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The Daily Record

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and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

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A BRIGHTER OUTLOOK.

OPTIMISM IN THE BALKANS.

Generally speaking, the Near Eastern situation has improved during the last day or so. It is true that Austria-Hungary has not yet come to an agreement with the bellicose Serbs, neither are there any well-founded reports of demobilisation; nevertheless, the Paris Bourse, which is regarded as an excellent international barometer, showed obvious signs of increased steadiness on Thursday, chiefly in consequence of rumours that Russia, France, and England were using their combined good offices at Belgrade. The following are the chief points of interest contained in yesterday's despatches:

The Servian Minister at Constantinople has assured the Porte and the Diplomatic Corps that Servia desires no war, but is hopeful of a speedy understanding.

The Servian Cabinet met, under the presidency of King Peter, on Thursday, discussed the prospective attitude of the Government towards the new steps anticipated from Austria, and the eventual military measures to be taken in case the reports of Austrian mobilisation should prove accurate. The alarmist reports in certain Austrian and Hungarian journals excite no particular anxiety in Belgrade.

The issue of a mobilisation decree at Vienna is postponed, but may take place today (Saturday). Premier Wekerle has intimated confidentially to several Deputies that the Emperor Francis Joseph is still confident that war is avoidable. The new representations to be made to Servia by the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Belgrade have been postponed for some days.

The Agence Havas reports from Belgrade that the Servian Government, after replying to the new representations to be made by the Austro-Hungarian Minister, will be disposed to yield to the suggestions of the Powers. It is even said that, if so advised by the Powers, Servia will demobilise.

Replying in the House of Commons on Thursday to an enquiry respecting the proposed European Conference, the Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey, said that the British Government had consistently been in favour of international agreement on the points at issue in the Near Eastern question, previous to the holding of a Conference. The negotiations, he added, were still in progress, and it was inadvisable to make any further statement at the moment.

It is reported from Sofia that the Bulgarian Government has asked Russia to use her influence with the aim of persuading the other Powers to recognise Bulgarian independence, since the question of compensation has been settled.

Montenegro, whose movements have lately been causing some anxiety, assures Turkey that she has absolutely no warlike intentions with regard to the Sandjak of Novi Bazar. The Turkish Minister at Cetinje has received a similar assurance from the Prince of Montenegro. Against this, however, comes a trustworthy report from Cetinje that a Montenegrin brigade has been mobilised and will march against Spizza.

An interpellation in the Hungarian Chamber of Deputies on Thursday created a remarkable scene. One of the speakers eulogised Germany's attitude during the crisis. "Germany stands at our side," he said, "and Emperor William supports us with true German loyalty." At these words a great storm of cheering broke out in all parts of the Chamber and was prolonged for several minutes.

According to an authoritative report of yesterday's date from Sofia, the Bulgarian Government has caused a declaration to be made on its behalf in Constantinople that it will renounce its old claim for pecuniary compensation in respect of the railway line from Varna to Rustchuk if the Porte consents to the immediate recognition of Bulgaria's independence.

INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRATION CONFERENCE.

Washington, March 18.

The Italian Ambassador has made proposals to the State Department with respect to a contemplated International Immigration Conference, which should endeavour to settle the many vexed questions centring around world-wide immigration.

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DISORGANISED POST OFFICE.

FIVE MILLION LETTERS UNDELIVERED.

Paris, March 19.

Absolute chaos reigns at the head post office here in consequence of the strike. No fewer than five million letters are lying undelivered, without receiving the least attention. Nor is the trouble confined to Paris, for seemingly all central France is similarly affected; while the strike has extended to most of the great cities. The hastily enrolled military telegraphists have proved themselves unable to cope with their task. Many thousand telegrams have been forwarded by railway across the frontiers, thence to be despatched to their destinations. The railway postal officials who until now had faithfully handled the mails between Paris, Calais, and Dunkirk, have finally struck, and have been joined by their colleagues at Mezières and Charleville. The telephone operators in the great building on Rue Gutenberg and at La Villette and Passy have deserted their posts, so that the instruments lie idle. In other offices only the head officials have stuck to their posts. There exists no hope of improvement in the paralyzing situation, as the strikers decided at a meeting held yesterday to vigorously prosecute their campaign. The disorganisation and hindrance of business all over the country is indescribable.

Later.

Paris is absolutely cut off from the outer world. During the whole of yesterday only 2,000 telegrams were despatched. The post offices, most of which are shut, refuse to accept registered letters. Foreign mails are only forwarded in part. Soldiers have been requisitioned to act as postmen, with unsatisfactory results. Last night only ten wires were in operation. In the provinces the strike is spreading to a most serious extent. The newspapers are greatly agitated over the situation, commenting sharply on the utter disorganisation of business and social life caused thereby. Government action is anticipated for this morning, and is awaited with extraordinary excitement. The entire Republican press asserts that in the event of victory attending the strikers it would be as bad as a revolution, as their victory would mean that trade unionism had the upper hand in national affairs. All constitutional authority would cease to exist. The country must decide whether it will tolerate such a condition. The Government must face two alternatives—either to crush this anarchy or to sacrifice their entire authority. Serious rioting occurred at the head post office yesterday, when improvised postmen about to start on their rounds were impeded by a huge crowd. Two hundred policemen and soldiers were necessary to escort the postmen out of the building. Delivery of letters is practically at a standstill.

BEGGAR MY NEIGHBOUR.

LONDON PRESS DEMANDS
THIRTY DREADNOUGHTS IN FOUR YEARS,
TO COST 71 MILLIONS.

(From our own correspondent.)

London, March 19.

The tone of the press this morning leaves no room for doubting that the entire country is stirred to its depths by the naval situation. It is obvious that the exact provisions of the recently introduced Estimates are only now becoming thoroughly understood, and public opinion almost solidly declares them to be inadequate. Even the Radical journals are shrinking beneath the storm, while such a sober organ as the *Daily Telegraph* is fiercely attacking the Government. A long article appears in this morning's issue of that journal, demanding that provision be made for the commencement of 30 Dreadnoughts in the next four years, for which an approximate sum of 71 millions sterling must be granted. This is declared to be the "irreducible minimum" consistent with the maintenance of the two-Power standard, and it is suggested that the enormous sum could be distributed over a period of six or seven years. The Admiralty is accused from all sides of having yielded against their better judgment to pressure from the "little Navyites."

The *Standard* learns that some days ago a petition, signed by a number of Peers and members of the Commons, was presented to the Prime Minister, calling for a searching investigation into the present conditions at the Admiralty and the naval administration in general. What the result was is not stated. The Government is doing all in its power to avert public attention from the Navy question, but with little success. It is no exaggeration to state that the country is in the throes of a naval crisis, and the rumours of a speedy General Election are cropping up again with renewed persistence.

THE DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT.

London, March 19.

The debate on the Naval Estimates was continued yesterday, the vote under discussion being that for the effective strength of 128,000 men.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Conservative member for East Worcestershire, said that the statements and assurances of the Government had not dissipated the fears that were felt on his side of the House, nor had they convinced the Opposition that the steps necessary to meet the situation had been taken. The First Sea Lord had said not long ago that they might sleep calmly ("So you may!"), from the First Lord of the Admiralty. They would sleep more calmly if the Admiralty had not been caught napping. (Hear! Hear! from the Opposition.)

The Opposition was of opinion that the Government had not realised the seriousness of the circumstances, and that their programme was not adequate to meet the demands of the situation. The two-Power standard was gone, and Great Britain's supremacy at sea was endangered.

Lieut. Bellairs, Liberal member for King's Lynn, remarked that, when he looked back at the promises and assurances given in the German Reichstag, he could not place confidence in the last statements of Secretary of State v. Tirpitz.

Mr. Lough, Radical member for West Islington, said the German people had taken no step unfriendly to England, not even with regard to their fleet. Since their great ruler came to the throne, no Englishman could point to a single unfriendly act (A voice: "The telegram!") Why harp upon a hastily written telegram? He could quote many hasty utterances made by political leaders. The policy of the Government should be to cement the friendship between the two peoples more closely.

After other members had spoken, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. McKenna, said: "The ships that will now be laid down will be 30% better than the 'Dreadnought.' We are certain of being numerically superior in that type of ship. In March 1912 we shall be superior in a better type, and we shall be better able than Germany to build such ships."

(Continued on page 2.)