

NEWS

The debt-collecting war of the European allies against Venezuela (p. 711) has come now to an end, all the protocols having been formally signed at the British embassy in Washington on the 13th. A separate agreement was made with each of the allies.

As reported by the Washington dispatches, the allies agreed to raise the blockade on the 14th, and return to Venezuela her captured ships; Venezuela making no claim, however, for the two ships that were sunk by the Germans. It was stipulated also that the question of preferential payment of the Venezuelan debts shall be submitted to The Hague tribunal, and that the non-combatant creditor nations shall have rights of representation at the hearings. Great Britain received \$27,500 in cash, upon the signing of the protocol; Italy and Germany are to receive the same amount in two payments, one at 30 and the other at 60 days; and Germany is to receive immediately, in five monthly payments, enough to bring the grand total up to \$340,000. All claims not already adjusted are to be referred to tribunals composed equally of representatives of the claimants and Venezuela, umpires to be appointed by President Roosevelt. As a guarantee for the payment of claims that are or shall be allowed, Venezuela pledges 30 per cent. of the customs receipts of La Guayra and Porto Cabello, from March 1, to be deposited with the representatives of the Bank of England at Caracas and there retained until The Hague tribunal decides upon the question of preferential treatment, after which the accumulated sums are to be paid over according to the various adjustments. In case of default on the part of Venezuela it is agreed that Belgium shall appoint an administrator of the Venezuelan customs houses at the two ports named above.

Pursuant to their agreement, the allies raised the blockade on the 14th. All their war vessels had sailed away on the 15th, and accumulations of goods began to flow through the Venezuelan customs houses. Of the duties on these goods the allies will get no share, as the 30 per cent. agreement does not go into effect until the 1st of March.

The United States has agreed with Venezuela upon a tribunal to adjust the American claims. It is to consist of two commissioners, one representing each country; the queen of the Netherlands is to be umpire; and the tribunal is to meet at Caracas on the 1st of June.

To provide for the obligations imposed by the protocols of peace, President Castro issued a presidential decree on the 17th by which he increased all import duties 30 per cent. and added specific duties on exports of coffee, cocoa and hides.

Rumors of war in the Balkans (p. 712) have multiplied while the war upon Venezuela has been drawing to its close. As reports from the Balkan region have it, there is great unrest in Macedonia, and open rebellion of the Macedonians against Turkey is almost certainly set for the opening of Spring. This would not signify the probability of a general European war, as it is said to do, but for the "Near Eastern" question—namely, the problem of driving the Turk out of Europe and administering upon his European estate. Otherwise Europe's interest would be slight in a Macedonian uprising. As it is, however, anything that threatens disturbance in Turkey forebodes a general continental conflict. Each nation is anxious to extend its own jurisdiction, yet is "committed" to maintaining a "balance of power," lest it may lose some of its own importance through such extensions by its neighbors. For that reason, all the Powers other than Turkey are forbidden by treaty to sail warships through the Bosphorus. But in September Russia asked permission of Turkey to sail four unarmed torpedo destroyers through that strait into the Black sea, whereupon Great Britain promptly addressed a note to the Sultan protesting against the proposed violation of treaty, and gave notice that if Russian vessels were allowed to pass Great Britain reserved the right to the same privilege. Turkey took the subject under advisement, but finally allowed the Russian vessels to pass. This incident supplements the Macedonian question. As one of the correspondents writes, all sorts of dry tinder are littered along the slopes of the Balkans and only a little spark may make a great flame.

Macedonia is a collection of more or less Christian districts in Turkey,

where maladministration is reported to be extreme. By the treaty of 1878, made at Berlin in settlement of the war between Russia and Turkey, Turkey was bound to introduce immediate reforms in Macedonia, establishing religious liberty. But this has not been done. A committee of Macedonians has consequently established headquarters at Sofia, in Bulgaria, for the purpose of agitating for these reforms and with the view of ultimately securing annexation of the Macedonian districts to Bulgaria. Roumania and Serbia are understood to disapprove the operations of the committee, fearing they may result in an extension of Bulgarian power and influence. The committee works secretly, of course, fearing on one hand the authority of Turkey, which is suzerain over Bulgaria, and on the other the interference of the Bulgarian government itself, which dare not openly countenance the annexation movement. Recently Bulgaria has taken steps, though her good faith is questioned, to suppress the committee.

Reports of uprisings have been gathering in volume for two years, and latterly they have been supplemented by reports of military activity on the part of the large powers affected. Diplomatic movements are also afoot. On the 10th of January it was reported from London that Russia and Austria, acting in concert, were about to submit to the other European Powers a scheme for the amelioration of the condition of the Christians in Macedonia; and that if the Powers approved their plan, it would be pressed upon Turkey by Austro-Russian diplomacy, coupled with representations that, if the Sultan did not acquiesce, Austria-Hungary would occupy the sphere of interest assigned to them by the Berlin treaty, while Russia would keep the Balkan principalities in restraint pending the perfection of the new regime. Later dispatches, also from London, stated that Italy had been consulted about these joint proceedings and had promised her support; and that the contemplated arrangements included the assembling of an international congress to be supported by a demonstration of European warships in the Gulf of Salonica. On the 17th a Paris dispatch announced that the Austrian ambassador to Constantinople was then about to present to the Sultan the Austrian note demand-

ing the proposed reforms, and that the Russian note, identical in terms, would soon follow. The terms of the notes were declared by the same dispatch to have been submitted to France, Great Britain, Italy and Germany, and to have been approved in principle by all except Germany. A similar dispatch emanated on the same day from Vienna. It differed only in stating that the Austrian note would be presented on the 19th, and in its more abundant details. The reform proposals, according to the Vienna dispatch, are chiefly of an administrative and financial nature, such as Turkey heretofore has promised. One new feature is the appointment of a governor for Macedonia, not necessarily a Christian, who shall have authority to act without specific instructions from Constantinople in every contingency.

These troubles were made the subject of one part of King Edward's speech from the throne at the reopening of the British parliament. After the adjournment of December 16 (p. 600) parliament reopens on the 17th of the current month, on which occasion the King was accompanied by the Queen and all the officers of state. Referring to the Balkan situation, the King in his speech said:

The condition of the European provinces of Turkey gives cause for serious anxiety. We have used our best efforts to impress upon the Sultan and his ministers the urgent need of practical and well considered measures of reform. The governments of Austria-Hungary and Russia have had under consideration what reforms would be desirable that the powers who were parties to the treaty of Berlin should recommend to the Sultan for immediate adoption. The papers dealing with the subject will be laid before you.

In the House of Lords, after the King's speech, in which the Venezuelan question had been touched upon, the Duke of Devonshire, speaking for the ministry, said that Great Britain accepts the Monroe doctrine unreservedly, and defended the action of the ministry in coercing Venezuela on the ground that not to have done so would have tended to prejudice every civilized power against the Monroe doctrine. In the House of Commons Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal leader, spoke in criticism. He said that information was desired regarding Venezuela and Macedonia.

In Venezuela, he said, the cloud happily had passed, but it was a black cloud and one which many people thought might have been avoided. It might have had dangerous consequences, and it was the duty of the country to inquire how it had been led into such a difficulty. He commented questioningly in this connection on the fact that Germany was not mentioned in the King's speech regarding Venezuela. There were people in England, he explained, who were of opinion that Great Britain should not associate with Germany under any circumstances, but he did not sympathize with that view, although he was opposed to cooperation with Germany in a matter like the Venezuelan. He characterized Germany as strong but rough. If there ever had been a case for arbitration, he argued, the Venezuelan affair was one; and if this course had been adopted in the first place a great precedent would have been established towards the peaceful settlement of international controversies.

One of the important measures likely to be brought before parliament at this session is a bill advocated by the British labor unions for protection against recent court decisions holding unions responsible in damages for business injuries caused by strikes. This bill proposes a legislative definition of the rights of unions, which shall include the right of peaceful "picketing." It would also amend the conspiracy law so as to make it lawful for several strikers acting together to do anything which a single striker may lawfully do when acting alone; and would protect union funds from attachment for damages caused by union members in committing acts unauthorized by the union.

The arbitration proceedings in the Pennsylvania anthracite strike (p. 713) have terminated. George F. Baer, president of the Reading company, began the final summing up for the employers on the 12th. Toward its close he made the following offer:

That the rate of wages now paid shall be the minimum basis for the next three years; that from Nov. 1, 1902, to April 1, 1903, all employes, other than contract miners, shall be paid an additional 5 per cent. That on and after April 1, 1903, for each 5 cents in excess of \$4.50 per ton on the average price realized for white ash coal in the harbor of New York, on all sizes above pea,

wages shall be advanced 1 per cent; the wages to rise or fall 1 per cent. for each 5 cents increase or decrease in prices; but they shall never fall during the next three years below the present basis.

Mr. Baer was followed on the same day by Clarence S. Darrow, attorney for the miners, who made the final speech in the case. He opened with this response to Mr. Baer's offer:

We have seen the President of the United States appoint this commission to settle this difficulty and then, this afternoon, in the last hour of this proceeding, the man more responsible than any other comes before this commission and says: "We will do exactly that which these men demanded nine months before." Why did not Mr. Baer go to John Mitchell nine months ago as he came to this commission to-day?

And later, referring again to Mr. Baer's offer, but in connection with representations of the employers as to the high wages the miners have been getting, Mr. Darrow responded:

If, at the end of all this time and labor, he is willing to give us 5 or 10 per cent. upon the figures that he says correctly represent our earnings we will be very glad indeed to take it. From the beginning of this strike until the end, whatever you may say about whether the miners knew what they were getting or not, these operators have never given out a correct figure or made a statement that would stand the light of day for a single moment when they talked to the public.

He went on to show, however, that—the 1 per cent raise on 5 cents suggested by Mr. Baer would give the operators an increase of 3½ per cent. in profits and the miners only 1½ on the \$4.50 basis.

Mr. Darrow concluded on the 14th, whereupon the commission adjourned for the purpose of considering their decision. Three days later, on the 16th, Mr. Darrow, Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Lloyd were given a public reception at the Auditorium by the labor organizations of Chicago.

Partly as the result of his work before the arbitration commission, partly because of his remarkably large vote last fall for member of the lower House of the Illinois legislature (p. 482), and partly because of his advocacy of municipal ownership of street car systems, now a burning issue in Chicago, a movement has been started to make Mr. Darrow an independent candidate for mayor at the April election. A large independent committee has been organized. Mr. Darrow has not yet accepted. He