

IRISH HOME RULE

Important Measure is Introduced by Gerald Balfour.

INTENDED TO HELP THE EMERALD ISLE

Most Valuable Bill Since that of Gladstone.

NULLIFIES THE INFLUENCE OF LANDLORDS

District Councils to Be Elected by Popular Franchise.

TRANSFERS POWER TO THE CATHOLICS

Bill Sweeps Away the Old Order of Things Absolutely—All Parties in Ireland Are Inclined to Accept It.

LONDON, Feb. 21.—(New York World Cablegram—Special Telegram.)—The bill introduced this evening in the House of Commons by Chief Secretary Gerald Balfour for the relief of the Irish county government is the most valuable and important measure offered for Ireland since Gladstone's home rule bill.

The Balfour bill abolishes this system, replacing it by county and district councils elected by popular franchise in England. Owing to the high franchise heretofore existing in small towns in the north of Ireland, their government has been monopolized by Protestants and unionists.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR IRELAND.

Ministry Introduces Its Bill in the Commons.

LONDON, Feb. 21.—The House of Commons was crowded today when the chief secretary for Ireland, Gerald Balfour, introduced the Irish local government bill. In so doing, Mr. Balfour said he thought it possible the new order of things would at first seem to be a failure, but he believed it would work through failure to the success which it deserved.

The government, Mr. Balfour said, proposed that the local administration be distributed between county councils, urban and rural district councils, and boards of election, the election of which would be by parliamentary franchise, with the addition of peers and women.

For the sake of convenience, Mr. Balfour further explained, the boundaries of the existing unions, and also of the counties, would be modified and the county councils would take over the duties of grand juries, but only in broad matters, and would not include criminal jurisdiction, or questions of compensation for malicious injuries.

The elections for county and district councils would be triennial and all would retire together. The county councils would be the sole rate-collecting authority and would control the expenditure. They would also be responsible for dealing with exceptional distress and would decide when the requests of boards of guardians for outdoor relief should be granted.

Mr. Balfour also pointed out that the bill provided that the occupier was liable to both the county and poor rate, whether in a town or rural district, which would involve a readjustment of rates on an equal basis to be granted from the imperial exchequer as an agricultural grant.

John Morley, chief secretary for Ireland in the late liberal administration, welcomed the bill as "being a genuine democratic effort."

Mr. Dillon, chairman of the Irish parliamentary party, said he thought the measure was an immense advance over the bill of 1892 and fulfilled the promise of the English or Scotch measures. He pointed out that the control of the police was not given to the councils. Nevertheless, he added, the bill would do much good and his party would endeavor to execute it to good faith.

John Redmond, the Parnellite leader, also welcomed the bill, but criticized some points of the measure. He added that if it worked successfully it would be an unanswerable argument in favor of home rule.

ensive and ostentatious manner. During the week eight railway truck loads of military material were paraded through the streets of Johannesburg and carried under escort of an artillery detachment to the fort on the hill outside of town.

INVASION WOULD MEAN WAR.

England and France Will Have to Act Cautiously.

LONDON, Feb. 21.—Great activity is manifested by the colonial office, in the West African department, and among the high military officers who are going out to the Lagos Hinterland. The latter are inclining to discredit the news which reached Akassa, Niger coast protectorate, yesterday to the effect that two French expeditions are advancing toward Sokoto, capital of the sultanate of that name, which is within the British sphere of influence, but add that if the news should be confirmed it must be followed by a declaration of war.

The St. James Gazette, commenting on the subject, says that the expedition of Sokoto is directed from Paris it admits of but one interpretation, and the seriousness of the situation is increased when it is remembered that these invasions of British territory must have been planned weeks ago, before the present ferment in Paris over Dreyfus. It would appear that the French cabinet, foreseeing the revelations which should be caused by the trial of M. Zola, had determined to bring affairs in Africa to a crisis to secure a renewal of its popularity.

Replying to a question in the House of Commons today Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, secretary of state for the colonies, said he received a dispatch from Lieutenant Piche, commanding at Lokohaj, stating that he had received information that four French officers with 100 men had arrived at Arangou on the Sokoto river, and within the sphere of British influence. Mr. Chamberlain added:

"I cannot believe that pending the negotiations the French government can have authorized this invasion of territory over which our rights have been recognized by the convention between Great Britain and France."

PARIS, Feb. 21.—The government has no news of the French having crossed the Niger into the Sokoto country and it is added any such unauthorized movement would be disavowed by the government.

A semi-official note issued this afternoon says it is quite untrue that French troops have entered the Sokoto region and that the story is merely the revival of an exploded rumor.

DREYFUS IS SURELY INNOCENT.

French Government Loses Strength Through the Zola Trial.

LONDON, Feb. 21.—(New York World Cablegram—Special Telegram.)—The correspondent of the Daily News says: "M. Laborie's speech was a masterpiece. Its matter was equal to its manner. Its style was ample and its language copious. M. Laborie is a clever, strong reasoner, with a lively fancy and the jury and a hostile audience were visibly impressed. The continuation of the speech tomorrow will be weightier than the first part."

"After attendance at all the sittings of the trial, I have arrived at the irresistible conclusion that Dreyfus is innocent. Every deposition, whether positive or negative, leads to this conclusion, and the accumulation of circumstantial evidence is so crushing that the anti-Dreyfus papers have not dared to present it in full to their readers. Only the great Dreyfus organs have published their careful reports. All others have been verbatim called. In fact, more has been told in Paris during this trial than in the whole of Europe during the rest of the century."

"But the very furor of this lying is beginning to defeat its own object. The advocate general's speech gave the impression that he feared M. Zola. He scarcely assailed him with the tips of his fingers. Undoubtedly he has received orders from the authorities to give no encouragement to further controversy over the Dreyfus case."

BEHEL DEPRECATES A LARGE ARMY.

Minister of War Makes Sport of the Socialist Leader.

BERLIN, Feb. 21.—In the Reichstag today during the discussion of the army estimates Herr Bebel, the socialist leader, deprecatd a large army. The minister for war, General von Gossler, replied, saying: "Herr Bebel appears to favor revolution, and he who does so is not a friend of the army. Should this enemy come day proceed to action we should advance against him without hatred, but with the same sang froid as against a foreign foe, and if Herr Bebel were the generalissimo I could only regret that, in the interest of himself and his troops." (Laughter and cheers.)

Herr Bebel answered that he had not advocated force to revolutionize the existing order of things, adding that he had especially condemned barracks and street fighting. The declaration of General von Gossler, therefore, were, he said, incomprehensible.

ENGLAND IS BUILDING WAR SHIPS.

Several of Them Are for Sale to the Highest Bidder.

LONDON, Feb. 21.—Six armored vessels, six protected cruisers, thirteen torpedo boat destroyers and five torpedo boats are now building in Great Britain for foreign governments, of which a number are purchasable, although Japan is supposed to have an option on several of them. Three war ships which have been ordered for South American governments are considered as being for sale to the highest bidder.

Thompson Brothers say that Spain has arranged to man the two remaining destroyers of the four completed some time ago at the Clyde Bank yards, but not delivered, presumably owing to the lack of payments.

Semi-Panics on Glasgow Exchange.

GLASGOW, Feb. 21.—On the stock exchange here today a semi-panic resulted from the West African news. Large liquidating sales forced the bears into complete control and there are apprehensions as to whether operators will be able to meet the high bid prices at the settlement on Wednesday.

LONDON Stock Market Depressed.

STORY OF AN EYE WITNESS

Description of the Explosion of the Battleship.

TALE OF TREACHERY BELIEVED BY MANY

Passengers on a Steamer that Left Havana the Day After the Accident Relate Their Experiences.

NEW YORK, Feb. 21.—The Ward line steamer Segura arrived at quarantine today from Tampico and Havana. The Segura arrived at Havana at 10 o'clock on the morning after the disaster to the Maine, and passed close by the wreck. The Segura's passengers said that great excitement prevailed at Havana and at the time of the sailing the foreign population was generally of the opinion that the Maine was destroyed by design. They cited among other things in support of this theory the fact that the Spanish man-of-war Alfonso XII, which was anchored near the Maine, changed its mooring just previous to the explosion. One of the passengers, William L. Carvin, went so far as to say that he saw a boat near the Maine a short time previous to the explosion. He said he would go to Washington to make a statement before the proper authorities.

C. P. Holcomb, of Newcastle, Del., general manager of a street railway in Philadelphia, one of the passengers on board the Segura, was questioned in his belief that the investigation at Havana would reveal some startling circumstances. "I went to Havana," said Mr. Holcomb, "got at all in sympathy with the insurgents, but on Wednesday when we got to Havana, I believe any of the Americans on board was in a mood to commit murder. The flags of the Spanish war ship were not at half mast. The vessels of all other nationalities had pulled after us that they had blown up the vessel, and the Spanish women were weeping and mourning. I went to Havana," said Mr. Holcomb, "got at all in sympathy with the insurgents, but on Wednesday when we got to Havana, I believe any of the Americans on board was in a mood to commit murder. The flags of the Spanish war ship were not at half mast. 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