

offered a portfolio giving him equal power with Reid, but he declined, though he promised the new ministry his support. The chief point of agreement in the coalition was that the fiscal issue should not be raised during the life of the present Parliament.

As some Protectionists deserted Deakin and formed a loose alliance with the Labor party, the Reid ministry had a majority of only two. The session ended in December, 1904.

During the recess efforts were made to form a coalition between the Labor party and the Protectionists. This was supported by the Melbourne Age, the strongest Protectionist paper in Australia. But most people thought Deakin would keep his promises to support the Reid government, and not raise the fiscal question. On June 24th, however, Deakin made a very puzzling, indefinite speech, which was almost universally taken to mean that he intended to abandon the Reid ministry, and to raise the fiscal question.

Accordingly, when Parliament opened for the second session, on June 27th, the Governor General's speech proposed only one measure, a redistribution-of-seats bill. The Reid ministry intended, after the bill was disposed of, to dissolve the House. But Deakin, after protesting he had been misunderstood, and had not intended to withdraw his support from Reid, moved a hostile amendment to the address in reply. This was carried, the Reid government being defeated by 17 votes.

The Governor General, nevertheless, refused a dissolution, and Deakin has now formed a Protectionist ministry, several members of which were among those who had deserted him when the coalition with Reid was formed.

So the position is very similar to that which existed when the Parliament was first elected. There are again "three elevens in the field." As Deakin's following is now somewhat smaller than it was then, he will be more than ever at the mercy of the Labor party, which holds the balance of power.

No coalition has been formed between Deakin and Watson.

State elections were held in South Australia in the beginning of June. In a local house of 42 members the Labor party increased its members from 6 to 16. As all the Labor candidates advocated socialism, the issue was practically socialism vs. anti-socialism.

The Melbourne City Council owns and operates an electric plant which is an example of successful municipal ownership. The business is managed by a committee of the Council, which lights the streets and supplies electricity to private people for light and power, making charges in all cases

just as a private company would do. For the year ending February 27th, 1905, the committee reports a credit balance of over \$50,000, although the street lighting had been improved without increase of charge to the Council, and the rates to private people had been reduced from six to four cents per unit.

ERNEST BRAY.

## NEWS NARRATIVE

Week ending Thursday, Aug. 17.

### The Norwegian referendum.

Pursuant to resolution of the Norwegian Storting (p. 276), the people of Norway voted, on the 13th, upon the question of dissolving the Sweden-Norway union. The vote aggregated 321,519. This may be regarded as a full vote, the entire voting population of Norway at the elections of 1903 having been 457,551. The result reported on the 14th was 321,358 (over 70 per cent of the voting population) for dissolution, and only 161 in opposition. Accordingly, the Storting has been summoned to meet on the 21st to give the referendum effect by taking the next step toward repealing the act of union.

### The Russian national assembly.

Although it had been understood that the Czar was to issue on the 21st a call for a national assembly (p. 295), the call has not yet been issued. The latest report regarding it came from St. Petersburg on the 13th. At that time its publication was still expected.

### Echoes of the Russian Zemstvos congress.

Through the Moscow correspondent of the London Standard, the full text of the declaration of the congress at Moscow of Zemstvo and municipal representatives (p. 276) has been published. It is signed by 172 delegates from Zemstvos and 112 delegates from municipalities, and, according to the London Speaker of the 29th, it—

is a ruthless analysis of the promises contained in the ukase of December 1904, and the contributions that have been made to their fulfillment. As an indictment at once of the sincerity and the statesmanship of the government it is overwhelming. It shows how, in every direction where the Czar had promised legality and freedom, the lib-

erties of individuals and associations were still further subjected to official caprice and administrative tyranny. It ends with a number of conclusions of which the last affirms that the congress has taken upon itself the task of realizing with all possible speed the reforms that the Czar has neglected and the transition of Russia to a constitutional form of government, and calls upon all true Russians to take action of the most decisive character.

Before adjourning, the congress decided to invite on the next occasion members from those regions where local self-government has not yet been introduced.

### Another Russian outbreak.

Revolution at Riga was reported from St. Petersburg, on the 10th, to have supplemented previous revolutionary outbreaks (p. 247). Riga occupies third place among the seaports of Russia and second among the Baltic seaports. Also an important industrial center, its chief manufactures are railway cars, machinery, lumber, leather, candles, tiles, glass and tobacco products. Its population is about 300,000, nearly 50 per cent of which is German, and it is situated on the Duna, about ten miles above its mouth in the Gulf of Riga, and 363 miles southwest of St. Petersburg. It is the capital of the government of Livonia and the seat of the governor-general of the Baltic provinces. "Ablaze with revolution," began the St. Petersburg dispatch regarding Riga, and, continuing, it reported: "Red flags are floating from factories and public houses. Neighboring Baltic cities are joining in the movement against the government. Business houses are closed and Cossacks and workingmen are shooting each other in the streets." Nothing further has been reported, but whether because the outbreak has been suppressed or because dispatches are censored it is impossible yet to say.

### Russian-Japanese peace negotiations in the United States.

The second joint meeting of the Russian-Japanese peace envoys (p. 295) took place at Portsmouth on the 10th. On this occasion the Japanese submitted in writing a statement, not in detail but in principle, of the terms they exact of Russia. The Russian reply was submitted in writing at the third meeting, on the 12th. At the