

NEWS NARRATIVE

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 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 beginnings to date.

Week ending Wednesday, August 29.

The Czar's Agrarian Policy.

The radicals continue to terrorize (p. 487). A bomb thrown or dropped in the country house of Mr. Stolypin, the prime minister (p. 394), on the 25th, killed or fatally wounded 32 persons, and seriously and perhaps fatally injured about 25 more, including two of Mr. Stolypin's children. Mr. Stolypin himself escaped with a few scratches. His death sentence, imposed by revolutionists, was found in the pocket of one of two conspirators killed by the explosion, two others being wounded. On the 26th General Min was shot to death by a young woman in the railway station at Peterhof, and an attempt was made to kill General Kaulbars in Odessa. On the 27th General Liarlarski, acting military Governor General of Warsaw, while driving through the streets of Warsaw, was fatally shot by a young man. Press dispatches also relate that the soldiers of the 11th and 12th Sapper battalions, in summer camp near Odessa, mutinied on the 23d. They assembled in political meeting, sang "The Marseillaise," and passed a resolution not to fire upon the revolutionists if ordered to do so. Officers of the battalions who tried to break up the meeting, were beaten by the soldiers.

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In haste to stem the rising tide of revolution expressed through this terrorism, the Czar's government has begun a system of land distribution (pp. 443, 461), by which it is hoped to win the peasants to the support of the government at the coming elections. According to the dispatches the Czar, by ukase, transferred on the 27th 4,500,000 acres of crown appanage lands to the Peasants' Bank. The Bank is to sell the land to peasants on 33 or 60 years' time. It is announced that 10,000,000 additional acres will further be transferred shortly. The Peasant Bank will issue to the Czar and the grand dukes in return for the land a "nominative scrip," and a dispatch says that in effect the imperial family will thus simply convert their land holdings into 6 per cent. securities, and be relieved of all the expense of management of crown lands and appanages, which absorbs at present a large share of their revenue. In regard to the peasants' side of the transaction it is said that the "period of amortization through installment payments" has not yet been fixed. The majority opinion favors thirty-three years, but smaller payments, covering a period as high as sixty years, also are advocated. Until redeemed the debentures and scrip will constitute a

blanket mortgage. In regard to this step the Chicago Record-Herald says editorially:

It is interesting to point out that, while the government is planning agrarian legislation on its own account, on such questions as popular instruction, personal liberty and civil equality it is merely preparing bills for submission to the Douma. These things can wait, but the peasant's confidence must be won at once, or the elections will go entirely against the government. The peasant wants land, and will send deputies to get it at any cost. Hence the anxiety of the government.

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The Drift Toward Constitutionalism.

Rumors of a crisis in Persia—the Shah's tottering authority, an empty treasury, revolts—come in the same dispatches with information of crowding movements on the part of England, Germany and Russia, who are "preparing to protect their interests when a crisis arrives." But in spite of the danger of national dissolution impending, a constitutional government in Persia (p. 491) seems to be an accomplished fact. And it is a new thing in governments—a constitutional government steeped in orientalism. A special dispatch to the Chicago Inter Ocean thus describes it:

By the terms of the new Persian constitution the Koran, the book of Mohammed and scripture of the Islamic faith, is made the supreme law of the land, corresponding to the constitution of the United States. Every law must be shown to be in conformity with the teachings of the Koran or it is ineffective. As the Koran is written in Arabic a commission is to be elected at the first session of the new legislative body, which is to be called the House of Justice, to translate it into Persian. Supplementary and explanatory paragraphs will be worked out, by which the rights of the people will be defined and guaranteed by the law, including the full liberty of speech. The constitution proper consists of ten articles, whereby hereafter the Shah will be a constitutional monarch, and legislative functions will belong to the people, among whom class differences will be abolished.

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Even far-away China has heard the slogan cry of constitutional government. It was reported from Peking under date of the 22d that Chinese commissioners who have recently returned from Europe and the United States have recommended a gradual change to a constitutional government, taking ten or fifteen years for educative preparation for it. Under date of the 27th it was reported that the Dowager Empress had appointed a committee to consider the subject. Discussions at Peking are on the line of organizing an upper house of parliament from among the Chinese officials as the beginning of a parliamentary government, and afterward in some years electing a lower house of parliament.

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Iceland, too, is moving in the current. The large island lying in the north Atlantic just on the edge of the Arctic circle, as the chief of the dependencies of Denmark, already has constitutional government. It has even its own constitution and administration, under a charter which came into force in 1874. Legislative power is vested in the Althing, with 34 members elected by popular suffrage, and six nominated by the King of Denmark. A minister for Iceland, nominated by the King, and residing at the