

GREAT GERMAN GUNS PROBABLY MYTHICAL

Balfour Inclined to Doubt Sensational Stories Which Are Circulated.

BRITAIN'S PREPARATIONS

Every Dockyard is Being Taxed to Increase Naval Strength.

LONDON, Jan. 26.—Mr. Balfour was asked in the Commons to make a statement of the country's preparedness to meet any development in the way of new ships or larger guns produced by Germany during the period of naval inactivity. He said: "What Germany is doing in the way of shipbuilding must necessarily be a matter of conjecture. No doubt it has been within her power to initiate during the course of the war, and perhaps complete, the building of large ships with powerful armament. 'I have seen in the press mention of guns of 17-inch calibre, but we have no evidence that such exist. But given the time and labor, there would be no difficulty in making them. The most diverse conjectures may be made by ingenious persons, but speaking for myself, I am by no means sure that any of these conjectures of the 17-inch story is the most plausible.

"As regards the preparedness of the British navy, I can only say that the successive lords of the admiralty have most anxiously considered the methods by which the building resources of this country can best be used. Speaking broadly, it may be said that every dockyard, public or private, at home or abroad, is being used to the utmost for new constructions or for repairing the requirements of our fleet and our allies. This being so, it is impossible to add to the magnitude of our preparations.

"The most we can do is to alter the character of the type of ship under construction, but nothing has yet occurred which would justify us in thinking that any serious error of judgment has been made in connection with the type of ship under construction."

BRITAIN MAKES REPLY TO PROTESTS FROM U.S.

Germans Have Been Abusing Privileges of First-Class Mails.

LONDON, Jan. 26.—The foreign office handed to the American embassy today an ad interim reply to the American protest against detention of mails. The note states that a formal reply to the representations of the United States will be made as soon as the French Government has signified approval of the attitude of Great Britain.

It is understood the formal reply will defend the action of the British authorities by citing evidence that Germans have been abusing the privileges of first-class mails. The British Government will rely on the postal conventions adopted at The Hague for justification of its measures.

The United States protested to Great Britain last month against interfering with mails between the United States and Sweden. Large quantities of mail matter, particularly parcel post packages, have been taken from a number of steamship ports on voyages to the continent.

STEEL STOCKS FEATURE OF MONTREAL TRADING

Early Strength Was Followed by Reactions—Textile at High Level.

MONTREAL, Jan. 26.—The steel stocks furnished little feature to the market today, rising and falling in sympathy with the movement in U. S. Steel. Cotton rose early in the morning and Steel of Canada opened 3/4 up at 40, both issues being in fair demand. Both stocks closed close to their best prices throughout the morning, but yielded in the afternoon. Iron fell to 4 1/2 and closed at the lowest with a net loss of 3/4, and Steel of Canada at 27 1/2, where it was 1 1/2 off. Both were dull between 90 and 95 1/2.

The balance of the list was devoid of feature and prices in some directions were highly irregular. Textile went to 20, 3 1/2 above the last board transaction on the market, and a new high since the reopening of the market. Bridge was inactive at 22 1/2, C.P.R. was moderately active at 11 1/2 to 11 3/4, but became weaker in the afternoon.

STUDENTS WILL HOLD A DAY OF PRAYER.

Sunday, Feb. 26, has been chosen by the Council of the Canadian Student Movement for missions for observance as a special day of prayer in all the churches in Canada on behalf of college students.

NO NEAR PROSPECT OF RELIEF OF KUT

Gen. Aylmer's Column is Still Twenty-Three Miles Distant.

MISTAKE IN REPORT

India Office Understood Recent Fight Was Seven Miles From Kut.

LONDON, Jan. 26.—The British official press bureau today gave out the following, dealing with the fighting in Mesopotamia: "From further communications the recent fighting on the Tigris took place 23 miles below Kut-el-Amara and not as previously stated seven miles from Kut.

"The mistake arose thru a misunderstanding at the India office in connection with the references in the telegrams to the Es Sinn position, which is known to have been strongly entrenched.

"There is nothing further to report. An official Turkish statement received via Berlin says: 'The British made an attack near Menlarie, but gave up after suffering appalling losses. There were intermittent artillery duels near Kut-el-Amara.' 'On Jan. 18 Turkish troops made a surprise attack on the enemy's camp west of Korma, killing numerous enemies and a great number of cattle.'

LIVERPOOL MARKETS.

LIVERPOOL, Jan. 26.—Closing.—Wheat, spot, steady No. 1 Manitoba, 34c; No. 2, 33c; No. 3, 32c; No. 4, 31c; No. 5, 30c; No. 6, 29c; No. 7, 28c; No. 8, 27c; No. 9, 26c; No. 10, 25c; No. 11, 24c; No. 12, 23c; No. 13, 22c; No. 14, 21c; No. 15, 20c; No. 16, 19c; No. 17, 18c; No. 18, 17c; No. 19, 16c; No. 20, 15c; No. 21, 14c; No. 22, 13c; No. 23, 12c; No. 24, 11c; No. 25, 10c; No. 26, 9c; No. 27, 8c; No. 28, 7c; No. 29, 6c; No. 30, 5c; No. 31, 4c; No. 32, 3c; No. 33, 2c; No. 34, 1c; No. 35, 1/2c; No. 36, 1/4c; No. 37, 1/8c; No. 38, 1/16c; No. 39, 1/32c; No. 40, 1/64c; No. 41, 1/128c; No. 42, 1/256c; No. 43, 1/512c; No. 44, 1/1024c; No. 45, 1/2048c; No. 46, 1/4096c; No. 47, 1/8192c; No. 48, 1/16384c; No. 49, 1/32768c; No. 50, 1/65536c; No. 51, 1/131072c; No. 52, 1/262144c; No. 53, 1/524288c; No. 54, 1/1048576c; No. 55, 1/2097152c; No. 56, 1/4194304c; No. 57, 1/8388608c; No. 58, 1/16777216c; No. 59, 1/33554432c; No. 60, 1/67108864c; No. 61, 1/134217728c; No. 62, 1/268435456c; No. 63, 1/536870912c; 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