

AFFAIRS IN SPAIN.

The War Budget in the Cortes—Reforms for Porto Rico—News from Cuba—Spanish Finance.

From Our Own Correspondent.

MADRID, Wednesday, Feb. 9, 1870.

In the sittings which have taken place since my last letter, the War Budget has been rapidly discussed. The Republican majority made several vehement protestations against the large sum demanded by the Minister of War to maintain the army exactly on the same footing as under the late monarchy.

One of the Deputies, M. DIAZ QUINTERO, thought it advisable to remind General PRIM that when he was a member of the Opposition he had always shown himself hostile to the system of conscription. M. QUINTERO added that he would prefer to have the volunteers armed, to maintain order throughout Spain, and he demanded that a considerable reduction should be made in the army, which, he said, is a heavy burden to the nation, and which only serves to maintain at the head of affairs men who know how to turn it to advantage for the gratification of their ambition and the realization of their selfish plans.

In spite of all the efforts of the Republicans, the Chamber voted the War Budget as General PRIM presented it. I think it advisable to state that PRIM recognized the necessity of reforming the organization and system of recruitment of the army. He told the Cortes that he was earnestly studying the means of effecting in Spain what M. DE BISMARCK had effected in Prussia; that is, the placing of five or six hundred thousand men on a war footing. He did not state the reasons which necessitated this measure. There must be powerful motives for it, however, for it would be difficult to find a plausible justification for such a step in time of peace.

REFORMS FOR PORTO RICO.

The Deputies of Porto Rico, having learned that the President of the Cortes intended to adjourn the debate on the constitutional reform of that colony, went immediately to the Minister of the Colonies to ask him if the question were adjourned indefinitely; and they added that, in the case of his replying in the affirmative, they would all tender their resignations after having formally protested in the Chamber against the non-execution of the promises held out to them by the Ministry. M. BECERRA, the Colonial Minister, reassured the Deputies of Porto Rico by informing them that the adjournment would only be for fifteen days at the most. The Government gives as a reason the urgency of discussing the law on the municipal taxes and those of the departments. Their real motive is their anxiety to support it against the Unionist Liberals, who have always opposed it, and who will renew their hostility to it in the coming debates.

M. FIGUEROLA obtained from M. ZORRILLA, the President of the Cortes, the concession that the debate on the Municipal Tax law should be put on the order of the day, and, as the report of this law had been distributed to the Deputies only half an hour before, the Republicans protested against such precipitation, on the ground that it prevented them from examining the law. The Minister of the Interior, M. RIVERO, spoke in the same terms, and the debate was adjourned to next Monday.

NEWS FROM CUBA.

The Colonial Minister read a dispatch from the Commandant of Cuba, informing the Governor that the troops had obtained an important advantage over the insurgents. This message states that the troops had destroyed a camp where the insurgent Government used to hold its meetings, and that they have taken prisoner a nephew of CESPEDES. The Spanish Government takes the greatest care to publish immediately all favorable news from Cuba, although it is rarely believed by the public, but when a private message announces the defeat of the Spanish troops by the insurgents, the Government contradicts it at once, and carries on in the papers a crusade against what it calls the intrigues of the enemies of Spain.

Those who know the real political situation of Cuba, assure us that the Government has the entire conviction that the insurrection will last all through the Summer, in spite of the reinforcements of men, artillery and ships which are being continually dispatched to the Gulf of Mexico. The news of the negotiations which are being carried on between the United States and San Domingo, for the annexation of that colony, has caused the Government great anxiety and displeasure. The Ministers deny that propositions have been made to them for the sale of Cuba, by the United States, and they add that any such proposals would be rejected without the slightest hesitation.

OVERTURES FROM ISABELLA.

An emissary from Queen ISABELLA paid a visit the other day to General PRIM, who would not hear a word of the overtures of the ex-Queen. It is said that the emissary came to ask General PRIM, in the name of the Spanish nation, to forget the past, and to reinstate the BOURBONS on the throne of Spain. General PRIM has shown himself too hostile to the question of restoration to turn round again so easily.

There is no longer a question of the candidature of the throne, of which I have spoken in my preceding letters. The discussion on the organic laws will soon occupy the attention of the Cortes. The session will last till July, when the Deputies will leave for the Provinces or for other parts of the continent. Let us hope that this Summer will pass by without any attempt at civil war on the part of the Carlists and partisans of ISABELLA, who are plotting openly.

FINANCE.

With regard to her finances, Spain is in as unsatisfactory a state as ever. I have it on good authority that the public exchequer owes to the clergy of certain provinces twelve months' income, and that not only has it failed to pay the retiring pensions for five months in the eastern and western provinces, but that the dividends of the first half of 1869, the three per cents., are not yet paid. Six millions are owed for those of the second half of 1869, due since the 31st of December last; the whole amount will not be paid before next June.