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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

In the House of Commons on Wednesday, Mr. Lynch (*Lib.*, Ripon) asked if His Majesty's Government, in consideration of the recent occurrences on the Indian frontier, would publish some of the correspondence that passed between the Indian Government and the Ameer of Afghanistan on the subject of the Anglo-Russian treaty. Mr. Lynch further enquired whether the Government, before undertaking any military operations on Afghan territory, would make the House cognisant of any differences of opinion that might have arisen between the Ameer and the Indian Government.

Mr. Buchanan, Under Secretary of the India Office, replied that his answer to the first question must be in the negative. As to the second question, it would not be in the public interest, having regard to the present state of affairs on the frontier, to answer Mr. Lynch's enquiry as to whether the consent of the Ameer had been asked to the Anglo-Russian treaty. "I think," said Mr. Buchanan, "I have perceived that, in the last ten days, all the members of this House have refrained from asking questions the answers to which might have been very inopportune. I hope the House will support me in this case if I decline, on the grounds above stated, to answer the question put." (General applause.)

In reply to further interrogation, Mr. Buchanan said the Government had received no information that the Ameer had issued a proclamation to his subjects forbidding them to engage in hostilities against the British forces. "But," continued Mr. Buchanan, "the Government, and I myself, believe that the Ameer endeavoured to prevent his subjects from taking part in the rising." The Under Secretary further informed the House that the Zakka Khel and other Afridi tribes had remained loyal. The headmen of the Zakka Khel had gone so far as to offer their services to Great Britain. That fact was a highly satisfactory justification of the policy of reciprocity which had been carried out at the conclusion of the expedition against the Zakka Khel. As far as the state of affairs in the Khyber district was concerned, the attack on Landi Khotal had completely failed and the Afghans had re-crossed the frontier, but it was not yet possible to forecast the future definitely. The arrival of a delegate from the Mohmands on the frontier of that tribe was expected.

In the course of the debate on the opium trade in British colonies, Colonel Seely, Under Secretary for the Colonial Office, said the Government had decided to take measures to suppress the misuse of opium in Hongkong and Ceylon, and to complete the regulations which have already begun to operate in the Straits Settlements.

The Bill for establishing a new controlling authority for the port of London passed the second reading.

THE FRONTIER EXPEDITION.

Latest reports from Simla and London confirm the belief that the Afghan frontier situation has sensibly improved. The British forces are apparently concentrated strongly enough on the spot to prevent any further incursions. But perhaps the most serious point about the present rising is that the authority of the Afghan Government over its own tribes has practically ceased to exist. Since the first hint of trouble on the frontier no news has filtered through from Cabul, and it would excite no surprise if the announcement came that the Ameer has not only lost his power but also his throne.

There is no man in India who is better known, or whose future is more assured, than Colonel Roos-Keppel, the Gate-Keeper of the Khyber. For years now he has held the post, and with extraordinary ability has carried out his task. For miles round he is known, and, what is more, deeply respected by the frontier tribes, with whom he is on terms of the greatest friendship. Such an official is invaluable to the Indian Government, for little happens on the frontier that Colonel Roos-Keppel does not get to hear of.

LADY DOCTOR AND THE AMEER.

Reuter's Bureau publishes a statement on the attitude of the Ameer of Afghanistan by Mrs. Winter, who was for nearly two years physician to the Court of Cabul, and who has returned to England. The statement deals with four points of interest: (1) The Ameer's absolute loyalty to England, and his appreciation of the Anglo-Russian treaty. (2) The attitude of Prince Nazr Ullah, a brother of the Ameer, who pursues a policy of sharp antagonism to the Ameer, and intrigues against all that he regards as British innovations. (3) The inability of the Ameer to cope with those intrigues, which are in accord with public feeling in Afghanistan. (4) The very considerable trade in arms and ammunition carried on between Karachi and Afghanistan. Mrs. Winter says that general quietude has prevailed in Afghanistan for some time, as the Ameer started for Herat in May of last year and did not return to Cabul till November. During his absence a general conspiracy was set on foot, the chief instigator being Nazr Ullah, who in fact posed as Mullah with sentiments decidedly hostile to England. His object seemed to be to bring about the fall of the Ameer by entangling him in complications with England. The news of the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian treaty reached Cabul during the Ameer's absence, and caused great excitement. The Ameer would have signed the treaty long ago but for the pressure exerted upon him from outside. He told Mrs. Winter that he wished for railway communication with India. "But," he added passionately, "I am but one man." On her return journey to England Mrs. Winter met 500 camel-loads of arms and ammunition.

SERIOUS DEFECT IN LATEST WARSHIPS.

Until further notice, says a London telegram, the Admiralty has forbidden the simultaneous discharge of all the 12-inch guns mounted in double barbettes on battleships and cruisers of the "Dreadnought" and "Invincible" types. This order has been issued in consequence of the effects produced during the recent firing practice on board the new cruiser "Indomitable." On this occasion the eight 12-inch guns were fired simultaneously, and the tremendous concussion is said to have extensively damaged the vessel's structure and many of the boats on the davits.

THE ANARCHIST OUTBREAK IN INDIA.

Advices from Calcutta state that thirty of the men taken on Saturday morning in the police raids on Anarchist dens were brought up on Wednesday before the Commissioner for examination. Several prisoners made startling admissions. One man confessed to having made the bomb for the Chandernagore train outrage, another to having flung the bomb at M. Tardeville, the Mayor of Chandernagore, because the latter had prevented the society from holding meetings; another said that he and others had travelled all over India in connection with the movement. The accused were remanded. Further important discoveries have been made by the police, and many more arrests are imminent.

The Anglo-Indian papers call upon the Government to administer the law with firmness, and to put a stop to the seditious and inflammatory writings and speeches which are bringing India to the verge of anarchy. They compare the present policy to playing with fireworks in a powder magazine.

COALITION IN THE IRON TRADE.

A conference of the Iron-merchants' Union was held in Nottingham on Wednesday. A communication had been received from the German Union of Iron-merchants that they could not attend the conference at Nottingham, but they invited the English Union to attend their conference to be held in Nürnberg on the 26th of June.

THE COTTON-SPINNING INDUSTRY.

The Committee of the Union of Cotton Spinning Millowners have summoned separate committees of the members who use American and Egyptian cotton respectively to meet on the 15th instant, in order to take into consideration the expediency of adopting a system of short time.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

According to all accounts, the political managers of both the Republican and Democratic parties apparently feel so confident of the nomination of Mr. Taft and Mr. Bryan as Presidential candidates that they are beginning to speculate as to the availability of candidates for the Vice-Presidency. The most interesting suggestion is that Governor Hughes should accept a place on the Taft ticket. The Governor's chances of nomination for the higher office are admitted to be hopeless. It is stated on good authority that this solution would be most satisfactory to Mr. Taft and his friends. Politically it would harmonise the party and make the triumph of the Republicans almost certain in New York.

GRUESOME DISCOVERY IN INDIANA.

While some workmen were excavating in the courtyard of a house in course of demolition at Laporte (Indiana) on Wednesday, they came upon nine mutilated human bodies. The local coroner gave it as his opinion that the corpses were those of murdered people. A certain Mrs. Guinness is believed to be implicated in the crimes, but she is at present in hiding at Chicago. The opinion is held at Laporte that the victims were murdered in Chicago, and that the bodies were subsequently sent in packing-cases to Mrs. Guinness for interment. During the year 1906 eight packing-cases were delivered at the woman's house.

THE ATLANTIC FLEET AT SAN FRANCISCO.

The United States Atlantic Fleet reached San Francisco on Wednesday, thus completing its long cruise which commenced at Hampton Roads on December 16th last. A brilliant series of entertainments for the officers and men of the squadron has been arranged by municipal authorities and private citizens of San Francisco. The ships will not, however, remain long at the Golden Gate, as according to present arrangements they will shortly proceed to Seattle and other ports of the north. Upon reassembling at Frisco the battleships will start upon the return voyage without delay. The itinerary of the homeward cruise is very extensive; calls will be made at the Philippines, China, Japan, Australia, British and French stations in the Mediterranean. It was originally hoped that at least some of the battleships would visit British, French and German naval bases in home waters, but this suggestion was vetoed by the Navy Department. (Continued on page 2.)