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The Daily Record

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and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

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THE NAVY ESTIMATES.

FOUR AND TWO MAKES FOUR.

(From our own correspondent.)

London, March 8.

It is highly probable that before this despatch reaches Dresden the Navy Estimates will have been laid before the House of Commons. Never have such Estimates been so eagerly awaited. Never were there Navy Estimates which will be subjected to such close scrutiny. They were to have been introduced by Mr. McKenna last week, but their appearance was postponed—to quote the official explanation—"owing to unavoidable delays in compilation and printing." The unofficial reason is that the Cabinet is—or was at that date—hopelessly divided on the subject of what provision is to be made for Britain's first and last line of defence this year. Although not yet published, more or less authoritative forecasts of this fiscal year's shipbuilding have been made known. It is believed that four large armoured ships will be laid down early in the financial year, and—mark the qualification—one or two more vessels will be commenced late in the financial year providing "foreign" programmes materialise; in other words, if Germany maintains her present rate of naval expansion. Now all the world knows what Germany's naval programme is as far on as 1915, and that her programme is as immutable as the laws of the Medas and Persians, having been fixed under the provisions of the 1908 Navy Act. Under these circumstances the new British Estimates are obviously framed in a spirit of compromise. The Government's supporters are clamorous for retrenchment, but the vast body of the electorate are equally as vociferous for adequate provision for the Fleet.

The hesitancy of the Government in this matter is more than deplorable; it is wicked. Mr. McKenna and his Cabinet colleagues cannot fail to be aware of the results of a vacillating policy at this juncture. Parsimony in connection with the Navy can only bring about a recrudescence of the big-Navy agitation, with all that that implies. Invidious comparisons will be made with the Fleets of other Powers; the "looming cloud across the North Sea" will again be brought forward; and the "German Peril" will bulk big in the popular imagination. Such an agitation can hardly fail to imperil the good relations between England and Germany which the recent visit of King Edward to Berlin did so much to strengthen. Every lover of peace and good-will among the Powers must deprecate the Government's present attitude towards the armed forces of the Empire, and it is to be hoped that in following the dictates of party Mr. Asquith will not ignore the larger issues of the problem.

En passant, it may be remarked that *Punch* last week revealed another deep-laid Government plot. Your witty contemporary "learns, on good authority," that four ships only are to be laid down this year; but that two of them are to be called the "Edward and Alexandra" and the "William and Mary," respectively, so that foreign Powers may be deceived into thinking that six ships are to be built!

GREAT BRITAIN AND SIAM.

Bangkok, March 10.

A British-Siamese agreement was signed here today, which provides that all persons registered as British subjects before the completion of the agreement shall be under the jurisdiction of the international Court, and that all who register themselves henceforth shall be under Siamese jurisdiction.

KING EDWARD IN THE SOUTH.

King Edward arrived at Biarritz at 9.50 p.m. on Monday. His Majesty was received by the Mayor, the British Consul, and a representative of the French Government. The station was decorated with British flags. After an exchange of greetings the King drove en route to the Hotel du Palais.

THE EMPRESS OF RUSSIA.

The Empress Marie of Russia arrived in London on Monday, on a visit to the Queen, her sister.

PARTY PROPORTION OF THE HOUSE.

THE FLOWING TIDE.

There appears to be a mistake in the list of the Unionist victories which we gave in one of our recent issues. A correspondent of the *Globe* points out that at the bye-election which took place at North-Aberdeen in 1907, on the appointment of Mr. Bryce to Washington, the result was as follows:

G. B. Esslemont (R.)	3,779
R. McNeill (U)	3,412
Radical majority	367

The result of the 1906 election had been:

Bryce (R.)	6,780
Black (U.)	2,332
Radical majority	4,448

The bye-election, therefore, showed a decrease in the Radical vote of 3,001 and an increase in the Unionist vote of 1,080.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD.

It is expected that Lord Charles Beresford will "haul down his flag" at the end of this month. There are rumours that he will re-enter Parliament in due time, and lively scenes may be expected. Lord Charles was 63 last month.

EXTRAORDINARY OCCURRENCE AT SEA.

A Reuter correspondent reports from Victoria (B.C.) that, according to statements made by the officers of the steamer "Inveric," which arrived there from Yokohama, they had a most strange experience during the voyage, which occupied 21 days, and was a succession of gales the whole way across the Pacific.

On February 8, at 8.5 a.m., when in 163 W. 50 N., with a strong hurricane blowing from the South-East, and a very high sea, which sent huge combers sweeping over the bow and along the waist of the ship, the wind suddenly died away and the sea fell with almost abrupt suddenness to a glassy calm, the barometer at the same time rising 6-10ths of an inch, from 29.12 to 29.70.

The phenomenon was noted in the log, and was reported as the strangest experience of the kind ever encountered at sea by the members of the crew. The steamer's speed was cut down to about three knots, steaming against the wind, and the next minute she was making full speed through a calm sea with a glass-like surface.

THE WAR OFFICE AND MR. WILBUR WRIGHT.

London, March 10.

According to a newspaper report, Mr. Wilbur Wright has accepted the invitation of the Secretary of State for War to make trials with his flying machine in England, and the Government intends to make him an offer for the purchase of his aeroplane.

THE NEAR EAST.

THE SERVIAN NOTE.

THE CHANCES OF PEACE IMPROVING.

At last the long-looked-for Note of the Servian Government has been published and officially handed to the Powers, and its contents bring no surprises to anyone who viewed the situation with a proper amount of coolness and common-sense. Servia has declared herself at the mercy of the Powers, and has specifically stated that she demands no sort of compensation from Austria. We cannot ask for more than has been given in this Note, and trust in the good-will of the Powers that they will see to Servia being rewarded for having yielded to the inevitable, and placed herself in the hands of those who have "looked on and seen most of the game." The chances for peace have, by this latest development in the vexed Balkan question, improved considerably, and after all we may live—and no need for living long for the matter of that—to see that by her incorrect proceeding in the matter, Austria has improved rather than impaired the situation in the Near East, which as regularly as the seasons of the year, has caused a stir in Europe.

The text of the Note presented to the Powers yesterday will be found below. Its tenure is dignified and straightforward, and the Servian people must be looked upon by the Europeans in general as a nation not unacquainted with the dictates of moderation. The influence brought to bear on them has been enormously strong, irresistible as we see, and Servia ought to be treated with that consideration which is due to the vanquished in a fair fight.

RUSSIA'S ADVICE TO SERVIA.

Belgrade, March 10.

The text of the Russian communication of the 2nd instant was published this afternoon; it is as follows:—"We note with satisfaction that the Servian Government adheres to its decision not to give up its friendly attitude, that it avoids everything that could bring about an armed conflict with Austria-Hungary, and that it will take no military measures on the frontier. We are convinced that the vital interests of Servia, to which we have always shown sincere sympathy, imperatively dictate that course of conduct, which alone corresponds to the general requirements of today. We have also been able to convince ourselves that the Powers are not disposed to lend their support to the idea of territorial claims in favour of Servia. The Servian Government should therefore conclude that all their efforts to induce the Powers to support such pretensions would be without result, and that it can only retain the sympathy of the Powers by refraining from demands which might lead to an armed conflict with Austria-Hungary. We earnestly wish to dissuade the Servian Government from any conduct that might expose it to such danger. We hope that Servia will keep her promises to follow the advice of the great Powers. We are at the same time of opinion that the Servian Government should, under existing circumstances, openly declare to the Powers that she does not insist on her territorial demands, and that she leaves to the decision of the great Powers all that relates to the solution of the questions at issue. Then the Powers will be able to use their efforts in favour of Servian interests."

THE CHANCES OF PEACE IMPROVING.

The circular despatch which the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Milovanovitch, sent this after-

(Continued on page 3.)