

fuy impromptu  
 a. au  
 p.



Rea,

Londres, ce 5 Octobre 1908.

R.P. n° 100.

Monsieur le Président,

D'après la correspondance télégraphique re-  
 -insérée dans le Paris et publiée par le Times  
 de ce matin, c'est aujourd'hui, lundi, que la  
 Bulgarie proclamerait son indépendance. Demain  
 mardi, l'Autriche-Hongrie annoucerait l'anne-  
 -xion formelle de la Bosnie et de la Herzégovine.

Je n'ai pas eu le temps d'aller aux  
 informations; mais ces graves nouvelles ne pa-  
 -raissent pas sans fondement. Il semblerait  
 que le coup a été monté sans que la Grande-  
 -Bretagne et la France en aient eu le moindre  
 -saisissement préalable, ce qui expliquerait la manière  
 de voir exprimée par Sir F. Campbell et rap-  
 -portée dans ma dépêche du 30 Septembre, R.P.  
 n° 99.

Matériellement, rien ne serait essentiel-  
 -lement changé, mais le Traité de Berlin  
 serait déchiré, d'une part par une Puissance

Au Département Politique Suisse,

Berne.

X

qui a fini un grand nombre d'actes à son égard  
 (Autriche - Hongrie) et d'autres par ses lois  
 (Bougarie) pour que l'Autriche ne soit pas  
 seule la puissance de l'Europe continentale  
 mais, car il n'est pas possible que totalement  
 la Russie domine son continent à des  
 modifications ni importantes du fait de Berlin  
 sans vouloir en profiter elle aussi : il y a eu  
 longtemps qu'elle cherche à se débarrasser de la  
 défense de ses frontières de manière de guerre à l'heure  
 des Balkans : . . .  
 de tout pas possible que la Russie, engagée  
 comme elle l'est actuellement dans des opérations  
 militaires et territoriales de sa faible relative,  
 n'apporte à ces opérations par une détermination  
 de guerre, mais il est indéniable que la Russie  
 n'est pas possible. Répétant, il n'est  
 impossible de noter, mais à nous et en mesure  
 de fait qui garantirait notre neutralité,  
 avec quelle légèreté certains grands puissances  
 ont pu se permettre de nous violer les arrangements



internationaux solennellement conclus, aussi-tôt qu'ils ne cadrent plus avec leurs intérêts présents et que l'occasion de faire un écart leur parait propice.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Président, les nouvelles assurances de ma très haute considération.

Le Ministre de Suisse:

Carlin

(Une annexe)

IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

CRISIS IN THE NEAR EAST.

ACTION OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AND BULGARIA.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

PARIS, Oct. 4.

Bulgaria will to-morrow (Monday) proclaim her independence. The proclamation will probably take the form of a national declaration by the Sobranje.

On Tuesday Austria-Hungary will announce the formal annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Count Khevenhüller-Metsch, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Paris, had an audience of the President of the Republic at the Elysée on Saturday afternoon at 4 o'clock, and presented an autograph letter from his Sovereign to M. Fallières, in which the Emperor Francis Joseph announced the intentions of Austria-Hungary with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Earlier in the day Count Khevenhüller-Metsch had called at the Quai d'Orsay, where he had a long conversation with M. Pichon. The audience was arranged at this conference, as Count Khevenhüller was informed that the President happened to have returned for the day to the Elysée from Rambouillet. This to some extent explains why the announcement of Austria's intentions was formally conveyed to France before being formally communicated to England. In fact, a similar announcement in the form of an autograph letter is on its way to King Edward, and will doubtless reach his Majesty at Balmoral to-morrow or on Tuesday.

AUSTRIAN POLICY.

The letter of the Emperor Francis-Joseph is a document of high historic interest. I believe that it will be found to contain an *exposé* of the reasons for Austrian action. The inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, actuated by emulation of their kinsmen in European Turkey, have demanded a Constitution, and have addressed their demand to Vienna. The Emperor Francis Joseph, who has recently extended the political privileges of his Austrian and Hungarian subjects in a democratic sense, favours the Bosnian and Herzegovinian aspirations. But he feels that the relations of Austria-Hungary to the occupied provinces are too anomalous to permit of his taking so momentous a step as the grant of a Constitution without previously establishing and consolidating the relation of these provinces to the Austrian Empire or the Hungarian kingdom. He therefore will proceed to their annexation as a preliminary to the grant of a Constitution.

More remarkable, perhaps, even than the announcement of this step, is the diplomacy behind the scenes by which it has been prepared. Count Khevenhüller or the Emperor's letter—I cannot positively say which—informed the President of the Republic that among the Great Powers Russia, Germany, and Italy had already given assurances of their approval of the step which Austria-Hungary proposes to take. On learning this it at once occurred to me that in all probability Russia had duly informed her Western ally of the negotiations which were in progress and of her intention to give Austria her support. It also occurred to me that Italy had probably informed either Great Britain or France—both of them Powers with which she professes to be on terms of the most cordial and confidential friendship. Nothing of the sort has happened. These negotiations have been conducted with perfect secrecy by Baron Aehrenthal, Prince Bülow, M. Isvolsky, and Signor Tittoni. These statesmen have been in the secret, and no others. Baron Aehrenthal's *coup* has been effected in conjunction with these statesmen without the knowledge or co-operation either of England or of France.

In this fact a clue may be found to the compensation which one at least of the consenting Powers has received for its support of the Austrian move. Germany, after having repeatedly isolated herself by her recent policy, especially in the Moroccan question, obtains the satisfaction of seeing the two Western Powers which are united by the *entente cordiale* isolated for the moment from the rest of Europe, in a diplomatic sense, unless—which is very unlikely—they hasten to homologate the impending Austrian and Bulgarian breaches of the Treaty of Berlin. That is also, doubtless, Germany's price for her acquiescence, under specious pretext of course, in Bulgaria's declaration of independence. Austria herself must look askance upon the aggrandisement of Bulgaria, the Prussia of the Balkans. But she, too, seems prepared to suffer this in the meantime, in view of the occasion which it offers for the immediate realization of her own plans. It is added by M. Georges Villiers, in the *Temps*, that Austria is prepared to offer to the Turks, by way of compensation for her seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the restitution of the Sanjak of Novi Bazar, which she has occupied since 1879. The whole transaction, so far as Austria is concerned, is marked by Jesuitical casuistry and political cynicism.

And what of Italy? Signor Tittoni has likewise played a very close game. What has he received in exchange for his support of Austria? Conjecture is rife, and there are reports to the effect that Italy may have received either the promise of a port on the Albanian coast or the promise of a free hand in Tripoli, or both promises at once.

TURKEY'S POSITION.

I have endeavoured, as far as was possible on a Sunday when many important people are inaccessible, to discover what is likely to be the immediate effect of this wholesale rupture of solemn European treaties and of this revolt on the part of Bulgaria from her suzerain, Turkey. So far as the impending Austrian seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina is concerned, it is probable, I gather, that Turkey may not feel that she has either the necessary determination or the strength to protest. She will doubtless consider that there is little prospect of active intervention from any quarter against Austrian aggression.

With regard to the action of Bulgaria, the case is different. In my last despatch I spoke of "further and still more serious provocation" which would be requisite in order to compel Turkey, as at present governed, to offer active resistance. This provocation appears to be impending, and the peace of Europe may hang in the balance to-morrow. In some quarters the hope is still expressed, but it is a very feeble one, that Prince Ferdinand may at the eleventh hour be able to restrain the national excitement of his people and the eager initiative of their leaders. Of the vanity of this hope I said enough yesterday.

LATER.

There is reason to believe that it was Count Khevenhüller, the Austrian Ambassador, who stated to the President of the Republic, M. Fallières, and to the French Foreign Minister, M. Pichon, that the Governments of Russia, Germany, and Italy had expressed their approval of the policy of Austria. M. Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, arrived in Paris to-day, and there will, doubtless, soon be an opportunity of obtaining the Russian account of these remarkable events. So far as I can at present ascertain, Count Khevenhüller, if he really informed the President of the Republic and M. Pichon that Russia, Germany, and Italy were united in supporting Austria without

reserve, must have been misstating or greatly overstating the attitude of these Powers. Germany, I have reason to believe, views the proposed breach of the Berlin Treaty with fundamental aversion, but does not feel herself in a position to offer direct opposition to her Austrian ally. Italy is "willing to consider" the Austrian proposals, but makes conditions, of which one is the restitution to Turkey of the Sanjak of Novi Bazar. Another is the revision of Article 29 in the Berlin Treaty, which imposes certain restrictions upon Montenegro.

As for Russia, she has explicitly announced to Austria a decision which I may describe as being of momentous import. I may put Russia's decision in this form:—Russia says, in effect, "You propose without further ado to tear up the most important provisions of the Treaty of Berlin, and Bulgaria is about to do the same. You and Bulgaria are tearing up certain provisions which you find inconvenient. Very well, then. There are other provisions which are inconvenient for us, and we intend to raise the question of these provisions. Above all, we intend to raise the question of the Dardanelles."

PROBABLE CONFERENCE OF THE POWERS.

As the result of a somewhat hard day's work, I have succeeded in evolving from absolute authentic information a picture of the critical situation which is impending. That situation resembles closely the state of affairs in 1870 and 1871, when Russia, with Bismarck's connivance, had repudiated those provisions of the Treaty of Paris which neutralized the Black Sea. Russia repudiated these provisions, but she was, as it were, called to account by Europe for doing so, and in revising the Treaty of Paris the London Black Sea Conference in 1871 implicitly branded the action of Russia as having been illegal and violent. Similarly, if Austria now annexes Bosnia and Herzegovina, that action will inevitably be contested, and will have to form the subject of a fresh conference of the Powers. At this conference other provisions of the Berlin Treaty, besides those which regulate the Austrian occupation of the provinces, will inevitably be brought up by other Powers for reconsideration and revision, and above all it is certain that Russia will raise the question of the Straits. This is the perspective which the Austrian and the Bulgarian aggressions open up, and it is hardly a reassuring one for any of the Great Powers.

At the future conference, moreover, Great Britain and France, as the only Powers which desire no selfish advantage, and which expressly deprecate a selfish policy of aggrandisement on the part of others, will be at the outset isolated. But such isolation in a good cause will only weld the *entente cordiale* more firmly; and a strong and straightforward policy on the part of the two Powers must draw to their side the support of all the friends of peace in Europe and throughout the world.

As I learn at the hour of telegraphing, it is believed in diplomatic circles that in the meantime formal protest will be entered by the Western Powers against the lawless action of Bulgaria and of Austria.

THE NEWS RECEIVED IN TURKEY.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

CONSTANTINOPLE, Oct. 4.

I learn on the highest authority that news has been received from Sofia that Prince Ferdinand will arrive at Rustchuk early to-morrow and there meet the Prime Minister and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of the Interior and proceed to Tirnovo, where the independence of Bulgaria will be proclaimed in the course of the day. News has been also received from the same source that Germany and Italy have agreed to place no obstacles in the way of Austrian annexation of the occupied provinces. The information is to be announced on Tuesday.

The information is difficult to believe, considering the Bulgarian statements reported to have been made in London that the Principality had no intention of declaring independence, and in view of the friendly messages said to have been sent by the Emperor William a week ago, expressing the hope that he might soon visit Constantinople.

THE BULGARIAN ATTITUDE.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

SOBIA, Oct. 4.

At a late hour on Friday night Refik Bey, the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires, delivered a Note to the Foreign Minister reminding the Bulgarian Government that the Oriental Company's line is the property of the Turkish Government, and expressing surprise that the Bulgarian Government proposes to enter into negotiations with a third party in regard to its property. Almost at the same time the Government received an intimation from the representative of the Oriental Company stating that the company declines to treat with the Bulgarian Government until the latter obtains the preliminary consent of Turkey to the negotiations. In consequence of these communications the members of the Cabinet who had already left Sofia were hastily recalled, while others who were preparing to leave postponed their departure, and prolonged Cabinet Councils were held throughout the night and yesterday.

The result of the Ministerial deliberations is announced in the journal *Vreme*. The Government will not restore the line to the company and will refuse to apply to Turkey for her consent to the negotiations.

Commenting on the declarations of the Turkish Government and the company, the Ministerial journal expresses the belief that their action was concerted and due to foreign instigation. On various previous occasions the company had entered into negotiations with the Government without imposing such a preliminary condition. Foreign diplomacy, the journal observes, is endeavouring to transfer the question into the domain of *la haute politique*. "The Bulgarian Government declares," the article concludes, "henceforth that it regards the question as one of money, perhaps of much money. The company should take this, as it has nothing else to expect."

THE PRINCE AND HIS MINISTERS.

8 30 P.M.

Last night all the Ministers left for Rustchuk, where Prince Ferdinand is expected to arrive to-night or to-morrow morning. According to a telegram from Rustchuk, great preparations are being made to give his Royal Highness an enthusiastic reception.

Last night's Cabinet Council continued up to the moment of the Ministers' departure. Nothing further has become known in regard to the decisions of the Government. It is understood, however, that all the Ministers are resolved not to abandon the position they have taken up in regard to the railway dispute, and should the Prince not approve of this, they will tender their resignation. It is stated that the Prince has already expressed to Vienna his dissatisfaction with the obstinate attitude of the Government in regard to this question. On the other hand, rumours are current to the effect that the Prince and the Ministers will proceed to Tirnovo, the ancient capital, and there proclaim Bulgaria's independence. The situation is one of suspense and uncertainty, and, although there is no outward sign of excitement, considerable anxiety prevails.

THE CABINET'S POSITION.

10 P.M.

A private telegram from Tirnovo states that the Democratic, or Ministerial, party there is making preparations for a great meeting to be held there to-morrow which will be addressed by the Prime Minister and some of his colleagues. The scene of the meeting will be the *Hissar*, or hill on which stood the palace of the ancient Bulgarian Tsars.

As it cannot be supposed that Ministers at this critical moment can find time for the preparation and delivery of electioneering addresses, some other explanation must be found for their intended visit to this historic site. It is suggested that the Cabinet Council last night came to the decision to proclaim Bulgarian independence, and if the Ministers can induce the Prince, who arrives at Rustchuk this evening, to accept their policy, they will accom-

pany him to Tirnovo to-morrow in order to give immediate effect to their resolve.

In regard to the Prince's intentions nothing is known. Should he refuse to comply with the reported Ministerial decision the fall of the Cabinet would follow. It is surmised that the Government, which was yesterday urged by all the foreign representatives here to surrender the Oriental Company's railway, has come to the conclusion that its position is untenable in view of the unanimity of the Powers, and aims at merging the railway question in the larger one of national independence. It seems not improbable that the proposal of Russia to lay this question before a European Areopagus has tended to bring matters to a crisis, and that the Government, foreseeing the joint demand of the Powers for the evacuation of the line, has resolved to stake its existence on another issue. Nothing, however, is certain and everything depends on the decision of the Prince.

THE ADVANTAGES OF INDEPENDENCE

OCTOBER 1.

There can be little doubt that recent events have tended to accustom the public mind to the idea of an early declaration of Bulgarian independence. The advantages of such a policy are urged, not only by the younger and more impulsive members of the community, but by old and experienced public servants who possess long knowledge of Turkey, and especially by those who have long advocated a close understanding with the neighbouring Empire. It is pointed out that the abolition of a relation which continually gives rise to diplomatic tension and unpleasant incidents will promote the interests of both Turkey and Bulgaria and prepare the way for a cordial understanding and even a military convention between the two Powers, which would greatly strengthen the position of Turkey and enable her to devote herself to the task of internal reform without any preoccupations in regard to dangers from abroad. Such an arrangement would imply a frank abandonment by Bulgaria of any claims to interference on behalf of the Bulgarian element in Macedonia. This would have been impossible during the former Turkish régime, owing to the intolerable position of the subject race, but there is every reason to anticipate that under the new dispensation the Macedonian Bulgars will be enabled to live and thrive and become loyal subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

No apprehension is felt in regard to the position of the Bulgarian Exarchate in Constantinople should Bulgaria exchange the *status* of a vassal Principality for that of a close ally with Turkey. The Exarch Joseph, whose health is broken, would make way for a successor born in the Ottoman Empire, and the relation of the Church in the Principality with the Exarchate would be assimilated to those between the Church in the Greek kingdom and the Patriarchate. The Exarchate is an institution necessary for Turkey as a counteracting force against the pretensions of the Greek Patriarchate, and the Young Turks, who have proclaimed in their official programme the maintenance of the rights accorded to the various religious communities, would be the last to desire its destruction.

PARIS, Oct. 4.\*

The *Temps* publishes an article by M. Georges Villiers, in the course of which he says that, according to the latest advice, Prince Ferdinand will, at Tirnovo, to-morrow proclaim himself an independent Sovereign, and will take the title of Tsar of the Bulgarians. Rumelia will naturally be included in the proclamation. "The only thing that can stand in the way of the decision of the Bulgarian Government," the writer adds, "is the possible hesitation at the last moment of Prince Ferdinand. This morning, however, his resolution appeared definitely fixed."

TURKEY AND THE ORIENTAL RAILWAYS.

We are informed that the British Government and Bulgarian Governments with a view to a settlement of the question of the Oriental Railways. The Turkish Government readily agreed that in the event of the railways being temporarily restored to the company they would consent to the lease being transferred from the company to the Bulgarian Government, the rights of the Porte being duly safeguarded. The British Government have urged the signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin to recommend this solution to the Sofia Government with a view to a return to the normal state of affairs. It is understood that the Great Powers have agreed to act accordingly.

ITALIAN VIEWS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

ROME, Oct. 4.

The news that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Paris has presented an autograph letter from the Emperor to the President and that the Ambassador in Rome, Count von Lützow, is even now on his way to Racconigi to present a similar letter to the King of Italy is taken as a certain indication that Austria-Hungary intends to lay another alternative before the Powers for the solution of the Turco-Bulgarian question. The newspapers to-night refrain from conjectures as to the character of that proposal, but agree that the solemn form of Austro-Hungarian interlocation shows an intention on the part of that Power not to resort to any sudden announcement or *coup de main*.

In Italy it is generally believed that the Powers must, without exception, support the Russian proposal for the solution of the Oriental Railways question, and that, in view of their unanimous attitude, Bulgaria will give way. As the *Popolo Romano* bluntly puts it:—"All danger of an armed conflict is at an end, unless the Bulgarians have completely taken leave of the political common sense which has made their fortune for 20 years." Of the unanimity of the Powers no doubt is expressed whatever. The sympathetic declarations made after the recent meeting at Desio between Signor Tittoni and M. Isvolsky sufficiently guarantee the line to be followed by the Italian Government and its adhesion to the Russian proposal, and it appears to be taken for granted that there will be dissent on the part of the Austrian ally. More than one newspaper remarks that the suggestion made in *The Times* of a reference of the question to The Hague tribunal might prove the most expeditious mode of solution; but nowhere is any doubt expressed as to the necessity of Bulgaria receding from an untenable position. Whatever may be the sympathies of Italy with the Bulgarian nation—and it is fairly evident that the declaration of Bulgarian independence can only meet with approval here—the violation of the treaty with the retention of the railways is strongly and universally condemned, and the fullest approval is given to the protests of the English and Russian Governments.