

State, the question of assessments has been much discussed during the past few months. For this awakening of public attention to this most important matter, Governor Blanchard deserves great credit. He was here recently, and in a group of leading citizens, who had called at the hotel, he spoke with great earnestness and intelligence, showing how much more sensible in every way is a proper assessment with lower rates than a ridiculously low assessment with high rates. During the conversation the interesting fact came out that the upper and poorer lands of the State, which are more subdivided, are assessed relatively much higher than the rich alluvial and valley lands which are held in large plantations. But this is an old story.

One is not long in Alexandria without hearing the name of General Sherman. He was, at the outbreak of the civil war, superintendent of the military academy, the ruins of which may still be seen some three miles out of Pineville. Mr. Jonas Rosenthal, an old inhabitant, and the present enthusiastic and efficient president of the school board, told me that Sherman often loafed in his store and told good stories. He says that Sherman declared he would never fight against the South, but afterwards wrote that the pressure was so great he had to go in.

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## NEWS NARRATIVE

Week ending Thursday, July 27.

### The British ministerial crisis.

The Speaker's ruling of the 18th in the British House of Commons adverse to the Ministry on its proposal regarding Irish representation (p. 248), was followed on the 21st by a defeat of the Ministry in the Commons on a question also affecting its Irish policy. Mr. Redmond, the leader of the Irish party in the House, had offered an amendment to the Irish land act (vol. vi, p. 282). It proposed a reduction of the land commission. This amendment, opposed by the Ministry and supported by the Opposition, was adopted by a vote of 199 to 196, a result which was followed by cries for the resignation of the Ministry.

After this defeat, the Prime Minister refused to declare his future action, and on the 22d only a short session was held, Mr. Bannerman, the Liberal leader, having moved an early adjournment

on the ground that it would be unseemly to proceed with business while the Ministry was considering its position. The Prime Minister insisted upon doing some business, but only enough to avoid Mr. Bannerman's implication. In the evening the Prime Minister had an audience with the King, and upon the reassembling of the Commons on the 24th he argued from the floor, in a speech citing precedents, that such defeats as that of the 21st had never been regarded as ground for resignation or dissolution, and announced that the Ministry did not purpose either to resign or to dissolve Parliament because of that day's occurrence. He declared that it would be a grave evil if the tenure of ministers was made dependent on such votes, and hoped the practice would never prevail of allowing a ministry united in itself and possessing the confidence of the majority of the House to abandon its post merely in consequence of such a vote. In all proceedings since, the Ministry has maintained a majority of about 60.

### Norway and Sweden.

The special joint committee of the two houses of the Swedish Riksdag, to which had been referred the Ministerial bill for adjusting the details of separation of Norway from Sweden (p. 198) delivered its report on the 25th. The report declares it to be self-evident that the union was not dissolved by the action of the Norwegian Storting, since—

a contract cannot be broken by one party's parliament. Therefore the Storting's action can only be considered as Norway's declaration that she does not desire any longer to maintain it. It is for Sweden to decide what action is necessary. According to the laws she would be fully justified in using the necessary force to re-establish the union. This would seem to be the natural course in the first excitement, but reflection shows that it would be against the true interests of Sweden. There was great mutual advantage in the union, but its maintenance by force would make the union a source of weakness instead of strength. Sweden should not therefore employ force, but must insist that its permission is necessary to dissolution. Sweden must agree to the cancellation of the act of union on certain conditions, insisting as a preliminary on a satisfactory settlement of all af-

fairs mutually affecting the two countries.

Following are the conditions of separation outlined by the report as feasible:

1. The establishment of a zone on each side of the frontier separating the kingdoms, within which the existing fortifications shall be razed and new fortifications may not be erected.

2. The right of pasturing reindeer belonging to Swedish Laplanders in North Norway.

3. That the transit trade through both countries shall be secured against unjustifiable obstruction.

4. That the status of Sweden in respect to foreign powers as established by treaty shall be clearly defined so that Sweden shall be completely freed from responsibility for Norway to other states.

The report emphatically disapproves of any action by Sweden, either in the direction of a dissolution of the union or recognition of Norway's independence, until the Norwegians have had an opportunity through elections or a plebiscite of expressing their wishes. If the popular vote of Norway favors a dissolution, the Storting must then, in the view of the committee, legally approach Sweden to this end, and if a satisfactory agreement can be reached the committee recommends Sweden's assent. In conclusion, the committee's report refuses to recommend that the Riksdag authorize the cabinet to negotiate with Norway, as demanded by the Ministerial bill referred to it, but proposes instead that if Norway legally approaches Sweden, in accordance with the committee's proposal, negotiations be opened.

In consequence of the adverse report on their bill, the Swedish ministers resigned on the day of the delivery of the report, the 24th.

### Action of the Russian Zemstvos congress.

No official force has been exerted to suppress the Zemstvos congress in session at Moscow (p. 247), and on the 20th, by a vote of 220 to 7, the congress ordered the first reading of a constitution for Russia, which had been proposed by its committee. The principal features of this draft are:

1. An elective bi-cameral parliament, representing the whole Empire regardless of creed or race, and composed of 840 members.