

NEWS NARRATIVE

How to use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives: Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue so until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginning to date.

Week ending Thursday, March 8.

Russian reorganization.

Elections for the National Assembly to convene in St. Petersburg in May (p. 805) were ordered by Imperial ukase on the 5th. They are to begin on the 8th of April in 28 provinces of central Russia. On the 27th of April they are to take place in 17 other provinces of central Russia and the Don regions, and on the 3d of May in two other provinces.

The ukase of the 5th was followed by publication on the 6th of the full text of the Imperial manifesto relative to the functions of the National Assembly. As this manifesto is cabled—

The composition of the Council of the Empire, or upper house of the National Assembly, with one-half appointed by the Emperor and twenty-six elected from the nobility and clergy, not counting scattering supporters from other classes, seems to insure a conservative if not a pliable majority in the Council to block the National Assembly, should the majority of the latter be in opposition to the Crown. The government carefully retains the power to promulgate "temporary" laws during recesses of the parliament, and as the parliament is subject to dissolution by Imperial ukase the government is thus in a position in time of stress to rid itself of an obnoxious legislature and proclaim such laws as it deems necessary to meet the emergency. A feature of the law which seems effectually to bar "reds" from membership in the National Assembly is a provision exacting from persons elected an oath of fidelity to "emperor, autocrat and holy Russia." The most significant article, however, is on retaining certain provisions of an existing law which is mentioned only by number. This innocent-looking provision is far-reaching, placing important powers beyond the jurisdiction of the parliament. It consigns to existing commissions of the Council of the Empire, composed solely of members appointed by the Crown, for consideration the following:

Reports of the minister of finance upon the state of the treasury; charges of malfeasance against members of the Council

of the Empire, ministers, governors general and commanders in chief of land and sea forces; the establishment of stock companies with special privileges; questions relating to entailed estates, titles of nobility, etc.

The Bouvier ministry, which came into power in France about a year ago (vol. vii, p. 98), resigned on the 7th. The occasion was its defeat on a vote of approval which it had demanded of the Chamber of Deputies on the same day. Being severely criticized in debate for sanguinary violence in enforcing the anti-Catholic laws (p. 764), the Premier retorted that the Ministry was in duty bound to enforce the law with prudence, tact and wisdom, in harmony with public tranquility, and yet without weakness, and demanded the adoption of a resolution approving those declarations. The resolution was defeated by a combination of Opposition influences—Clericals, Nationals and Socialists—and by a vote of 267 to 234. After deciding to suspend enforcement of the anti-Catholic laws pending the organization of a new ministry the Ministry immediately resigned.

Congress and railroad rates.

The debate in the United States Senate over the Hepburn bill for the regulation of railroad charges, begun on the 28th by Senator Foraker (Republican) in opposition (p. 803), has been continued, the principal debater being Senator Dolliver (Republican), who, in speaking for the bill, predicted that if Congress should not agree upon a bill regulating railroads the country would be called upon to face the problem of government ownership. As Raymond, the Washington correspondent of the Chicago Tribune, observes the drift of the debate,—

the railroads are fighting now for the protection of their watered stock and are not afraid of a law permitting the Interstate Commerce Commission to fix rates provided it bases its action upon capital stock and not upon the actual cost of transportation. . . . I have been assured on excellent authority that the whole purpose of the railroads is to get into the rate bill as it is finally passed a specific section not only authorizing but actually directing the Circuit Courts to see that the rate is "remunerative," on a basis either of the capital stock of a road as it now exists or as it may be increased in the future. There is a vast amount

of difference between a rate which is confiscatory on the actual value of a railroad and one which will pay dividends on watered stock. If the railroads were forced to depend upon their constitutional rights the only question to be presented to the courts would be whether the specified rate confiscated the property of the railroad.

La Follette's defeat in the Senate.

Senator La Follette (p. 803) was defeated in the Senate on the 2d in his effort to prohibit the union of railroad with coal and asphalt landed interests in that part of the Indian Territory belonging to the Five Civilized Tribes which is about to be subjected to private ownership. The spirit of his work is indicated by his speech on this subject upon the Senate floor in which he said:

I believe that it is of greater good to go down to defeat again and again rather than write improper laws upon the statute books.

Defeat of the Philippine tariff bill.

The bill for reducing tariffs between the United States and the Philippines, which passed the House on the 16th of February (p. 693), was killed in Senate committee on the 2d. The committee voted against reporting favorably, against reporting without recommendation, and against reporting adversely. This pigeon holes the bill.

The divorce-law congress.

An official report of the Congress on Unfair Divorce Laws (p. 803), rendered by the Illinois delegation to the Governor on the 3d, explains that—

a committee on resolutions will meet in Philadelphia within the month and draft statutes embodying the principles agreed upon at the eight sessions of the congress. Gov. Pennypacker of Pennsylvania, president of the congress, will then call another session, at which the drafts will be approved and recommended for adoption. The causes of divorce which the congress has decided should be embodied in a uniform code are: Adultery, desertion, felony, cruelty, physical incapacity, and habitual drunkenness. Though more than a dozen other offenses are recognized as grounds for divorce in different States, the congress did not approve them or consider it possible to secure their general adoption. As to national legislation, the following was the view expressed: "It is the sense of the congress that no Federal divorce law is feasible, and that all efforts to