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The Victoria Times.

TWICE-A-WEEK EDITION

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RIVAL FORCES MEET IN LAND ENGAGEMENT

Battle Reported on the Yalu River---Russians Claim to Have Captured Eighteen Hundred Men.

London, March 18.—The correspondent of the Daily Mail at Chefoo, who has just visited Chinnampo, Korea, says:

"On the way to Chemulpo we passed a constant succession of Japanese transports. Three thousand Japanese landed at Chemulpo at the end of last week."

The correspondent adds that the Russians are retreating across the Yalu river before the advance of the Japanese outposts, and that their force in this district number 20,000.

Under date of March 17th the Chefoo correspondent of the Standard reports that provision trains are arriving hourly at Port Arthur, the railway being intact.

The Daily Telegraph's Tokio correspondent, cabling March 17th, asserts that the Russian fleet has returned to Port Arthur. If this is correct, the correspondent adds, as is evident from Rear-Admiral Baron von Stackelberg's report, the Russian cruisers, which left Vladivostock, returned to that port without an attempt having been made to unite the fleets or if an attempt was made, it was unsuccessful.

The Chefoo correspondent of the Paris edition of the New York Herald, cabling under yesterday's date, asserts that a portion of the Russian fleet have made several cruises within a radius of fifty miles of Port Arthur without finding any trace of the enemy.

London papers also have vague rumors of alleged movements of the opposing forces in the vicinity of the Yalu river.

It is stated that the Russians are again negotiating for the purchase of Welsh coal, and it is reported from Hamburg that Russia is trying to place contracts with German shipyards for several new torpedo boat destroyers to be delivered this year.

According to a dispatch from Antwerp to the Daily Telegraph, Russia has acquired twenty large Antwerp transport steamers and has insured each of them for $250,000.

A Tokio correspondent of the Times says that Russian and Japanese scouts are now separated only by the River Cheng Cheng, just north of Anju. The dispatch adds that the foreign correspondents will leave for the front March 20th or 23rd, but their destination is still unknown.

A Times correspondent at Wei-Hai-Wei, cabling under yesterday's date, says:

"I arrived at Ping Yang Inlet March 15th and proceeded to Chinnampo. Navigation was difficult owing to the drift ice. I found anchored there both war vessels and transports. Disembarkation has been difficult, but the Japanese have brought all necessary appliances."

The correspondent describes the landing movements and the disposal of the forces with some detail, and says: "Despite the terrible weather the infantry marched 25 miles daily, each man carrying nearly one hundred pounds. It was a severe test. A larger force is now disembarking within easier distance of the Japanese objective, while preparations are reported to be proceeding at the only practicable port on the east coast of Korea. The Japanese are now holding Anju, the line of the Cheng Cheng river. The actual land front points to a further retirement of the Russian forces.

"Despite the command of the sea, the Japanse omit no precautions. It would be unfair to the Japanese to give the numbers and designation of their forces, but landings were made long enough ago to permit general reference to them without prejudice to the operations. The weather, generally, is improving."

Cossacks Also Retire.

Seoul, March 17.—4.30 p. m.—The Japanese authorities have been advised that part of the Russian cavalry in northern Korea has recrossed the Yalu river and that a Cossack battery has also withdrawn. A small Russian force still occupies Chong Ju.

Five thousand engineers are now employed in the building of the military road from Seoul to Wiju. Only a few miles have been completed. Civilians are working on the railroad from Seoul to Susun. The road cannot be completed before next October.

Inspected Defences.

Newchwang, March 17.—Patriarchal General Linevitch after a survey of Newchwang and its defences yesterday returned to his command at Liao Yang. He also visited Kaichou and points effecting the protection of the coast and the holding of the weak zone along the main line of the railway opposite Newchwang. Although disclaiming any apprehension of the Japanese landing here the authorities are satisfied to have foreigners understand that the Russians are prepared for any local emergency, and the arrival of an additional battery of artillery and 150 scouts to-day is significant.

It is apparent that both civil and military strategists and the diplomats at Mukden apprehend a collision with the Chinese, probably fearing that the inspiring numbers of their small bands of scouts operating between the Liao river and the Great Wall are the surest instruments for their entanglement in a conflict, particularly as the zone is in the nature of a no man's land on account of having been abandoned by the owners and also because the Chinese jurisdiction is incompetent. Russians able to judge profess to regard General Ma's attitude as dangerous to the peace of Russia and China.

The Chemulpo Fight.

St. Petersburg, March 17.—The Chinese legation here has assured the Associated Press most positively that the government at Pekin intends not only to observe the strictest neutrality during the war between Russia and Japan, but that the government thoroughly realizes the danger threatening the integrity of the Celestial empire, in case it should become embroiled in the conflict.

"We are well aware," said a member of the legation, "that the eyes of European powers are watching our every move and we know also what is being said about a general uprising against foreigners should we take sides with Japan. But there will be no chance whatever for our giving the slightest ground for complaints. China can only play one role during the war, namely, that of absolute quiescence. I will not deny that there is some pro-Japanese feeling among my countrymen, but there is also a great deal of pro-Russian feeling. One neutralizes the other. Our position is very clear. We have twenty thousand men guarding our frontier of Manchuria. This force is intended merely to maintain order and to prevent each of the belligerents from entering our territory."

The Russians deny that they have any intention of going west of the Liao region. The railroad from Pekin west of the river from Newchwang and to Sin Min Tin Russia considers neutral territory and beyond the sphere of operations unless the Japanese invade it.

The Novikiri of Port Arthur, dated February 22nd, reached here to-day. It contains the first consecutive account from a Russian source of the Chemulpo fight and says the Variag fought till every gun was dismantled. It does not mention the Vicksburg offering succor to the Russians. The same issue contains viceroy Alexieff's announcement that for military reasons he was going to Manchuria, leaving General Stoessel in command at Port Arthur and Liao Tung. The viceroy's farewell order to the garrison confirms previous reports on the subject and says he was convinced they would fight to the last man and repeat the heroic defence of Sebastapol.

Contraband of War.

St. Petersburg, March 17.—A diplomatic agent of Viceroy Alexieff at Port Arthur reiterates the denial of the report that Port Arthur has been abandoned. In the bombardment of March 10th the casualties were five killed, several buildings being damaged.

As the result of a conference between the ministers of marine and of foreign affairs, the following additional articles have been declared contraband of war: Provisions of all kinds destined for the Japanese army, including grain and fish products, beans, bean oil, parts of machines for the manufacture of weapons and ammunition.

The Czar to-day received General Sakaparoff, acting minister of war and chief of the general staff, with whom he discussed the reported concentration of Japanese troops at Ping Yang. The Czar will inspect more of the warships to-morrow.

Seeking Favors.

Pekin, March 17.—Russian commissariat officers have applied to the Chinese railway officials at Hsin-Min-Tun for permission to use their name on the transportation of troops and stores. The officials have replied that the matter presents many difficulties and that they must refer the application to the authorities at Pekin. Some questions were also asked regarding the possibility of purchasing fodder and other supplies, also regarding the procurement of carts for transportation purposes, should the railway not be available. Native agents of the Russo-Chinese bank at Mukden have also approached the railroad officials upon the subject.

The magistrates at Chin Chou will not allow the natives to sell supplies of any kind to the Russians.

The Japan authorities here state that a land engagement of any magnitude is not likely before another month.

Marquis Ito at Seoul.

Seoul, March 17.—Marquis Ito arrived at Chemulpo to-day. He was greeted by a delegation of high Korean officials. G. Hayashi, the Japanese minister at Korea, and General Ijichi, commander of the Japanese garrison here, who went to meet him, accompanied him to Seoul.

When the special train arrived at Seoul, it was received with military honors. A Korean guard of honor saluted and surrounded the handsome green palanquin in which Marquis Ito was carried to the mansion prepared for him by the Emperor. The route was lined by Japanese troops, who saluted the marquis as he passed. Thousands of Koreans also witnessed his arrival. Marquis Ito will be received by the Korean Emperor on Saturday, March 19th.

Korea's Position.

St. Petersburg, March 17.—The correspondent of the Associated Press is informed that Russia does not regard Korea as a belligerent, and will not do so until there is evidence that Korea is actively making common cause with Japan. Russia now considers the Korean government as being under duress, and that all its acts are void.

Although no confirmation is obtainable of the Associated Press dispatch from Seoul, saying that a Korean official on the Tumen river had received notice that Russia considered Korea as belligerent and would act accordingly, in government circles it is considered quite possible that the Russian commanders along the Korean border may have warned the Koreans that they must not impede the Russian military operations under pain of being considered belligerent. Even should Korea throw in her lot with Japan and join in the hostilities, Russia would not deign to regard such an ally of Japan as a second power within the terms of the Franco-Russian alliance.

The military authorities in the Far East have reported that there is absolutely no truth in the story that Russian troops are occupying the American mining concession at Unsan, Korea. Besides, the Russian government has already promised so far as it lies in her power to safeguard American interests should the sphere of operations extend to the American concessions.

Port Arthur, March 17.—Last night and to-day passed quietly.

According to information received from Russians at Shanghai, during the fighting at Port Arthur on February 10th and 11th, the Japanese battleship Mikasa was struck by ten projectiles and seriously damaged. The Japanese battleship and two cruisers have been docked for repairs at Nagasaki and Sasebo and 2,000 wounded men are said to be in the Japanese hospitals.

All the Russian wounded and sick at Port Arthur are making good progress towards recovery.

ADMIRAL'S STATEMENT.

Denies Report That Russians Bombarded Hakodate—The Cruise of Fleet.

St. Petersburg, March 18.—12.05 p. m.—Admiral Stackenburg who, on account of illness, turned over the command of the Vladivostock squadron to Captain Reitzenstein, has arrived in St. Petersburg. He gives an entirely different version of some of the reports, emanating from Japanese sources, regarding the events before he left.

The cruise of his squadron from February 9th to February 15th, in Japanese waters, was made, by order of Admiral Stark, for its effect on the population of the northern Japanese. Admiral Stackenburg denies that he fired upon Japanese merchantmen in Tsugaru Straits. He says that the ships were captured and that while attempting to convey them to port a terrific blizzard sprang up, and not wishing to endanger the Russian cruisers, after taking off the crews and pasengers from the merchantmen, one of the latter loaded with contraband rice was sunk. The other, which was a worthless tramp steamer, was released to carry to the Japanese the story of the presence of Russian warships in those waters for moral effect. There was no bombardment of Hakodate. The admiral adds that he cannot understand how such a stupid story was credited. He expressed the opinion that the war will be of long duration, judging from the extensive Japanese preparations which were thoroughly understood at Vladivostock, where war was expected even earlier than it came.

ACROSS THE YALU.

Russian Horse Artillery and Part of Cavalry Withdraw.

Berlin, March 18.—The correspondent of the Lokal Anzeiger, at Seoul, Korea, confirms the report that the Russian horse artillery has withdrawn to the north bank of the Yalu, and says part of the cavalry has also been withdrawn, leaving only a weak post at Syon Chion, south of Wiju.

GIRL ANXIOUS TO FIGHT.

Volunteers For Service With the Russians in Manchuria.

Odessa, March 18.—A Bulgarian girl named Zorka Illieva, who fought and was wounded in the ranks of the Macedonian insurgents, has arrived here and volunteered for service in Manchuria. She wears masculine attire, is an expert horsewoman and handles rifle and sword. The girl saw Gen. Kaibours, the commander-in-chief here, who promised to endorse her application. She brought with her a full captain's equipment.

THE LOSS OF DESTROYER.

Russians Have No Confirmation of Report of Blowing Up of the Skorr.

St. Petersburg, March 18.—8.30 p. m.—The admiralty has no confirmation of the reported loss of the torpedo boat destroyer Skorr off Port Arthur.

THEORIES OF EXPERTS.

Question Truth of Japanese Report—Stories of Suffering Among Soldiers Without Foundation.

St. Petersburg, March 18.—The war experts here are questioning the truth of the Japanese official reports, asking, for instance, how the torpedo boats of Vice-Admiral Togo, the commander-in-chief of the standing squadron, could lay mines weighing 400 pounds in the heavy sea which Togo admits was running, even if the boats had room for them aboard; how fire could break out on the Russian torpedo boats, which carry nothing inflammable, and how a Japanese torpedo boat preserves its full fighting capacity if a steam pipe on board burst and the Russian boats got away.

The Gazette expresses the hope that the Anglo-French understanding will result in a more friendly attitude on the part of Great Britain towards Russia.

A diplomatist, representing a small European power, expresses the hope that China will join the Japanese on the theory that all white powers will then be compelled to form a coalition and stop the war which would ruin the trade of the whole world with China. But he fears Japan realizes the danger and will decline China's aid.

The Red Cross Society is considering a proposition to fit out an auto train to convey the wounded over the high road, 350 miles, from Mukden, Manchuria, to Blagovetchensk, East Siberia, on the river Amur, where they would be placed on board barges for conveyance to hospitals established along the river.

An expert in the military organ says that even presuming there are four divisions of Japanese at Ping Yang, Korea, they could not venture to advance until reinforced by two more divisions, which would require another month or six weeks. The writer contends they could not advance more than seven miles a day, owing to the conditions of roads. He compares Ping Yang with Plevna, and says the great drawback to the town is that it is surrounded by marshes, which will breed pestilence and malaria when the warm weather comes.

A correspondent of the Associated Press, on crossing Lake Baikal, writes: "The stories of soldiers frozen to death while crossing the lake provoke mirth. Personally, I am convinced that the men are not suffering from the cold. Huts, at intervals of a few versts, provide warmth and refreshments and the weaker are driven across in sleighs, well wrapped up in furs. Others march the distance, forty versts (about 26 miles) comfortably in a day, and are glad of the opportunity to stretch their limbs after the journey. The huts are provided with bells, which are rung during snowstorms, and lanterns are hung on telegraph poles to show the way at night. The ice railroad conveys the baggage cars, which are drawn by horses. The ice breakers are getting ready to begin operations at the end of March."

RUMOR OF DEFEAT

Of Japanese Probably Founded on a Shanghai Story.

Paris, March 18.—5.30 p.m.—No reports have been received at the foreign office or elsewhere confirming the bourse rumor of a great Japanese defeat, which probably grew out of the unconfirmed Shanghai report of the defeat of 200 Japanese by a Russian force of 300 men.

RUSSIA AND KOREA.

Soldiers Who Fight Under Influence of Jap Officers Will Be Arrested.

St. Petersburg, March 18.—A communication from the foreign office is published here confirming the statement made to the correspondent of the Associated Press that Russia does not regard Korea belligerent, and will not do so until there is evidence that Korea is actively making common cause with Japan. The communication, after reiterating the assertion that Russia considers Korea simply a neutral state acting under violent pressure by Japan and deprived of the power of free action, and that Russia therefore cannot regard as valid any treaty to the benefit of Japan nor the abrogation of Russian concessions, proceeds: "Should the Russian troops encounter Korean forces operating against the Russians under the influence of Japanese officers, who are forcing them to act against the wishes of the Korean government, the Russians are instructed not to fight them as though they were troops of a belligerent state, but to confine themselves to placing them under arrest."

BANKER'S TRIP.

K. Takahashi Denies He Has Anything to Do With Negotiating a Loan.

New York, March 18.—The Sun says: "Korekyo Takahashi, the vice-president of the Bank of Japan, has arrived in this city on a trip around the world. He will sail for Europe on March 23rd. Mr. Takahashi said that he had nothing to do with negotiating any loan for his government. The government loan of 100,000,000 yen had been four times over subscribed, he said. Moreover the nobles and wealthy merchants in Japan had been contributing money freely. In some cases old coins which had been secreted since Japan's feudal times had been brought from their hiding place."

PRIZE COURTS

Are to Be Instituted by Order of Russian Ministry of Marine.

St. Petersburg, March 18.—The ministry of marine has directed the institution of prize courts at Sebastopol, Libau, Port Arthur and Vladivostock.

JAPS OCCUPY PING YANG.

Russian Cruiser Bayarin Struck by Floating Mine—Movements of Chinese Troops.

St. Petersburg, March 18.—Under today's date Viceroy Alexieff cables from Mukden as follows:

"General Mishtchento reports that Ping Yang is occupied by Japanese infantry with some guns, and that the Korean carts are carrying their supplies. The enemy's cavalry is not visible in large bodies and only isolated horsemen are seen. Their horses are poor. Our patrols discovered the presence of the enemy's infantry on the banks of the Cheng Cheng river, five versts (about three and one-half miles) from Anju. The enemy opened fire and killed one of our horses."

A correspondent of the Associated Press, who has just visited Port Arthur, telegraphs to-day from Mukden as follows:

"Despite the various bombardments at Port Arthur the external aspect of the city remains unchanged, although the enemy fired an enormous number of projectiles. The cruiser Pallada stands almost ready in the dock. Near the entrance of the harbor can be seen the charred wrecks of the Japanese fire ships. On board one of the farthest out was found the body of a Japanese officer, who had shot himself; beside him lay a chart showing the course of the fire ships and the spot where they sank.

"Six hours of firing by the heaviest guns during the last bombardment did not demolish a single building, but cost a few lives. The husband and children of the Baroness Frank, who was decapitated by fragments of shell flying through the window, were unharmed. The enemy is endeavoring to stand as far as possible outside the range of the Russian batteries, rendering their own fire ineffective. The people are getting used to the bombardments and the Japanese squadron cruising in the offing causes little alarm. Occupations are resuming their wonted course, and many stores have been reopened. Not a few women refused to leave Port Arthur, regardless of the tragic death of Baroness Frank. During the height of the cannonading one lady, armed with dressing for the wounded, went through the streets ready to afford aid to the injured. A branch of the Russo-Chinese bank is doing business, and many wives of the officers and soldiers are returning, as also are Sisters of Mercy.

"The land defences are being strengthened every day and the troops are eager to fight. The gaiety and good spirits of the troops are surprising. During the engagement between the Japanese torpedo boat destroyers and the Russians the boats came into very close quarters, being within only a few fathoms length of each other. A torpedo from the Russian destroyer Vlastini tore off the stern of one of the enemy's destroyers, her captain standing on the bridge as she sank amidst wild cheers. The Japanese squadron is now reckoned to consist only of the battleships Shikishima, the Hatsuse, the Yashima, the Mikasa, the Ashai and the Fudashi.

"Concerning the loss of the armored cruiser Boyarin at Port Arthur, a private letter received here says the vessel was struck by a floating mine dropped by the Japanese. Naval engineers are preparing to raise the Boyarin, though it is considered doubtful that she will be fit for fighting purposes, as it is feared that the tremendous concussion sustained from the explosion of the floating mine has more than likely strained the frames.

"Port Arthur is extremely gloomy at night, all lights being out. Pickets patrol the streets, stopping all suspicious pedestrians. The Chunchuses (Chinese bandits) a few days ago attacked a house in the centre of the town. The master of the house killed two of the Chunchuses and a third was killed by officers. The understanding at Port Arthur is that the Japanese are proposing to effect a landing west of the Liao river."

At the Yalu.

London, March 19.—This morning's papers contain vague rumors of unsuccessful attempts of the Porth Arthur and Vladivostock squadrons to join hands.

The Standard's Tientsin correspondent says that Paul Lessar, Russian minister to China, has renewed his protest against the dispatch of Chinese troops outside the Great Wall, and intimated that unless they are withdrawn Russia may be compelled to act on the assumption that China is abandoning her neutrality in favor of Japan. The minister is also reported to have renewed his threat that, on the slightest movement on China's part, Russian troops will march on Pekin. It is understood that in reply to this, the correspondent says, China refused to recall her troops.

The Newchwang correspondent of the Times, cabling under yesterday's date, asserts that there are no Japanese north of the Yalu river, and that not any of their scouts have been seen there since the beginning of March. On the other hand, the correspondent says the Russians are reported to have crossed the Yalu to the south, leaving a small force to guard the river.

Admiral Stark.

Paris, March 18.—The Petit Parisienne's correspondent at St. Petersburg sends a mere rumor to the effect that Vice-Admiral Stark, who has been relieved of the command of the fleet at Port Arthur, ostensibly on account of ill-health, has attempted to commit suicide. There is no confirmation of this rumor from any other source.

Fortifying the Liao River.

Newchwang, March 18.—The work of undocking the Russian gunboat Sivoutch has been started so as to enable her to enter the Liao river at the earliest possible moment. Three small boats from Port Arthur have been disentrained at the railroad station. The above facts are taken to indicate the proposed execution of plans to fortify the east bank of the Liao river, from the railway station to the forts, and the coast line to Kinchau.

Official denials were sent to Tokio today of the reports prevailing in Japan that Vice-Admiral Makaroff fears the loss of his fleet if he remains at Port Arthur, and he therefore contemplates an attempt to escape. Competent authorities much doubt the probability of the Japanese reducing Port Arthur under two years.

ENTERING KOREA.

Russian Troops Said to Be Pouring Into Country—Experts Puzzled.

St. Petersburg, March 19.—Russian troops continue to pour into North Korea. They are in excellent condition. It is said typhus fever is raging among the Japanese forces.

The government's private information is not completely reassuring as regards China's sincerity in observing a neutral attitude. Secret advices indicate that at least a powerful party in the Chinese government is abetting the Japanese. Although at first reluctant to credit these reports, the Russian authorities continue to receive evidence that the Japanese would not be a large force, yet would weaken the frontal attack from Korea.

It was reported soon after the Japanese began their operations against Port Arthur that they had seized one of the Elliot islands, situated in the Korean Gulf, less than one hundred miles east by north of Port Arthur, for use as a base, and the Tokio correspondent of the London Times on March 7th cabled that a Japanese squadron took possession of Hai Yang Tui, one of the Elliott islands, on February 29th. The correspondent argued that the Japanese found there only stores of coal and signalling flags, the Russians having evacuated the island on February 23rd.

ORDERS RAILWAY CARS.

Russia Desires Three Thousand Within the Next Six Months.

Berlin, March 19.—The Frankfurter Zeitung to-day says the Russian government has just ordered 3,000 railway cars in Russian-Poland for delivery within the next six months.

sen's experience will be useful, enabling the province to arrange for the supplies for the Manchurian army.

BECOME DEAF.

Effect of Cannonading on Commander of Russian Battleship.

Moscow, March 19.—Mme Shechensnevitch has been informed that her husband, the commander of the battleship Retvizan, has become deaf as the result of the cannonading in the repelling of the Japanese assaults on Port Arthur.

SUPPORT AND SYMPATHY.

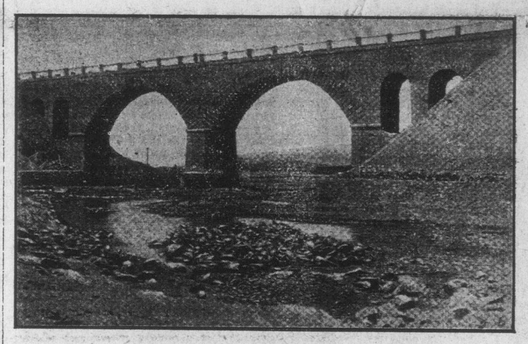
Resolutions Passed at Meeting of American Citizens of Slavic Origin.

New York, March 19.—Resolutions pledging support and sympathy to the Russian people in their struggle with the Japanese were adopted at a meeting here of American citizens of Slavic origin. The resolution states:

"We are firmly convinced that the Russian people are waging a war of self-defence and not one of conquest.

"We recognize that a nation throbbing with virility and ambition like the Russian nation must have an outlet to an ice free seaboard.

"We are not unmindful of the enduring services which the Russian people have rendered the cause of Christianity, and that we maintain that there is less to fear from the peaceful aggression of Russian people than there is to dread from the industrial and commercial domination of the Pacific ocean by 500,000,000 yellow men, to whose traditions, mode of living, life and thought, we are and must remain as strangers."



THE LARGEST BRIDGE ON THE MANCHURIAN RAILWAY.

ARMY SUPPLIES.

Russians Seeking Information From Dr. Nansen, the Norwegian Explorer.

Moscow, March 19.—The provincial government of Moscow has asked Dr. Nansen, the Norwegian explorer, for information concerning the kind of conserves which proved most satisfactory during his Polar expedition. Dr. Nan-

RUSSIA'S NEW WARSHIPS.

Vessels on the Neva Will Be Ready to Proceed to Far East by June.

Cronstadt, March 19. — The commander-in-chief here, Admiral Birileff, inspected the battleships Alexander III., Naravin and Sissoi Vilki, the cruiser Svietlana and the torpedo boats, which are preparing for a foreign cruise. The chief constructor promises to have all the warships building on the Neva ready in June to proceed for the Far East, if the authorities decide to send them there.

Chefoo, March 19.—9.30 p.m.—A private dispatch received here from Mukden states that a battle has been fought on the Yalu, in which the Russians claim to have captured 1,800 prisoners.

A. G. HALES EXCLUDED.

British Minister Refuses to Endorse His Application to Accompany the Japanese Army.

Tokio, March 19.—The British minister refuses to endorse the application of A. G. Hales, the correspondent of the Daily News, to accompany the Japanese army, giving as his reason that the reports Mr.