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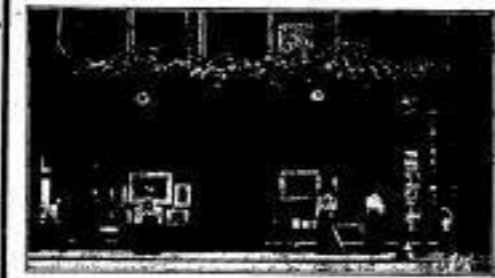
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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

London, July 17.

Mr. Staveley-Hill asked the First Lord of the Admiralty what rule or practice governed communications sent by the Admiralty to the Press; who framed these communications, and who was the responsible authority for them; were they invariably sent to the Press generally, or only to certain newspapers; and, in the latter case, on what principle was the selection made. Mr. McKenna replied that official communications with the Press, apart from advertisements, were placed in a room set apart for the purpose at the Admiralty to which all the newspaper representatives had access, or in the case of special communications they were sent under cover to the principal press agencies, and newspapers which had offices in London.

Mr. McKenna, replying to Mr. Du Cros, said that the longest continuous period spent in harbour by the Mediterranean Fleet during 1907 was three months, and during 1908 one month; but individual ships came out during such period to perform gunnery and torpedo exercises.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention had been drawn to certain prosecutions for the purpose of restraining the British manufacturers of cigars from using boxes with labels printed in Spanish as being contrary to the law of merchandise marks; whether his attention had also been drawn to the fact that cigars in boxes, with labels printed in Spanish, were imported from countries where Spanish was not more commonly spoken than it is in Great Britain; and whether he proposed, in view of the handicap which this placed upon the British manufacturer, to equalise the administration of the law between British manufacturer and foreign importer? Mr. Churchill said his attention had been called to the prosecutions referred to. He entirely agreed there should be equality in the administration of the law between British and foreign manufacturers. He was now in communication with the Customs on the subject.

The House went into Committee of Supply on the Civil Services and Revenue Departments Estimates.

On a vote of £11,821,571 for the salaries and expenses of the Post Office, including telegraphs and telephones, Mr. S. Buxton made a humorous speech. He said that the revenue of the Post Office during the past year was 22½ millions, and the expenditure 18¼ millions. The estimates for the coming year was revenue 23 millions, and expenditure 19½ millions. What was required at the present moment was something in the nature of a stimulus which would increase the postal revenue, and this could be done in one or two ways. The most important, and the one which he advocated, was a general election (laughter). This was very profitable to the Post Office. Public excitement in any particular question was also an addition, and he would therefore say—without expressing any view with

regard to the question of women's suffrage or the Licensing Bill—to those who were opposing or advocating these measures, "agitate so long as you do it in the proper channel, namely, by means of the penny post" (laughter). Either those who supported or those who opposed women's suffrage or the Licensing Bill would be doing something to bring to an end this iniquitous Government (laughter), and at the same time were doing something to assist the revenue of the country (laughter).

As to postal crazes, he said that latterly it had been picture postcards, but that had been falling off, and he suggested last year to the public that they should direct their superfluous energy to some new form of craze which would be profitable to the postal revenue. They responded to the appeal, and had devoted themselves to limericks. As a result, a very large number of 6d. postal orders had been bought, and it had also involved a very considerable amount of correspondence. The amount that was brought in by the 6d. postal orders during the last six months was 14 times over the average. That particular craze was now disappearing. He was speaking from a post office point of view. He had been accused of gambling, but people wanted to buy his 6d. orders, and he had got to supply them. He now wanted some public craze which would be profitable, and which would pass the scrutiny of the Anti-Gambling League and the Manchester Watch Committee (loud laughter).

As regards the postal expenditure, the matter was not so satisfactory, because while the revenue had shown considerable elasticity by increasing over two millions, the expenditure had risen by a larger amount. This was due to ordinary automatic increases due to the increased amount of matter which went through the Post Office. Buildings, telephones, and increase in rates of pay had added to the expenditure. The ultimate additions to pay will mean an increase of £1,000,000 a year. The surplus available for the Exchequer had not materially increased in the last few years. Really the only profitable head of revenue was the penny stamp; that was the sheet anchor of the postal revenue, and the sales continued to increase. But the telephone, which was cutting naturally into the telegraph system, was doing something to diminish in big towns the number of letters which were written. The telegraph was carried on at a great loss, and they were determined that the telephone system should be placed and should remain on a paying basis. Dealing with complaints respecting the telephone, he said if there was any mistake in respect of the charge for calls the automatic check gave the balance in favour of the user. People were really not aware how much their telephones were used. He read a letter just received from a user who had complained of overcharge, in which he said he had solved the mystery. "I find that the housemaid has been using my telephone, without my authority, to communicate with her young man" (laughter). The underground telegraph work was making steady progress, and as to wireless telegraphy the Government did not wish to put themselves in the position revealed in respect to the telegraph and the telephone. They were not

going to allow a monopoly to grow up, and they had therefore started two experimental stations, and were now erecting a commercial station which would enable the Post Office at any moment, if so desired, to extend their operations without having to buy up companies and monopolies. Dealing with various postal reforms effected during his two and a half years of office, he said he had secured £500,000 from the Treasury for the benefit of the home, colonial, and foreign services.

He was glad to find the penny postage to America had been received with general satisfaction. In future, they would have the same rate of postage to all English speaking nations. In future, a letter of ½ oz. which before cost 2½ d. would now pay 1d.; a 1oz. letter would cost 1d. against 5d. now, and a 2oz. letter which now cost 10d. would after October 1 cost only 2d. On the general question of the treatment of the staff, the right hon. gentleman said he quite agreed that the Post Office should be a model employer of labour. They were still endeavouring to improve the conditions of the postal service, and act upon the recommendations of the Hobhouse Committee. In a large number of cases the scales of pay were improved, and in every case the conditions of the postal servants had been improved. For those improvements the Committee was asked to vote a very large sum of money, and that money, he believed, would be readily voted (cheers). The Post Office was a wonderful organisation, and he was very proud to be its head. This great public department was a credit to the State and a splendid example in its members of loyalty to the public service (cheers).

THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR'S BANQUET.

London, July 17.

The German Ambassador, Count Wolff-Metternich, gave a breakfast in the Embassy today to several distinguished guests, including the Crown Princess of Greece, Princess Friedrich Karl, and Lady Cavendish.

STREET FIGHTING AT BOMBAY.

Bombay, July 18.

Fourteen thousand native factory hands, all of whom are employed full time, for some reason or other went on strike yesterday, and attacked other factories, the employes of which had refused to join the malcontents. The windows of two factories were shattered with stones. Later in the evening the police, while attempting to rescue two Europeans who had taken refuge from the fury of the mob in a café, were stoned by the strikers, and were compelled to use their firearms. A cavalry charge dispersed the crowd, no resistance being offered to the soldiers. It has not yet been ascertained whether there were any fatalities or other casualties.

Bombay, July 18.

The two Europeans who sought refuge in a café from the mob are engineers. They were severely injured by stones, several European police officers also being struck. The majority of the strikers has resumed work, but two thousand labourers still continue to agitate. Military guards are stationed in the quarters where order has not yet been restored. (Continued on page 2.)