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The Daily Record

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and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

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THE WAR CLOUD.

ALARMING RUMOURS FROM THE BALKANS.

Yesterday's reports from the Near East were the reverse of reassuring. A Vienna telegram stated that the publication of an Imperial decree was awaited in Vienna yesterday, according to which the Austro-Hungarian troops in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia would be placed on a war footing. Orders are expected for a general advance in the neighbourhood of the Drina. In the course of a week it is estimated that 200,000 Austro-Hungarian troops will be concentrated along the Servian frontier. A despatch from Saloniki, dated Wednesday, says reports from the Sandjak assert positively that the Servians continue to arm the peasants on the frontier, and to distribute bombs among them. Four more battalions have been ordered to march on the Sandjak. Servian intransigence has received a severe setback, according to a report published in the *Pester Lloyd* of Budapest, that M. Isvolski assured the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Count Berchtold, that Russia would take no steps calculated to persuade the Servians that help was to be anticipated from Russia. News came from Belgrade that large numbers of Russian volunteers had arrived there, to assist the Servians in their campaign against the Austrians. This rumour, however, is denied on high authority. In the opinion of the well-informed Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*, the situation justifies a pessimistic outlook, which has been accentuated since the unsatisfactory contents of the Russian answer have been made known. The attitude of Servia during the last few days has caused Austria-Hungary to hesitate before proposing to the Principality any economic concessions. In Austrian Parliamentary circles pessimism reigns supreme. It is believed, however, that the actual crisis in the situation will be reached before the end of this month. If Servia is blindly foolish enough to eventually provoke hostilities, she will experience great difficulty in laying hands upon sufficient ammunition for her troops. The Turkish authorities have notified their intention of thoroughly examining consignments of war material destined for Servia. Only military provisions and equipment will be granted right of way through Turkish territory, not arms or ammunition. Consignments of dynamite for the French and English mining companies in the Balkans will only be allowed through in parcels of two and a half tons at a time.—To sum up the entire batch of latest news is to arrive at the conclusion that the possibility of war has grown very much more menacing during the past week. Servia is either bluffing or is in the throes of genuine jingo fever. In the present condition of affairs, a spark may at any moment cause a widespread conflagration.

The *Danzerarmeezeitung*, a military review published in Vienna, has a strong following in high circles; it has published an article, which demands not only the invasion of Servia, but it says: "Let us free ourselves at all costs from the alliance with Italy." This latter remark has called forth a great deal of surprise, and the *Fremdenblatt* quotes the article referred to. The Austro-Hungarian troops have been divided into two armies, and the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the Heir Apparent, will be the Commander-in-Chief. The 2nd, 7th, 9th, 12th, and 13th Army Corps and the 15th Army Corps of Sarajevo form the two armies; but the last-named corps will remain in its present quarters. The First Army will be commanded by Gen. Albori, Master of the Ordnance, and the Second Army will be

led by Gen. Hlobucar. None of the Army Corps of Galicia are affected by this arrangement of the troops. A telegram to the Viennese *Zeit* states that at Nish on Monday the Austrian Consul was grossly insulted in a public café by a Servian officer, who boxed his ears and denounced him as a liar.

KING EDWARD AND WILBUR WRIGHT.

Pau, March 17.
King Edward motored over to Pau from Biarritz yesterday to witness Mr. Wilbur Wright's experiments with his aeroplane. His Majesty was present on the ground when the American aviator made an ascent with his sister, Miss Wright. The aeroplane circled several times above the King, and gliding over the earth like a gigantic bird, and gliding gracefully this way and that at the will of the operator. It finally rose to a considerable height, disappearing in the low-lying banks of clouds, and finally emerging to make a successful descent.

THE GENERAL ELECTION RUMOURS.

(From our own correspondent.)
London, March 16.
In spite of the many apparently well-founded rumours of a Parliamentary General Election next June, the idea finds little credence among M.P.'s themselves. The consensus of opinion is that everything points to a continuance of the present Government at least until next year. Serious differences in the Cabinet at one time gave rise to the belief that a premature dissolution might result. It now appears, however, that these differences have been arranged, at least temporarily.

RAILROAD DISASTER AT MONTREAL.

EXPRESS WRECKS STATION PLATFORM.
Montreal, March 18.
Upon approaching Windsor Street station here yesterday, the Pacific Express was unable to come to a standstill, with the result that the locomotive mounted the platform and crashed through the station buildings, completely wrecking two waiting-rooms and covering the platform with debris. The rooms were crowded at the moment with passengers, five of whom were instantly killed and 20 badly hurt. The passengers on the express were unharmed. It transpires that the boiler of the locomotive exploded some two miles distant from the station, killing the engineer and fireman, so that the heavy train dashed onwards at a great speed entirely without control.

THE AMERICAN STEEL TRUST.

New York, March 18.
The gross profits of the United States Steel Corporation during 1908 amounted to \$91,848,000, the net profits to \$74,883,000, and the gross surplus to \$10,343,000. The total income during the past year amounted to \$482,308,000.

UNITED STATES TARIFF REVISION.

A cable despatch from Washington, giving details of the United States tariff revision Bill, appears on Page 4.

THE BRITISH NAVAL CRISIS.

HEATED DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT.

SENSATIONAL PRESS TALK.

London, March 18.
The debate on the Navy Estimates is the one subject of conversation. All the newspapers discuss the situation; the *Daily Telegraph* describing it as a greater national calamity even than the "Black Week" in the Boer war. The *Daily Mail* publishes the result of an enquiry among shipbuilding firms as to the number of slips available for building "Dreadnoughts," and concludes that sixteen such ships could be turned out annually in Great Britain. The *Times* of this morning publishes the following letter from the Earl of Rosebery, dated the 17th instant: "The statements made yesterday evening in the House of Commons on our Navy and on the Navies of other countries are the most serious that I remember. Their importance does not lie so much in the Navy question, which to a certain extent is solved. Once the nation realises that its naval supremacy is threatened, it will make the greatest exertions. The very important result of yesterday's explanations will cause us to examine the value of our defensive measures afresh and with all care. Are they sufficient? Will our Territorial Army be sufficient, even when it reaches its full strength? These are today really practical and urgent questions."

London, March 18.
In answer to a question during yesterday's Navy debate in the House of Commons, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. McKenna, said that the number of slips in Great Britain on which ships of the "Dreadnought" class could be built was 17, including two belonging to firms who had not yet built large battleships. With alterations that would take a few months, two more slips in Government dockyards and several more in private yards could be made available for the purpose named. In Germany there were 14 such slips, and two more that could be quickly converted. There was, besides, one German slip capable of turning out a ship of the "Invincible" class, and one more of that kind in the yard of a private firm that had not yet undertaken the building of large battleships.

The debate on the Navy Estimates was then continued. Major Lee, Conservative member for South Hants, said the crisis with which the nation was confronted had united the whole House in one party of British citizens determined, in view of the common danger, to work together. The circumstances demanded that all the eight "Dreadnoughts" should be ordered at once and completed as soon as possible. There was no ground for a panic, but good reason for prompt and rapid action. Germany had laid down nine "Dreadnoughts" in the last twelve months; why should she not do the same this year? Germany's right to build ships was unquestionable; but, as for her explanation, he said with all respect that from a practical point of view it was not worth the paper it was written on, if it had actually been committed to paper.

The Prime Minister here interrupted the speaker by asking whether he drew a distinction between an oral and a written explanation of a foreign Power.

Major Lee said he did not wish to be drawn into a discussion which might make it appear that he doubted the good faith of Germany (hear, hear!).

(Continued on page 2.)