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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS. At the sitting of the Upper House on Monday Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Foreign Office, replying to several questions, said that in the opinion of the Government British interests in the country between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf were completely protected; and, further, that Parliament had full knowledge of all agreements arrived at between England and

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

In the House of Commons on Monday, Mr. Rees (Lib. Montgomery) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the German Government had been informed of the fact that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had given a written declaration that the contents of the Anglo-Russian agreement did not affect British rights in the Persian Gulf. Mr. Runciman, on behalf of the Government, replied that the text of the despatch of Sir Edward Grey, dated the 29th of August, to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, in which note was taken of that declaration of the Russian Minister, had been communicated to the German Government together with the text of the agreement. Mr. Asquith then gave notice that the House would adjourn from the 15th to the 27th of April for the Easter holidays.

In the further course of Monday's sitting Mr. John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Nationalists, moved a resolution condemning the present system of administration in Ireland, and declaring that a solution of the problem would only be reached by giving the Irish people legislative and executive power in purely Irish affairs. Earl Percy (Conserv. Kensington) on behalf of the Opposition, moved an amendment, affirming that the antagonism on his side of the House to the creation of an Irish par-

liament was unalterable.

In the debate that ensued on the resolution and the amendment, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Asquith, said he could not agree to Mr. Redmond's resolution in its present form, and proposed to add to it words providing that the supreme authorover Irish affairs should remain vested in the Imperial Parliament. He could not, he went on, agree to a resolution which maintained that it was the duty of the present Parliament to create a legislative and executive system for Ireland, as that would be a gross breach of trust with regard to the electorate. The programme in the near future would be to create a free Imperial Parliament for Imperial affairs, and to leave purely local affairs to be dealt with by local opinion and local administrative machinery.

At the conclusion of the debate Earl Percy's

amendment was rejected by 334 votes to 142, and Mr. Redmond's resolution with the Government addition was carried by 313 votes against 157.

BRITISH WARSHIPS TO GREET THE KAISER. Reuter's Bureau learns from Malta that the battleships "Formidable" and "Implacable" are to proceed on the 3rd instant from Malta to Corfu; probably in order to be present on the arrival of the German Emperor at the latter island.

WAGES REDUCED IN THE NORTH. The mediation and arbitration committee of the Scottish iron industry has decided, in view of the sale prices since the beginning of 1908, to authorise the manufacturers to reduce the wages of their employés by 71/2 %. This decision will affect many thousands of mechanics and labourers.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE BOMB OUTRAGE IN NEW YORK. In connection with the bomb outrage in New York on Saturday last, a cable states that Alexander Bergmann, the husband of the anarchist Emma Bergmann, has been arrested. In Silverstein's lodgings at Brooklyn the police found a card of membership of the Anarchist Union in Silverstein's, name signed by Alexander Bergmann.

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STOP PRESS NEWS.

THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN BERLIN.

We have received the following telegram from Washington: With a view to ending the Berlin Embassy incident the German Ambassador, Baron Speck v. Sternburg, visited President Roosevelt yesterday evening by appointment, the conference resulting in the issue of an announcement to the effect that in conjunction with the communication from the German Foreign office, already published, the German Ambassador has given the assurance that no alteration has taken place in the attitude towards Dr. Hill and the readiness to accord him a hearty welcome in Berlin. Several distorted and exaggerated statements respecting the matter have been published, so that a totally erroneous impression of the entire affair has been conveyed. Both the United States and the German Governments have abstained from participation in this misunderstanding. In the case of Dr. Hill it was incumbent upon the Government to show that the possession of only moderate means constituted no hindrance to promotion to the highest offices. In accordance with the plan approved of yesterday evening, the as yet unnotified appointment of Dr. Hill as Ambassador to Germany will be laid before the Senate tomorrow. No definite date has yet been named for Mr. Tower's retirement, but it is expected that he will be succeeded by Dr. Hill some time during the month of May.

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A later telegram states that, as no formal charge had been made against him, Bergmann had been released by the Police Magistrate on his promising to again appear before the Court if summoned.

COTTON SPINNERS' WAGES LOWER.

A reduction of 10% in the wages of cottonspinners throughout the New England states came into operation on Monday, by which 120,000 workers will be affected.

CONGRESSMAN SHOOTS A NEGRO.

Details of the recent extraordinary affray at Washington between a Congressman and a negro are now to hand. A negro, in an advanced state of intoxication, boarded a street-car and immediately began to make himself objectionable to the other passengers. From drunken absurdities he passed to foul language and insults, and several gentlemen in the car interfered. Among them was Mr. James Thomas Heflin, member of Congress for the Fifth Alabama district, who threatened to throw the negro into the street if he did not behave himself. Immediately the latter hurled himself at the Congressman, who was taken completely by surprise, and had a difficult task to defend himself. The negro seemed possessed with a perfect frenzy, and the other occupants of the car were greatly alarmed, their alarm increasing to panic when Mr. Heflin, in self-defence, drew a revolver and fired twice. The first bullet struck the negro in the chest, and inflicted a serious wound, while the second slightly injured a white man. By this time the police were on the scene, and Mr. Heflin, who was, of course, recognised by them, explained that he had been forced to act as he had done. The negro was removed to hospital on an ambulance, and his recovery is doubtful.

MAN VERSUS BOA CONSTRICTOR.

The Bronx Zoological Gardens, one of the bestknown collection of animals in the world, has just been the scene of a terrible struggle between a keeper and a boa constrictor, the man narrowly escaping with his life. The keeper had entered the cage to feed the snake, which appeared to be asleep. Suddenly, however, at a moment when his back was turned, he was horrified to feel the boa constrictor coiling itself about his legs. He endeavoured to extricate himself from the coils of the snake, but his strength was useless against that of the boa constrictor, which is one of the largest in the Zoo. His shouts for help quickly brought other men to the spot, and eventually no fewer than 15 men were engaged in a struggle for the keeper's life with the boa constrictor, whose death grip was gradually tightening about the unfortunate man. For a few moments it seemed that he could not possibly be saved, but in the end the united efforts of the rescuers prevailed, and the keeper was extricated in a terribly exhausted condition.

DARING TRAIN ROBBERY.

Despatches from New York state that a band of robbers held up a Santa Fé train near Newton (Kansas) on Monday, the entire incident vividly recalling the days of Jesse James and his gang of desperados. The train was flagged and had hardly come to a stop when several armed men boarded the cars and called upon the terror-stricken passengers to hand over their valuables. Meanwhile, two of the robbers made for the express van, and upon the clerk attempting to resist he was shot dead. Although the safe only contained a thousand dollars, the telegram says that a great quantity of jewellery was taken from the lady passengers. Eventually the miscreants allowed the train to proceed. So far no trace of the robbers has been

(Continued on page 2.)

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