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SERVIA'S BAD BOY.

The news published from Belgrade yesterday, according to which the Crown Prince has intimated an intention of renouncing his rights of succession to the Throne in order to free the Servian Government from the obloquy attaching to several deeds which the young Prince is alleged to have committed, cannot but prove favourable in the present condition of the eternal Balkan situation. This hot-headed scion of the Karageorgevitch house has more than once introduced unwelcome complications into the problem by his bellicose speeches to such of his father's subjects as would listen to them. He has spouted interminably of his intention to lead his "brothers" triumphantly across "fields of blood" and has more than once said things which, if he were the actual head of State, might well have involved Servia in war. During the few short years that King Peter has occupied the throne rendered vacant by the abominable assassination of Alexander and his unfortunate Consort Draga, his turbulent heir has been a continual thorn in his side. It has long been notorious that the Crown Prince lent his support to political factions whose aims were diametrically opposed to those of the reigning monarch, and from time to time came rumours of an intention on the King's part to lodge his erring offspring in a fortress for a few years, to cool his unfilial exuberance. The embarrassment caused the Government by the machinations of this young Don Quixote may well be imagined. Over and over again Servian diplomacy has been at its wits' end to palliate flagrant offences against international etiquette in which the foolish youth has borne a prominent part. There have been rumours of dynamite plots, filibustering outrages, and similar enterprises in which he figured together with a body of wealthy young wastrels who from sheer love of mischief elected the Prince their leader and initiated a campaign against law and order.

On the other hand, some people hold that the Crown Prince is not so much the victim of his own violent passions as the object of persistent calumny on the part of sensational journalism. Thus a few weeks ago a Belgrade correspondent of one of the leading Paris papers wrote a powerful article in defence of the Prince, asserting that not a fraction of the wild tales told of him were true. In support of this statement it was said that the Prince was on the best of terms with the officials of his father's court, his personal servants, and his messmates in the army, and that there was no more popular youth in the length and breadth of the Kingdom. The story of his shooting cigarettes out of the mouths of soldiers, emptying shotguns into the backs of his servants, and committing atrocious breaches of morality were—on the same authority—all purely malicious inventions. There is no doubt that every story has two sides, and it is quite on the cards that the Crown Prince has been fair game for the flippant pens of unscrupulous newspaper men when other copy was lacking. Nevertheless, his renunciation of succession rights, if confirmed, will remove an unknown and potentially dangerous factor from a problem which abounds with inflammable possibilities.

BERLIN INTEREST IN U.S. TARIFF REFORM.

(From The Daily Record correspondent.)

Berlin, March 26.
The Secretary of the Association of Commerce and Trade, Berlin, Mr. Geo. S. Atwood, who sails tomorrow (Saturday) from Hamburg by the S.S. "Cleveland," will go to Washington, where he expects to take some active part in the tariff negotiations, representing and conserving the interests of the members of the Berlin Association. In this respect Mr. Atwood goes as direct envoy of the Association.

Besides urging the Washington Government to obtain some concessions from the German Government, especially as regards the re-admission of canned meats and Californian fruits, Mr. Atwood will also direct the attention of the Washington authorities to the well-nigh prohibitive duty on American cereals, which are classified by the German Government as luxuries—which those who are qualified to speak say they most assuredly are not.

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ENGLAND AND GERMANY.

CONFLICTING STATEMENTS.

London, March 26.

Mr. Arthur Lee, Conservative member for South Hants, will move the vote of censure against the Government on Monday next, on behalf of Mr. Balfour. It is believed that the Opposition will not go to a division if Sir Edward Grey's promised statement is satisfactory.

Mr. Gretton, Conservative member for Rutland, having asked the question: whether the statement as to the intentions of the German Government with regard to their shipbuilding programme had been officially communicated to the British Foreign Office by the German Government in a formal Note, or had been made verbally to other members of the Government, the Prime Minister replied that the information had been made verbally to Sir Edward Grey in the usual diplomatic manner.

In reply to a further question from Mr. Gretton: when the German Government had for the first time communicated their intention to accelerate their building programme, and whether the communication had been repeated, Mr. Asquith said: "The definitive statement referred to was given verbally on the 10th of March, and was to the effect that it was not the intention of the German Government to accelerate their shipbuilding programme and that Germany would not have twelve "Dreadnoughts" until the end of 1912. Comparing that statement with the information of the Admiralty as to the German shipbuilding programme, we came to the conclusion that battleships only and not cruisers were included in the statement. The speech of State Secretary v. Tirpitz, which, so far as I recollect, was delivered on the 16th of March, made it clear that his statement included cruisers. On the 18th of March we were informed that certain firms had been promised contracts in advance for the building of two of the ships to be included in the German programme for the financial year 1909-1910; but we were at the same time given to understand that this in no way modified the statement previously made. That information was also communicated at the same time by State Secretary von Tirpitz."

London, March 26.

Engineering states the Government has already called for tenders for the new ships included in the Naval Estimates. The tenders are to be sent in early in April.

CROWN PRINCE AND SERVANT.

EXCITEMENT IN BELGRADE.

Belgrade, March 26.

In every circle of society the one topic of conversation is the unexpected renunciation by the Crown Prince of his rights of succession to the Throne, owing to the scandal which has arisen out of the death of Kolakovitch, his valet. The version of this affair which finds most credence is as follows: On the 14th inst. the Crown Prince was angry with his valet owing to the latter's inattention, and in a moment of passion he struck Kolakovitch in the face. The man fled from the room, but on his way through the adjoining apartment he slipped and fell, sustaining an injury in the region of his abdomen. This injury necessitated an operation shortly after, and the unfortunate man died in hospital. Before his death he himself gave this account of the incident. His friends, however, say that his injury was directly inflicted by the Crown Prince. The journal *Zwono*, which ever since its appearance has repeatedly made violent attacks on the Prince, published an article on the 20th inst. accusing the Crown Prince of murder and demanding his arrest and imprisonment. As this accusation was not denied authoritatively, other journals took up the matter and united in demanding an instant explanation of the Kolakovitch affair. No explanation followed, and Prince George therefore decided to renounce his succession rights so as to render possible a legal investigation such as was demanded by the *Zwono*. According to his own statement—and even his enemies do not deny his love of truth—the accusation put forward by the *Zwono* is a base calumny.

Belgrade, Later.

Tomorrow an official pronouncement will be made regarding the death of the valet Kolakovitch, as the Ministry of the Interior believes it desirable to publicly controvert the press rumours on this head. An official report says that Kolakovitch was admitted to hospital on the night of March 12th-13th, and explained that he had hurt himself by falling on the Palace steps. Two days afterwards the Prefect of Belgrade drew the attention of the Ministry to the rumours that the Crown Prince had injured Kolakovitch. Thereupon the Prefect was sent to the hospital to take the injured man's depositions, as a first step towards instituting an investigation. Kolakovitch's statement quite exonerated the Crown Prince, and he signed it with his own hand. He died on the 17th inst. and a post-mortem was held the following day, which showed death to have followed on a rupture of the intestines caused by a heavy blow. Other traces of violence were lacking. This result is held to confirm the Crown Prince's own account of the affair.

Questions were asked in the Skupshtina today regarding the Crown Prince's renunciation of his succession rights, but the Prime Minister refused to make a statement before the King had authorised him to do so. The press attacks on the Crown Prince continue with unabated violence.

SENSATIONAL RUMOURS.

Belgrade, March 26.

The excitement caused by the news of the Crown Prince's action has not yet subsided. All sorts of rumours are in the air; an insistent one says that this action of the Prince's was urged upon him by the Government in conjunction with King Peter, with the object of silencing the war party and making possible a peaceful settlement of the dispute with Austria-Hungary. From an authoritative source it is said, however, that the Prince's action, which corresponds with his candid character, was taken entirely on his own initiative. His renunciation proves that he is ready to sacrifice everything to save his honour from the calumnies of his enemies. The news has inflicted an overwhelming defeat on the hopes of the war party, who until now have been jubilant.

Prince Alexander, the second son of King Peter, absolutely refuses to accept the rights of succession to the Throne in place of his brother George in the present disturbed condition of things.

(Continued on page 2.)