rammed by the outward-bound German S.S. "Eduard Grootmann" off Cuxhaven, and sank at once. The crew were saved with the exception of the first engineer who was so badly injured in his bunk during the collision that he could not be saved. The boat belongs to the oldest type of torpedo boats in the German navy, having been built in the eighties. Her speed was 17 knots, her displacement 85 tons, and her crew numbered 16.

NEWS FROM FRANCE.

FRANCE'S MILITARY STRENGTH.

M. Raibern (Rad. Republican) brought up an interpellation complaining of the slackness of the French army organisation, by which the weakness of France in comparison with Germany was increased. General Picquart, the Minister of War, in replying said that there was no immediate danger. The troops covering the French frontier would be equal to their task. On the other hand, the German troops on the frontier received their recruits in October, and were in that respect in the same position as the French troops. The Minister then referred to the law as to the total strength of the troops, which was now before the Army Committee of the Chamber and which would begin a reorganisation that must proceed step by step. The Minister added that the law with respect to two-years' service secured to the State a better availability of the reserves, inasmuch as it provided a nursery of reserve officers and rank and file who had received the same kind of training and would be able to guarantee the safety and the independence of the country. General Picquart concluded with an allusion to French alliances and friendships and by expressing his lively optimism which was increased by the admirable leading of the troops in Morocco under difficult circumstances. (Cheers.) A simple order of the day, to which M. Raibern agreed, was then passed by a show of hands.

(Continued on page 4.)

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