

ments for the information and the consideration of their congresses.

WATER BOUNDARY.

The Mexican water boundary commission has adjusted all matters submitted to it to the satisfaction of both governments save in three important cases— that of Chamizal at El Paso, Tex., where the two commissioners failed to agree, and wherein, for this case only, this government has proposed to Mexico the addition of a third member; the proposed elimination of what are known as "bancos," small isolated islands formed by the cutting off of bends in the Rio Grande, from the operation of the treaties of 1884 and 1889, recommended by the commissioners and approved by this government, but still under consideration by Mexico; and the subject of the "equitable distribution of waters of the Rio Grande," for which the commissioners recommended an international dam and reservoir, are approved by Mexico, but still under consideration by this government. Pending these questions it is necessary to extend the life of the commission which expires December 26, next.

The coronation of the young queen of the Netherlands was made the occasion of fitting congratulations.

The claim of Victor H. McCord against Peru, which for a number of years has been pressed by this government and has on several occasions attracted the attention of the Congress, has been satisfactorily adjusted. A protocol was signed May 17, 1898, whereby, the fact of liability being admitted, the question of the amount to be awarded was submitted to the chief justice of Canada as sole arbitrator. His award sets the indemnity due the claimant at \$40,000.

PERU ABROGATES.

The government of Peru has given the prescribed notification of its intention to abrogate the treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation, concluded with this country August 31, 1887. As that treaty contains many important provisions necessary to the maintenance of commerce and good relations which could with difficulty be replaced by the nomination of renewed provisions within the brief twelve months intervening before the treaty terminates, I have invited suggestions by Peru as to the particular provisions it is desired to annul in the hope of reaching an arrangement whereby the remaining articles may be provisionally saved.

NEW AMBASSADOR.

His majesty, the czar, having announced his purpose to raise the imperial Russian mission at this capital to the rank of an embassy, I responded under the authority conferred by the act of March 3, 1893, by commissioning and accrediting the actual representative at St. Petersburg in the capacity of ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary. The Russian ambassador to this country has since presented his credentials.

The proposal of the czar for a general reduction of the vast military establishments that weigh so heavily upon many peoples in time of peace was communicated to this government with an earnest invitation to be represented in the conference which it is contemplated to assemble with a view to discussing the means of accomplishing so desirable a result.

His majesty was at once informed of the cordial sympathy of this government with the principle involved in his exalted proposal and of the readiness of the United States to take part in the conference. The active military force of the United States as measured by our population, territorial area and taxable wealth is, and under any conceivable

able prospective conditions, must continue to be in time of peace so conspicuously less than that of the armed powers to whom the czar's appeal is especially addressed that the question can have for us no practical importance save as marking an auspicious step toward the betterment of the condition of the modern peoples and the cultivation of peace and good will among them, and in this view it behooves us as a nation to lend countenance and aid to the beneficent project.

CLAIMS AGAINST RUSSIA.

The claims of owners of American sailing vessels for seizure by Russian cruisers in Bering sea are being pressed for settlement. The equities of the cases justify the expectation that a measure of reparation would eventually be accorded in harmony with precedent and in the light of the provision of the acts. The resolution made in my special message of April 27, last, is renewed, that appropriation be made to reimburse the master and owners of the Russian bark Hans for wrongful arrest of the master and detention of the vessel in February, 1896, by officers of the United States district court for the southern district of Mississippi. The papers accompanying my message make out a most meritorious claim and justify the urgency with which it has been presented by the government of Russia.

SAMOAN TROUBLES.

Malletoa Laupepa, king of Samoa, died on August 22, last. According to article I of the general act of Berlin, "his successor shall be duly elected according to the laws and customs of Samoa." Arrangements had been agreed upon between the signatories of the general act for the return of Mataafa and the other exiled Samoan chiefs. They were brought from Jaluit by a German war vessel and landed at Apia on Sept. 18, last.

Whether the death of Malletoa and the return of his old-time rival Mataafa, will add to the undesirable complications which the execution of the tripartite general act has heretofore developed, remains to be seen. The efforts of this government will as heretofore be addressed towards a harmonious and exact fulfillment of the terms of the international engagement to which the United States became a party in 1889.

CLAIM AGAINST SIAM.

The Cheek claim against Siam, after some five years of controversy, has been adjusted by arbitration under an agreement signed July 6, 1897, an award of 706,721 ticals (about \$187,987), with the release of the Cheek estate from mortgage claims, had been rendered March 21, 1893, in favor of the claimant by the arbitrator, Sir Nicholas John Hannan, British chief justice for China and Japan.

An envoy from Siam has been accredited to this government and has presented his credentials.

RED CROSS AND SWITZERLAND.

Immediately upon the outbreak of the war with Spain, the Swiss government, fulfilling the high mission it has deservedly assumed as the patron of the International Red Cross, proposed to the United States and Spain that they should severally recognize and carry into execution as a *modus vivendi* during the continuance of hostilities the additional articles proposed by the international conference at Geneva Oct. 26, 1868, extending the effects of the existing Red Cross convention of 1864 to the conduct of naval war. Following the example set by France and Germany in 1870 in adopting such a *modus vivendi*, and in view of the accession of the United States to those

additional articles in 1882, although the exchange of ratification thereof still remained uncompleted, the Swiss proposal was promptly and cordially accepted by us and simultaneously by Spain.

This government feels a keen satisfaction in having thus been enabled to testify its adherence to the broad principle of humanity even amidst the clash of war, and it is to be hoped that the extension of the Red Cross compact to hostilities by sea as well as on land may soon become an accomplished fact through the general promulgations of additional naval Red Cross articles by the maritime powers now parties to the convention of 1864.

The important question of the claim of Switzerland to the perpetual cantonal allegiance of American citizens of Swiss origin has not made hopeful progress toward a solution, and controversies in this regard still continue.

ARMENIAN TROUBLES.

The newly accredited envoy of the United States to the Ottoman Porte carries instructions looking to the disposal of matters in controversy with Turkey for a number of years. He is especially charged to press for a just settlement of our claims for indemnity by reason of the destruction of property of American troubles of 1895 as well as for the recognition of older claims of equal justness. He is also instructed to seek an adjustment of the dispute growing out of the refusal of Turkey to recognize the acquired citizenship of Ottoman-Bornesians naturalized in the United States since 1889 without prior imperial consent, and in the same general relation he is directed to endeavor to bring about a solution of the question which has more or less acutely existed since 1869 concerning the jurisdiction and rights of the United States in matters of criminal procedure and punishment under article IV of the treaty of 1830. This latter difficulty grows out of a verbal difference, claimed by Turkey to be essential between the original Turkish text and the promulgated translation.

VENEZUELAN ARBITRATION.

After more than two years from the appointment of a consul of this country to Erzeroum he has received his exequatur. The arbitral tribunal appointment under the treaty of February, 1897, between Great Britain and Venezuela to determine the boundary between the latter and the colony of British Guiana is to convene at Paris during the present month. It is a source of much gratification to this government to see the friendly resort of arbitration applied to the settlement of this controversy, not alone because of the earnest part we have had in bringing about the result but also because the two members named on behalf of Venezuela, Mr. Chief Justice Fuller and Mr. Justice Brewer, chosen from our highest court, appropriately testified the continuing interest we feel in the definite adjustment of the question according to the strictest rules of justice. The British members, Lord Herschel and Sir Richard Collins, are jurists of no less exalted repute, while the fifth member and president of the tribunal, M. F. Demartens, has earned a world-wide reputation as an authority upon international law.

The claim of Felipe Scandella against Venezuela for arbitrary expulsion and injury to his business has been adjusted by the revocation of the order of expulsion and by the payment of the sum of \$16,000.

WESTERN COMMERCE.

I have the satisfaction of being able to state that the bureau of the American republics created in 1890 as the organ for promoting commercial intercourse and fraternal relations among the countries of the Western Hemisphere