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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

HEALTH OF KING EDWARD.

(From our own correspondent.) London, December 11.

Confirmatory of my recent despatch to you concerning the health of King Edward, a report now appears in the Lancet, our most reliable medical organ, to the following effect: "As there have been disquieting rumours abroad, we are glad to announce on the best authority that the health of the King gives no cause for anxiety."

The latest news from Brighton is equally favourable. The King has already driven out several times, and it is remarked that he appears to be in excellent spirits.

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER.

London, December 12. Speaking at the dinner of the National Liberal Club today the Prime Minister said the members had not met in a spirit of contrition. The Government had kept up the character of England at its highest as the friend of peace, and had brought Boer and Briton together in South Africa. Referring to the House of Lords, Mr. Asquith condemned the conduct of the majority of its members in rejecting the Licensing Bill before it had reached the House. The proceedings in the House had not followed the traditional form of debate, and had afforded a discouraging spectacle to all those who upheld the principles of popular Government. If the rejection of the Licensing Bill stood alone, it would be a reason for a call to arms, but there were other reasons also. An end must be put to the control of the House of Lords. He declined to dissolve Parliament, as to do so would be tantamount to a recognition of the claim of the House of Lords to fix the time and occasion of a dissolution. Financial questions must occupy a large portion of next Session. It was the task of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to be strict, but he had not to reckon for a deficit, as both the great Protectionist countries had to do. In conclusion, Mr. Asquith spoke of the House of Lords as an irresponsible body which could not

LORD ROSEBERY ON INVASION.

claim to represent the electorate.

London, December 12. Lord Rosebery, in a speech delivered at Granton today, expressed his regret that the work of completing the new naval base at Rosyth was not making progress. Lord Rosebery went on to say that he did not believe in invasion by a people unfriendly to England unless it should be caused by a very great misunderstanding on England's own part. On the other hand, he was of opinion that England could not, either at home or elsewhere, carry out her policy unless she was convinced that her territory was protected from invasion. The feeling of patriotism had been quickly awakened in the nation. When an enemy was already in the country, it would be too late to train troops, to supply weapons, and to make a plan of operations. All that must be done beforehand, and he hoped that England would spare no expense and no effort for the protection of her coasts.

A SERIOUS MISHAP.

London, December 12. Three members of the Amsterdam firm Assber and Co., who conveyed the Cullinan diamonds from Amsterdam to London and Sandringham, were taken seriously ill with symptoms of poisoning. The physician who was called in diagnosed poisoning by alkaloids. The three gentlemen laid the blame on a pâté de foie gras.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS.

. New York, December 11. Both Houses of Congress are incensed at what they regard as Mr. Roosevelt's reflections upon their honesty in not allowing the American-Japanese Note to be discussed in public. The Democrats allege that the Note is not a Treaty, and therefore need not be discussed in secret Session, and this view is supported by the majority of the two houses. It is probable that House and Senate will jointly pass a vote of censure in regard to the President's

HOLLAND AND VENEZUELA.

New York, December 11. A telegram from Willemstad states that the Netherlands warships "Jacob van Heemskerck" and 'Gelderland" sailed for Venezuela early this morn-

THE 'NAVAL ESTIMATES.

Washington, December 11. The annual report of the Secretary of the Navy recommends the building of four battleships, four protected cruisers (scouts), ten destroyers, four submarines, three coal ships, and one ammunition ship. This programme will be laid before Congress next Session.

AMERICAN RAILROAD CASE.

New York, December 11. The Court of Appeals has decided in favour of Messrs. Zimmermann and Forshay in the suit which has for some time past been before the courts, involving a controversy over an issue of United Railroads of San Francisco bonds. In 1902 Messrs. Zimmerman bought the bonds from the firms of E. and C. Randolph, C. I. Hudson, and other houses on "when as and if issued" contracts, but the sellers refused delivery on demand, contending that the entire issue had not yet been put on the market, and that consequently the contracts had not matured. Messrs. Zimmerman thereupon brought actions for damages, and the opposing firms retaliated by bringing charges against Messrs. Zimmerman before the Stock Exchange authorities. The court has now upheld Messrs. Zimmerman's claims.

THE GERMAN EMPEROR.

It is learned authoritatively, says a Berlin report, that the sensational rumours published in Germany | years ago.

and abroad regarding the health of the Emperor are causing the Royal Family great annoyance. Particularly is this the case in respect of the remarkable statements made by a leading provincial newspaper, which are absolutely unfounded. The Emperor is suffering from a slight attack of influenza, and in the present changeable weather it is only natural that he should refrain from travelling, but to speak of His Majesty as an Imperial hermit is ridiculous. For the reason that arrangements which have not yet been made cannot very well be cancelled, it is equally foolish to state that the Emperor has abandoned his intention of visiting Corfu in the spring. It should be mentioned that during the past week the Emperor has received the Chinese and Brazilian Ministers in audience at Potsdam. Their Excellencies state that his voice was hoarse from his cold, but that he otherwise seemed well and cheerful.

FRENCH COMMENT ON PRINCE BÜLOW'S SPEECH.

Paris, December 11.

The Temps, in an article on Prince Bulow's speech yesterday, writes: "What Prince Bülow said concerning the limitation of armaments is in all respects true. The strength of a people does not depend only on the number of its guns and the size of its battleships, but on its birth statistics, its industrial activity, its credit, and its geographical position. Germany might be under the necessity of carrying on war on several fronts; if one is in the least degree impartial, one must admit that the care she devotes to the maintenance of her military power is justified." With regard to the Imperial Chancellor's statement as to loyalty to the alliance with Austria-Hungary, the Temps thinks it looks as if Germany had but one ally, and that she is supporting Austria in view of possible contingencies, even on the side of Italy.

THE LATE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

Reuter's Peking correspondent states that statutes have been published fixing the status of the Regent Prince Chun. They give him complete Imperial power, and the people are to regard him as de facto Emperor. His enthronement will take place at the end of the period of mourning, when the officials will make obeisance to him as to an Emperor. Repeated edicts published in the name of Ye-hana-La confirm that her position is head of the Imperial Family and of palace affairs. The body of the late Emperor was on Friday transferred with great ceremony from the forbidden city to the mortuary, where it will remain until the completion of a sepulchre. The streets were lined with 6,000 mourners and 4,000 soldiers, all kneeling.

KING LEOPOLD'S PICTURES.

It is reported that King Leopold of Belgium contemplates disposing of his famous collection of pictures, which contains, among other treasures, a Rubens for which His Majesty paid £8,000 twenty