

NEWS

The British war in South Africa has assumed a new phase. Negotiations by the government of Holland with the British government have been set on foot with a view to making peace. The first known fact in this turn of affairs is a flying visit which it is now learned was made to London by Dr. von Kuyper, the prime minister of Holland, shortly before the opening of parliament on the 16th. His presence was not discovered at the time, but it now transpires that he spent most of the time with Mr. Chamberlain's secretary, and it is suspected that he had a conference with Mr. Chamberlain himself. The object of his visit was doubtless known to Lord Rosebery, who, on the opening day of parliament, formally asked Lord Salisbury, the British prime minister, if the Dutch prime minister had not been in London on an errand of peace. Lord Salisbury's reply was: "Not so far as I know." Eight days later, on the 24th, Mr. Labouchere brought the subject to the attention of the Commons by an interpellation of the ministry in that house. His question was answered by A. J. Balfour, the ministerial leader in the House, who denied that any peace overtures had been received, either directly or indirectly, from anyone having the authority of the Boer leaders to make them. Mr. Balfour's reply, as well as Lord Salisbury's, was generally regarded as an evasion, and so it now seems to have been. For on the 28th, in response to further questioning by Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Balfour said:

No overtures for peace have been received from anyone authorized to speak in behalf of the Boers. A communication was, however, received late Saturday last from the Dutch government, and it is now under consideration. I propose to lay on the table as soon as I can do so a copy of that communication and of our reply to it.

Mr. Labouchere being insistent upon knowing whether proposals or suggestions had been submitted prior to last Saturday, Mr. Balfour added:

If the communications did not come authorized by the Boers they are no proper subject of question and answer across the floor of the House. If they were merely part of private correspondence they consist of that with which all the ministers are more or less flooded.

The nature of the correspondence which Mr. Balfour promised to di-

vulge as soon as possible is not yet known.

Reports from the field of the war indicate the continued determination of the Boers to resist British conquest. The London Daily News publishes uncensored dispatches to the effect that their power in Cape Colony is increasing daily, the executions of Lotter and Scheepers having converted even loyalists and caused them to join the Boer forces. The dispatches tell also of 12 defeats suffered by the British, from September to November, of which no mention has been made in the official or the censored dispatches. On the 27th Lord Kitchener reported the capture of Gen. B. Viljoen; but it soon leaked out that Gen. Viljoen had been killed, not captured. The capture of a Boer camp near Vryburg is reported by Gen. Methuen, 25 prisoners having been taken, together with a large herd of cattle. Captures near Rustenburg were also reported. But near Frankfort, in the Orange Free State, after capturing 20 Boers, Col. Wilson was attacked by another force, and during a hot fight all but three of his prisoners escaped.

The effort of the British ministry to influence American sentiment regarding the Boer war by disclosing evidence of peculiar friendliness to the United States on the part of Great Britain at the time of the Spanish-American war, the details of which were reported last week, has drawn out the following official explanation, dated the 22d, from the Russian foreign office:

Russia has always been and now is extremely desirous of maintaining amicable relations with the United States. Russia never had any intention of participating in any collective step in the Spanish-American dispute, which did not directly concern her, nor did Russia receive any proposition having such action in view. Indeed, we received no information regarding Austria's alleged initiative or about an attempt on the part of any of the powers to interfere in the interest of Spain.

A suggestion of the London Times, apparently inspired by the British ministry, to the effect that Great Britain would welcome the publication of the papers relating to the negotiations of the European powers on this subject, caused the Associated Press to solicit responses from the foreign offices of the respective governments con-

cerned. The following replies were received:

France—"No suggestion has been received here from the British government to publish the Hispano-American papers, and none is expected. No importance is attached to the Times' statement, as England is aware that the several governments would not agree to their publication."

Austria—"The British government has made no inquiry. Should such an inquiry be made Austria's answer would probably be according to the answers of the other powers."

Germany—"We have nothing to add to what was said to you on Tuesday."

Russia—"Should a request for publication be made by Great Britain, Russia will willingly consider the matter. No such request has yet been received."

From the Philippines, where, as one of the results of the Spanish-American war, the American government is playing the part of the British in South Africa, there is no military news except reports of two or three small captures, vague indications of unsatisfactory developments in the island of Negros, and a suggestion of the terrible experiences of a party of American marines which attempted to penetrate the island of Samar, under Capt. David B. Porter. They had been given up as dead, but on the 28th they returned to camp delirious from privation. For several days the party was without food, and neither the captain nor any of his men is yet in condition to relate their experiences in detail.

A full investigation of the Philippine situation has been decided upon by the Senate committee on the Philippines; and it is understood that Gov. Taft, who has just returned from his gubernatorial post at Manila, on leave of absence, is to be the first witness. In newspaper interviews on his way to Washington, Gov. Taft is reported as saying, that—

Civil government in the islands is a distinct success. It has been firmly established in nearly 40 provinces. . . . Opposition to our rule exists in practically only three provinces, and that will soon be stamped out. At the end of this year I hope to see the military forces reduced to 15,000 men in the islands. That number of troops, together with the native constabulary, will be ample force with which to maintain order and peace. Just as soon as we can persuade all the natives that the war is over our task will be made easier.

On the subject of "reconcentration" he is reported as follows:

Although I am not sufficiently well acquainted with the full military plans to speak with absolute authority, I can say that the whole subject is much misunderstood by our people. As a matter of fact there has never been any thought of establishing "concentration camps" in the ordinary acceptation of the term. All that has been proposed is an insurgent cordon, the establishment of a dead line into which will gradually be drawn all the remnants of insurrection that exist.

What appears to be another colonial venture on the part of the United States is the signing of a treaty between the Danish minister at Washington, Christian Brun, and Secretary of State Hay, for the sale by Denmark to the United States of the Danish West India islands—St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix—lying to the east of Porto Rico. In 1865 a treaty for the purchase of these islands was made by Secretary Seward, but the Senate refused to ratify. Negotiations were renewed by the United States in 1892, and again shortly before the Spanish-American war, but without result, Denmark refusing to entertain them. In 1899, however, it was reported that an informal offer had been made by Denmark to sell for \$3,000,000. At the same time it was said that Germany was in negotiation with Denmark for their purchase; but this was immediately contradicted, it being announced that Germany would do nothing that might be regarded as an infringement of the Monroe doctrine. Rumors of the contemplated purchase by the United States were rife in 1900 and 1901, and on the 2d of December of the latter year it was reported from Copenhagen that the terms of an agreement had been actually reached. But a hitch occurred. These islands are largely inhabited by Negroes, who enjoy, under the Danish regime, all the rights of citizenship that are possessed by the whites. They have an unrestricted voting franchise and full representation in the colonial council. Being an intelligent people, they understand that the tendency of American politics does not promise conditions so favorable to their race, and they object to the sale. Petitions against the sale without a vote of the inhabitants, signed by 34,000 names, were consequently laid before the King of Denmark on the 13th of January, and the American government was sounded by Denmark as to its

willingness to consent to a vote by the inhabitants of the islands. Secretary Hay was reported on the 23d as declining to agree to such a procedure. As reported, he said that "this government desired to acquire the islands and was prepared to make liberal terms, but it could only negotiate with the Danish government and not with its subjects." He is also reported to have been asked to agree to a provision in the treaty for the full American citizenship of the inhabitants and to have refused that concession also. Finally, on the 23d, Denmark communicated its willingness to accept the terms offered by the United States, and on the 24th the treaty was signed at Washington by Mr. Brun for Denmark and Mr. Hay for the United States. The terms of the treaty are as yet not divulged.

In preparation for the colonial system now so significant a feature of the American policy, and also for other commercial reasons, the first step in the organization of a new executive department has been taken. It consists in the passage on the 28th, by the Senate, of a bill for the establishment of a department of commerce and labor, the head of which is to be a member of the cabinet. As originally drawn the bill provided that the department be called "Department of Commerce," but the Senate added the words "and Labor" to the name.

NEWS NOTES.

—Santos-Dumont successfully guided his airship around the harbor of Monte Carlo on the 28th.

—The birthday of the late President McKinley was generally but informally observed on the 29th.

—Members of the American Secular Union organized the National Liberty party at Cincinnati on the 26th.

—The National Traders' association, in annual session at Milwaukee on the 29th, refused to pass a resolution asking congress to retain the sugar duty.

—A consolidation of all the principal glucose factories of the country was reported on the 28th to have been closed at New York, with a capitalization of \$80,000,000.

—James J. Hill, Darius Miller, Edward H. Harriman, George B. Harris and C. S. Mellen, railroad magnates, were examined by the interstate commerce commission at Chicago on the 25th and 26th.

—In the French Chamber of Deputies on the 29th the socialist bill limiting working time in the mines to eight hours a day was adopted in

principle, and the details are now under discussion.

—The supreme court of Ohio rendered a decision on the 24th in favor of the "Nickel Plate" railroad in a suit brought against it by Frank Shaffer, discharged and kept out of railroad employment for joining a strike, who had sued for damages for blacklisting.

—Dr. Felix Adler, of New York, will give a series of public lectures under the auspices of the Chicago Ethical society, in Steinway hall, on the 9th, 12th and 16th of February. His subject is "Outlines of Twentieth Century Morality." The three lectures deal respectively with the new attitude toward others, toward marriage, and toward wealth.

—On the 27th Attorney General Douglas, of Minnesota, argued before the supreme court of the United States the application of the state of Minnesota (see p. 634) for leave to begin original suit in that court to prevent the merger of the Northwestern railroad systems into the Northern Securities company of New Jersey. He was assisted by M. D. Munn, of Minnesota, and opposed by W. D. Guthrie, of New York, on behalf of the railway companies, and by former United States Attorney General John W. Griggs, in behalf of the Northern Securities Co. Decision was reserved.

PRESS OPINIONS.

THE SUGAR TARIFF.

Salt Lake Tribune (Rep.), Jan. 24.—We have done a great deal for Cuba, at costly sacrifices in blood and coin. There is no reason why we should continue our losses to her gain.

Nashville Daily News (Dem.), Jan. 25.—It is hoped that the majority in congress, for the sake of Cuba and the honor of the American people, to say nothing of its own escape from stultification, will pay no heed to the wiles of the beet sugar people.

Chicago Tribune (Rep.), Jan. 27.—Reduce the duties. We have incurred obligations in Cuba. We must discharge those obligations or stand convicted of something so much like oppression that the most ingenious casuist would be puzzled to find the difference.

Indianapolis Journal (Rep.), Jan. 28.—It would be interesting to have a statement from the beet sugar manufacturers showing wherein their own claim is so essentially just and so conspicuously different from begging. If Cuba is asking for charity what are they doing?

Philadelphia Press (Rep.), Jan. 28.—All called to act on this question must put aside all but the broad principle, policy and practice which swayed the nation during the Spanish war, and must continue to direct it as Cuban independence is crowned with Cuban prosperity by reducing the duty on Cuban sugar.

Kansas City Star (Ind.), Jan. 28.—As the United States is the natural market for the island, most of the business would come to this country. A liberal reciprocity policy would build up this enormous trade for the United States. To continue to close American ports to Cuba would strangle this commerce in its infancy.

New York Tribune (Rep.), Jan. 27.—The sugar interests of Louisiana follow the lead of the beet sugar manufacturers in