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**FRENCH POLITICS.**

Paris, March 2.—The Figaro this morning was up to the interview it published yesterday with Premier Combes upon the report that the cabinet is likely to fall soon. The report of a lengthy conversation from a member of the cabinet, whose identity is not divulged, and an intimate of this minister said there was a complete absence of cordial relations among cabinet members, who avoided exchange elsewhere than at the official meetings and who even then did not discuss matters, but simply accepted the proposals of Combes. He added that all the members would be glad when the cabinet was overthrown, but that none was willing to compromise his colleagues by taking the initiative by resigning, and declared the cabinet would not be overthrown unless it could vote secretly, but the deputies feared the accusation of seditious tendencies if they did not support the government's anti-clerical policy.

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# The Victoria Times.

TWICE-A-WEEK EDITION  
VICTORIA, B. C., TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 1904.

VOL. 34.

NO. 96.

## RUSSIAN SQUADRON MAY SOON ATTACK JAPANESE

### A Decisive Move Expected to Follow Arrival of Markoff—Torpedo Boats to Take Prominent Part—Landing of Troops at Chinnampo Will Expedite Advance.

London, March 4.—The general idea among correspondents in the Far East appears to be that no important land battle is expected before the end of March.

A dispatch to the Daily Express from Chemulpo, dated March 2nd, says that 15,000 Japanese troops have landed at Chemulpo and gone to Ping Yang.

A Harbin correspondent of the Daily Herald gives a rumor that 60,000 Japanese have landed at Wonsan.

The Shanghai correspondent of the Daily Telegraph asserts that three separate Japanese armies have landed in Korea.

Nothing in any of these reports is improbable, but it is evident that Japan is maintaining strict secrecy as to her plans.

Under date of March 3rd, a Chefoo correspondent of the Daily Telegraph says that, although Japan has lost a small cruiser and that the machinery of two of her warships has been damaged, these have probably been fully repaired, and in any event Japan has complete command of the sea and will resume her normal movements, the landing of Japanese troops at the best strategic positions and the occupation of territory near Port Dahu as soon as the winter moderates.

He predicts that, having crossed the Yalu, one army of the Japanese will strike Kirin, cutting the railroad and menacing Vladivostok while the second force deals with the Liao Tung peninsula.

According to the Chefoo correspondent of the Morning Post, a Japanese battleship has run aground near Chemulpo.

Refugees from Port Arthur, the Nagasaki correspondent of the Times says, "believe there were thirty thousand troops there in the middle of February. They report that the ten thousand Russian troops who were dispatched to Korea the beginning of February

were so ill-equipped with transports and supplies that it was thought they would be compelled to return. They say also that the Russians treated the Japanese at Port Arthur so brutally that they fled to the sea shore, embarked in small harbor boats and endeavored to reach Port Dahu. Several were drowned."

**Confident of Result.**

St. Petersburg, March 4.—The government is badly puzzled at the apparent disappearance of the Japanese squadron, which has been investing Port Arthur and are inclined to believe that the ships are being coaled and their ammunition supplied in order to begin a renewal of the bombardment at an early date.

The report which is being persistently circulated by the "official" news agency that the Japanese have retired, discouraged at their lack of success in damaging the fortress and the severe injury of some of their ships, is laughed at by the best posted of the naval experts here. It is reported that orders have been sent to the commandant at Port Arthur to relax none of his vigilance and not to permit his cruisers and scout boats to return too far away from their base in endeavoring to locate the enemy.

Russian officers are looking forward confidently to the first battle between the land forces. They declare that the Russian forces in the vicinity of the Yalu are strong enough to contest the points of vantage with the enemy and are placing a great deal of dependence in the strong force of cavalry which General Lenevitch has available for service. It will endeavor to cut the Japanese line of communication and generally harass them without actually participating in a general engagement.

The main reliance of the Russian commander will be on his infantry, and he will use the cavalry as an auxiliary and to follow up any advantage that may be gained.

In reply to a telegram sent to him by General Bogdanovitch, victory Alexieff says: "Our message has strengthened our unalterable determination to fight until the death for faith, the Czar and the country."

**Report Heavy Losses.**

Vladivostok, March 3.—It is reported here that a Japanese steamer, the name of which is not known, was sunk in the Sea of Japan on February 25th while on her way to Wonsan with a load of rice.

Witnesses of the naval fight at Port Arthur have just arrived here. They declare that the losses of the Japanese up to February 25th were greater than has been admitted in foreign newspapers. In addition to five steamers sunk they say that five torpedo boat destroyers, one gunboat and two torpedo boats were put out of action and several others so damaged that they will require extensive repairs.

**Depend on Land Force.**

Yin Kow, March 3.—The Russo-Chinese bank is closing preparatory to removing to Mukden. Women and children are preparing to leave Yin Kow in anticipation of the arrival of a Japanese fleet, which is expected when the river opens, probably a fortnight hence.

On account of the impossibility of defending the coast of Ying Kow until such time as a thaw permits the construction of retranchments and forts, the Japanese have ceased debarking troops at Chemulpo and that they have taken advantage of the opening of Chinnampo to land troops there, thus expediting the advance.

As far as is yet known the only plans decided upon are:

First—That Gen. Kouropatkin's headquarters are to be at Mukden. Victory Alexieff proposes to remain at Mukden indefinitely, as that city is the centre of the Chinese administration and has a viceregal bureau. Second—That the plain west of Tsinshichio, which is almost impossible of defence, will be held, if possible, on account of the railroad connecting with Port Arthur. Third—That Chin-ching and Liao-chang are the extreme limits to which troops will be withdrawn on account of the exposure of the railroad at these points.

That the Japanese will arrive before a thaw permits the construction of defences is thought here to be practically certain. It would appear also that the authorities expect Port Arthur to be besieged.

Sir Robert Hart, director of the Chinese imperial maritime customs, after sounding Russian opinion in the matter, has ordered the Chinese customs lightship and the channel buoy to be placed at the river mouth as usual. This step, however, has no effect upon the neutralization of Chemulpo.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the Matin telegraphs that Admiral Makaroff has arrived at Port Arthur.

The Harbin correspondent of the Matin says that a detachment of Japanese cavalry, commanded by Vitchemmo Calenzer Moshane, has entered Mak Far Chan in eastern Manchuria, close to the Korean border.

**KOUROPATKIN'S DEPARTURE.**

Will Start For the Front on March 12th, Going by Special Train.

Paris, March 4.—The St. Petersburg correspondent of the Echo De Paris says that when Gen. Kouropatkin starts for the Far East on March 12th, he will go in a special train and be accompanied by part of his staff. It is reported, the



GEN. KOUROPATKIN, Who Will Start For the Front on March 12th.

correspondent continues, that the Czar said to him: "You will return a field marshal." There has not been a field marshal in Russia since Count Giurko.

Paris, March 4.—Information received here from official sources in Korea confirm previous reports to the effect that Chinnampo is free from ice, that the Japanese have ceased debarking troops at Chemulpo and that they have taken advantage of the opening of Chinnampo to land troops there, thus expediting the advance.

Official advices from St. Petersburg confirm the reports that a decisive move is anticipated on the part of the Port Arthur squadron, now that Admiral Markoff has arrived here, that torpedo boats especially will be brought into play, and that in spite of reports to the contrary, Russia is understood to have a simple supply of torpedoes for these craft.

**TRANSPORTS SIGHTED.**

Discovered by Cruisers They Are Proceeding Towards Gulf of Liao Tung.

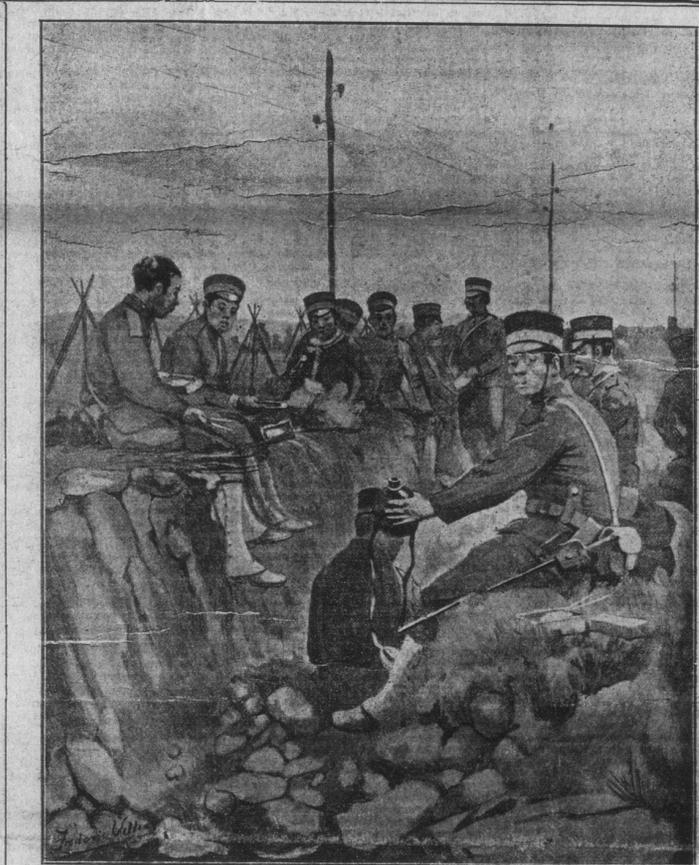
New York, March 4.—Six Japanese cruisers, escorting ten transports, have been sighted steaming in the direction of the Gulf of Liao Tung, according to a cable to the Herald, from Chefoo. This movement is connected with the reported intention to effect a landing north of Saddle Bay. Owing to the heavy weather, it is difficult to proceed. A big battle is expected.

**CALLING OUT RESERVES.**

Preparations to Mobilize the Whole of Russian Army if Necessary.

St. Petersburg, March 4.—An imperial order has been issued summoning the reserve subalterns and first class reserve of European Russia to the colors for a six weeks course of training. A similar order has been issued to the Cavalry reserves. This is interpreted as indicating that everything is being got ready for the mobilization of the whole Russian army if necessary. The St. Petersburg post office employees are starting a fund to build a torpedo boat to be named Post-Telegraph.

A resident of St. Petersburg, who has just arrived here from Port Arthur, having left the day before the Japanese attack, tells an interesting story, which seems to indicate that the Japanese planned to cork the harbor before firing a shot.



A HALT ON THE MARCH. Japanese Troops Resting For Rations.

ing," and commenced to settle. Luckily a tug with steam up was close by, and towed the Japanese vessel into a shallow part of the outer harbor. The merchantman was loaded with iron. The captain declared he had been caught in a storm and the pumps, which had kept the steamer afloat, broke down just as the entrance of Port Arthur was reached.

The wife of a Russian naval officer attached to the armored cruiser Rossin, who has just arrived here from Vladivostok, described the scene there at the outbreak of hostilities. At 8 o'clock in the morning of February 9th a shot was fired by the flagship and signals were hoisted calling all seamen and others who were on shore leave to come on board.

There was great excitement and enthusiasm amongst the people in the streets. The warship harbor were surrounded with ice, and crowds gathered about them watching the ships receive their war colors and cheer as the ice breaker opened a channel. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon headed by the Rossin and accompanied by the Japanese people gathered on the ice the fleet steamed out.

**THE FIRST ATTACK.**

Panic Among the Inhabitants at Port Arthur—Cabinets Drafted Into Service.

Moscow, March 4.—M. Arkokin, an actor, who has returned here from Port Arthur, was an eyewitness of events there, prior to his departure. His Japanese landings on February 3rd declared that the Japanese had already landed at Yin Kow, and that another place would be taken.

On February 7th the Japanese began leaving Port Arthur. Upon orders from the viceroys, those remaining on February 9th were detained, about 100 of them being rounded up at the hotel.

M. Arkokin had been informed that Chinese would begin celebrating the New Year by setting off fireworks and shooting guns, so when firing was heard for the first time it was supposed to be the Chinese celebration. The Japanese had cleared their decks, but even this did not occasion alarm. It was not until the 9th that the ordinary course of events was interrupted. That day firing caused a panic among the people. All business was suspended. It was rumored about the town that an explosion had occurred on the board one of the Japanese vessels.

During the bombardment the wind blew towards the fort and consequently the smoke from the guns interfered with the sight of the Russians.

**RELATIONS IMPROVED.**

Suspicious Entertained by Russia Regarding Britain's Attitude Cleared Away.

Paris, March 4.—To the gratification of France better relations between Russia and Great Britain are promised as the result of the visit of the Russian ambassador in London to St. Petersburg. Official advices from St. Petersburg show that the ambassador's representations cleared away many suspicions entertained by the Russian authorities.

Russia does not desire unfriendly relations with Great Britain. She therefore met the British government half way, and it is understood that the ambassador was charged with the most conciliatory message by the Czar.

This new phase of the situation has given rise to a feeling in official and diplomatic circles that it will be possible after all to confine the Far Eastern war to Russia and Japan. The regretted action of various European countries in arming is not considered as having any other bearing than preparation for eventualities which, in the present optimistic frame of mind of the authorities, are not likely to come to pass.

There is doubt in official circles regarding the policy of Germany toward Russia. Advice received here indicate that Germany assured Russia that France inspired the recent note of the United States Secretary of State Hay regarding Chinese neutrality, while France claims, and Russia is satisfied, that Germany made the first suggestion to the United States.

**PAPERS WARNED.**

Must Not Publish Bitter Anti-British Articles.

New York, March 4.—A special from St. Petersburg to the Herald, says that in connection with Count Benckendorff's recent departure from London, local newspapers, especially the Novoye Vremya, had been seriously warned against harmful and bitter anti-British articles, which they have been in the habit of publishing.

**LETTER FROM CZAR.**

Russian Ambassador Brought Reply to the King From St. Petersburg.

an autograph letter from the Czar. This was in answer to a letter sent by King Edward in which, in the most friendly terms, he emphasized Great Britain's complete neutrality during the war in the Far East, and he trusted that the Czar would pay no attention to the press reports intimating Great Britain was not neutral nor to any unfriendly comments of the English papers, which the King regretted.

**STATES AND RUSSIA.**

Washington Government's Change of Attitude Hailed With Satisfaction.

St. Petersburg, March 4.—The Russian press hails with satisfaction the American dispatches of the last few days indicating a change in the disposition of the Washington government towards Russia. The Bourne Gazette and the Novoye Vremya this morning discuss in a sober fashion Russo-American relations, and the danger of permanent estrangement. The Gazette says there is something profoundly regrettable in the present relations between these two powers.

**EXODUS CONTINUES.**

Inhabitants Leaving Vladivostok—No Japanese Warships Sighted Since February 25th.

Vladivostok, March 4.—All is quiet here. No Japanese warships have been seen since February 25th, when three ships were sighted on the horizon, but soon disappeared.

The inhabitants continue to leave Vladivostok for Nikolai, Khabarovsk or Europe.

**TO GUARD PROPERTY.**

United States Marines Will Protect Premises of American Mining Co. Near Ping Yang.

Seoul, March 4.—Sixty American marines have been sent to guard the premises of the American mining company, at Un San, 120 miles north of Ping Yang, which were reported on February 27th to have been seized by Russian soldiers.

**MANCHURIA.**

If Japs Are Victorious Russians Will Be Prevented From Assuming a Dominant Attitude.

New York, March 4.—A special from London to the World says it is understood that if the Japanese are successful in Manchuria, steps will be taken to guard against the possibility of Russia again assuming a dominant attitude in that portion of China. The idea of Russia policing the railroad for example,



THE EYES OF THE JAPANESE ARMY—CAVALRY SCOUTING.

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