

American ambassador at Rome, J. G. A. Leishman, dated March 23:

Mgr. Kennedy, rector of the American Catholic College, in reply to an inquiry which I caused to be made, requests that the following communication be transmitted to you! "The Holy Father will be delighted to grant an audience to Mr. Roosevelt on April 5, and hopes that nothing will arise to prevent it, such as the much regretted incident which made the reception of Mr. Fairbanks impossible."

Replying to Mr. Leishman on March 25, Mr. Roosevelt said:

Please present the following to Mgr. Kennedy: "It would be a real pleasure to me to be presented to the Holy Father, for whom I entertain high respect, both personally and as the head of a great church. I fully recognize his entire right to receive or not receive whomsoever he chooses, for any reason that seems good to him, and if he does not receive me I shall not for a moment question the propriety of his action. On the other hand, I in turn must decline to make any stipulations or submit to any conditions which in any way would limit my freedom of conduct. I trust that on April 5 he will find it convenient to receive me."

On March 28 Mr. Roosevelt at Cairo received a cablegram from Mr. Leishman, giving a message from Mgr. Kennedy, which concluded by saying:

His Holiness would be much pleased to grant an audience to Mr. Roosevelt, for whom he entertains high esteem, both personally and as the former President of the United States. His Holiness recognizes Mr. Roosevelt's entire right to full freedom of conduct. On the other hand, in view of the circumstances for which neither His Holiness nor Mr. Roosevelt is responsible, an audience could not take place except on the understanding expressed in the former message.

The following day Mr. Roosevelt sent another message to the American ambassador, saying:

The proposed presentation is, of course, now impossible.

Through an editorial message to the Outlook from Rome on the 3d, Mr. Roosevelt issued an appeal on the subject to the American people in which he said:

I am sure that the great majority of my fellow citizens, Catholics quite as much as Protestants, will feel that I acted in the only way possible for an American to act, and because of this very fact I most earnestly hope that the incident will be treated in a matter of course way as merely personal, and, above all, as not warranting the slightest exhibition of rancor or bitterness. . . . Bitter comment and criticism, acrimonious attack and defense are not only profitless but harmful, and to seize upon such an incident as this as an occasion for controversy would be wholly indefensible and should be frowned upon by Catholics and Protestants alike and all good Americans.

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#### The British Parliament.

When Mr. Asquith moved on the 29th that the

House of Commons go into committee of the whole to consider the Ministerial resolutions abolishing the absolute veto of the House of Lords (p. 297), he traced the course of events culminating in the Lords' interference with the Budget of 1909, and declared that under the circumstances the general elections of last winter had given the House of Commons express authority to bring that state of things to an end. The King's veto, he said, was as dead as Queen Anne, and the absolute veto of the Lords must follow before the road is cleared for the advent of a full grown and unfettered democracy. Mr. Balfour, the Tory leader, characterized the resolutions as "the most absurd experiment in constitution making upon which any government ever embarked," and intimated that if they became a law, the Tories would promptly repeal it when they returned to power. Mr. Redmond, leader of the Irish progressives, congratulated Mr. Asquith upon the substance of his resolutions, and said they would be supported heartily by himself and his friends. Winston Churchill, now the Home Secretary, closed his speech on the Lords' veto on the floor of the Commons on the 31st in a manner which is regarded as highly significant, coming from a cabinet minister. He declared that when the veto resolutions were disposed of in the Commons, the Ministry would advance with the Budget, regardless of the consequences. Unless the House of Commons carried the Budget, it was idle, he said, to look to the King or to the country to carry the veto bill; but he predicted that at the proper time and under the proper circumstances the Ministry would succeed in carrying both the veto and the Budget to the steps of the throne. "The time for action," he concluded, "has arrived. Since the Lords have used their veto to affront the prerogative of the Crown, and have invaded the rights of the Commons, it has become necessary that the Crown and the Commons, acting together, should restore the balance of the Constitution and restrict forever the veto power of the House of Lords."

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Meanwhile a Tory motion to amend the resolutions (offered by Sir Robert Finlay), was defeated on the 4th by 357 to 251—a majority of 106 in an attendance of 608 out of a total membership of 670. The Finlay amendment as reported by cable declared that "a strong and efficient second chamber is necessary and that the Commons are willing to consider proposals for the reform of the present second chamber, but decline to proceed with proposals that would destroy the usefulness of any second chamber and thus remove the only safeguard against any great changes being made by the Government of the day without the consent and against the wishes of a majority of the electors." After the Finlay amendment had been rejected by

the large majority noted above, the motion of Mr. Asquith to go into committee of the whole on the veto resolutions was adopted without division. April 14 had already been fixed for the conclusion of the committee stages on the passage of the resolutions, and on the 6th, by a majority of 84, closure rules for the committee were adopted.

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#### The United States and Liberia.

It will be remembered that the United States sent out a commission of investigation to Liberia a year ago (vol. xii, pp. 395, 492) in response to an appeal from that disorganized little Negro republic on the west coast of Africa (vol. xi, p. 203). Newspaper anticipations of the report of the Commission appeared in the American press in January, but the report was not transmitted to Congress by the President until the 25th of March. The Chicago Inter Ocean describes the Commission as objecting to any co-operation between Great Britain and the United States for the reform of the disorders of Liberia. The Commission makes the following recommendations:

(1) That the United States extend its aid to Liberia in the prompt settlement of its boundary disputes.

(2) That the United States enable Liberia to refund its debt by assuming as a guarantee for the payment of obligations under such an arrangement, the control and collection of Liberian customs.

(3) That the United States lend its assistance to the reform of the internal finances.

(4) That this nation aid in organizing and drilling a competent constabulary or frontier police.

(5) That the United States establish and maintain a research station there.

(6) That the United States reopen the question of establishing a coaling station in Liberia.

The Commission calls attention to the fact that the Liberians have never resorted to revolution. Also, Liberia is not bankrupt. Her troubles are external, rather than internal—coming from the pressure of neighboring English and French spheres of influence.

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Following close upon the heels of this tardy transmission to Congress of the Commission's report, with the consequent publicity of its recommendations as to American intervention, has come news in regard to the lining up of American warships on the Liberian coast. The dispatches in regard to their flight across the Atlantic assume an American protectorate. Since the 31st dispatches have been coming from Liberia by the way of Liverpool, to the effect that the Liberians are having trouble with the natives, and that assistance offered by a German gunboat has been indignantly rejected by the Liberians. Berlin reports state that the disturbances are slight, but that the situation as revealed by the refusal of Ger-

man assistance, is such that a United States protectorate in Liberia may be regarded "as good as settled."

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#### Significant Supreme Court Decisions.

Three decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States, made on the 4th, are of serious political importance. One of them nullified as unconstitutional the statute of Nebraska requiring railroads to build switches to all grain elevators along their tracks upon request. This was held to be a taking of property without compensation. Another nullified as unconstitutional the Arkansas statute imposing penalties upon inter-State railroads for failure to supply sufficient cars for inter-State traffic. The third decides that the business of a correspondence school with pupils in various States is inter-State commerce and therefore subject to Federal regulation.

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#### Prospective Coal Strike.

The agreement between the bituminous coal miners and mine operators having expired on the 31st, and a joint conference having dissolved without reaching a new agreement, the special convention of the United Mine Workers of North America, in session at Cincinnati, adjourned on the 29th. Several points of disagreement were involved, but a concession of an increase in wages of 5 cents a ton on pick-mine-screen coal, with proportionate advances for other methods of mining and for outside labor, is made a pre-requisite to negotiations on the other questions. If this is conceded, there will be no strike pending further negotiations; but if this concession is denied, the miners will not return to work after the expiration of their contract. That was the situation on the 29th, and no change has taken place since, except that on April 1st, their contract having expired the day before, the organized coal miners of the bituminous fields did not return to work.

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#### Socialism in the Milwaukee Election.

On the eve of the Milwaukee election of the 5th, it was predicted by Socialists that their candidate for Mayor, Emil Seidl, would be elected, and reported by Republicans that the contest would be between Mr. Seidl and their own candidate, Dr. Beffel. Early in the campaign the election of the Democratic candidate, V. J. Schoenecker, was considered certain. The election resulted in the choice of Mr. Seidl (Socialist) for Mayor and a strong Socialist majority for the Council. Victor Berger, a Socialist of national reputation, is an alderman at large. The plurality for Mayor-elect Seidl was 8,000 over the Democratic candidate and 16,000 over the Republican.