

Office:
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The Daily Record

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and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

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BALKAN TENSION UNRELAXED.

It were idle to deny that the situation in the Near East continues to evoke grave apprehension on all hands. The Gordian knot, which no one apparently is trying energetically to loosen, may yet be cut with the sword. The most remarkable feature of the debate in the Chamber of Deputies at Vienna on Friday and yesterday was the spontaneous and unanimous exhibition of loyalty to the Dual Monarchy on the part of all Austrian, Hungarian, and Slav Deputies. Dr. Sustirjio, a Slav representative, said his compatriots fervently hoped for peace, since in case of war they would be called upon to fight their own brothers. "But," he added, "if war does come, the southern Slavs will unite with the people of Austria against the common enemy, Serbia, even though they do it with bleeding hearts. We shall not hesitate to place duty before ties of blood!" Deafening applause greeted these sentiments. Next followed M. Ckiri who, in the name of the National German Union, expressed his hope that peace would be maintained. "We desire peace," he said, "with all our hearts, in the interests of our soldier youths whose lives are imperilled, and in the interests of the economic welfare of this State, in whose affairs the German people take no minor part. We desire peace, not war; but we do not want peace at any price; we do not want a peace that would involve the sacrifice of Austria's honour; nor an evanescent peace to be followed on the morrow by a still bloodier war!" Again the Chamber resounded with thunderous cheers.

Serbia is still striving with might and main to wring permission from the Porte for the passage of arms and other munitions of war through Turkish territory. The reports on this head are somewhat conflicting. Thus a Constantinople paper reported yesterday an alleged interview between the Serbian representative and the Grand Vizier, in which the latter is made to say: "I can give absolutely no permission for the passage of war material through Ottoman territory so long as the situation is not cleared. I must refuse to enter into a discussion on the subject." In proof of Serbia's feverish military preparations the same paper publishes a list of Serbian orders placed with European firms. This includes 100,000 rifles, 50 million cartridges, 170 machine guns, and four military balloons. On the other hand, a despatch from Saloniki states positively that permission has arrived from the Turkish Government to transport through Ottoman territory the remaining cargo of the steamer "Crime," including ammunition and big guns, and the dynamite in the hold of the steamer "Orchis," all consigned to Serbia.

A Vienna telegram says: "On Friday evening it was impossible to say with any degree of confidence that the danger of war had diminished. The lengthy Cabinet councils have thus far had no result. The position of Austria as a great Power renders it impossible for her to tolerate protracted delay."

Some mild excitement has been caused by the report published in an Italian newspaper to the effect that the Italian War Ministry is engaged in amplifying proposals respecting the strengthening of the defences on Italy's eastern frontier. It has been decided to send a battalion of fortress artillery from Turin to Venice, and this will be done at once.

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE AT JERSEY CITY.

New York, March 19.

Two docks at Jersey City belonging to the Lehigh Valley Railroad caught fire today and are burning furiously. The steamer "Eastward" which was lying alongside when the fire started is also in flames.



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THE BRITISH NAVAL CRISIS.

(From our own correspondent.)

London, March 20.

Mr. Balfour, leader of the Opposition, has given notice to introduce a motion in the House of Commons on Monday, to the effect that the policy of the Government with regard to the timely provision of warships of the latest types is not of a kind consistent with the security of the Empire. Mr. Balfour will on Monday demand that a day be set apart for the discussion of his motion.

Popular excitement on the Navy question continues unabated. The papers are full of sensational headlines and no less sensational statements. The following is a typical passage: "A very few hours ago the mass of the nation believed that our naval supremacy was secure, and that we might sleep quietly in our beds. We know now that we have been hugging ourselves in an utterly false security, that we have been dwelling in a fool's paradise, and that the Government and the Admiralty have been deceived. We know, by the admissions of the heads of the Government and the Admiralty, that the position is such that we must very shortly be face to face with a situation the peril of which it is impossible to exaggerate." It is now believed probable that the Estimates will undergo alteration, so that eight instead of four Dreadnoughts will be commenced during the financial year.

The Easter recess of the House of Lords will last from April 1 to April 20.

London, March 20.

Several important speeches respecting the Navy Estimates were delivered yesterday evening. Mr. C. P. Trevelyan, M.P., speaking at Liverpool, asserted that the panic displayed by the Tory "Yellow" press and Tory speakers was the natural result of a campaign of exaggeration and un-English nervousness. He protested against the assertion that Germany's "Dreadnought" programme was aimed against England. Speaking in London yesterday evening, Mr. Runciman, Secretary for Education, denounced the panic as baseless, defended the Government's policy, and charged the Opposition with making the Navy Estimates a party platform, as is demonstrated by the bye-election fight at Croydon.

AMERICAN CONSUL THREATENED.

Rome, March 19.

Mr. Bishop, the American Consul at Palermo, has received threatening letters from the Mafia, saying that if he does not mind his own business, the same fate as overtook Mr. Petrosino awaits him, adding that the Mafia will punish him more severely than they did Mr. Petrosino if he continues to persecute the Sicilian criminals who find refuge in New York, and if he continues to incite the Italian police and judicial authorities to molest suspected persons, thinking them implicated in the plot against Mr. Petrosino.

Mr. Bishop has handed these letters to the police, who have taken adequate measures to protect his person and the Consulate.

FRANCE ISOLATED.

SHUT OFF FROM THE OUTER WORLD.

Paris, March 20.

The strike of the French post office employees continues to increase in dimensions and vigour. The paralysing results of the situation may be judged by the fact that for the past four days the Government has been unable to send or to receive despatches from its various emissaries in foreign capitals, and has therefore to rely on private and foreign sources for its information during a period of grave international unrest. Literal cartloads of letters, telegrams, and other postal matter encumber the deserted offices. Strong language marked the proceedings in the Chamber on Friday, when the various Ministers, including M. Symian, defended the Government's attitude towards the strikers. One excited Deputy accused M. Barthou of having imperilled the national interests, whereupon the Minister delivered himself of the following statement: "For three days the Foreign Minister has received no despatches, no information that may have a bearing on important questions of national defence." He then read a report from the Prefect of the Northern Department, announcing that between Paris and the Belgian frontier 47 wires were interrupted. The only international lines in working order are those between Paris and Berlin, Mülhausen, Bâle, Vienna, and Zürich, and the only domestic ones those between Paris and Orléans, Bordeaux, Clermont, St. Etienne, Lyons, La Rochelle, Le Mans, and Brest. The Government has resolved upon drastic measures, and if these be not permitted the Cabinet will resign.

There is pressing danger that the strike may extend, not only to all branches of the postal service, but to every department under Governmental control. The leaders of the striking element held a meeting on Friday night and decided to call upon every Government official to stop work in case the strike was not speedily terminated in favour of the employees.

In the course of his defence in the Chamber, the Under Secretary for Posts and Telegraphs declared the position of the Government workers to be better than that of private employees. The country faced a well-organised revolutionary movement. For his part he had done his duty. Deputy Rouamet defended the strikers in a violent speech, drawing attention to the nervousness of the Under Secretary and alleging that he had placed the blame on the police. The strikers, he said, were not revolutionaries, and the Government must desist from their obstinate attitude. At this stage Minister Barthou sprang to his feet and denied that the movement had the slightest shadow of an excuse. People did not cut France's communications with the outer world solely on account of some trivial grievances. The postal officials were actively rebelling against the entire nation at a most difficult moment, and when it was urgently necessary for the Government to be in communication with its ambassadors and representatives. An outrage against the State was nothing compared to this present attempt against the national welfare. In spite of the gravity of their misdemeanours, however, he would give the officials one last chance to return to their duty.

UNITED STATES TRANSPORT WRECKED.

Bellingham (Wash.), March 19.

A Government transport has gone ashore in Puget Sound. Several people are reported to have perished.