

Russia's Big Railway Line Cannot Be Depended Upon Even In Time Of Peace. Believed It Will Collapse Under Stress of War Transport.

Glasgow Evening News.

It is not to be expected that you will find a fair estimate of the Russian railway system in the event of war. But besides the number of men and ships, with their equipment, the railway is another element in the problem which is of the first importance. The old conditions of peace have greatly changed by developments in modern weapons, so that Mr. Blach was led to believe that the railway being so destructive, war on the old terms would become impossible. This view has now been confirmed, as was demonstrated by ourselves in South Africa. There, also, we discovered that the military system had developed greatly, the old problem of how to feed and reinforce efficiently an army in the field still remains dominant with its intricacies and perplexities. A railway was a great advantage; but when it is a single line passing through a vast and hostile territory, its disadvantages are great.

This is a fact which the Russians have already realized in the Far East. At one time they thought—and the world is in its ignorance agreed with them—that since the Manchurian railways, their Siberian and Manchurian railways, their railway strength in the Far East would be capable of indefinite extension, that they would be masters of the situation. This belief, although quite natural, has been greatly modified by experience. The Russians have found that a single line of coastwise railways, at a distance of twenty-five miles, makes a most precarious form of transport; its difficulties and dangers increase with its increasing length. When this length runs to thousands of miles—say, 4,000 miles from the Ural mountains to Port Arthur—it can at once be seen what possibilities of disaster are involved in its use.

It is usual to base the transport speed of the Siberian railway on the time taken by the express train from Moscow to the western shore of Lake Balkan. But such a basis is reckoning on entirely misleading. The line is cleared for the express, and the effort is made to pass it along inside the scheduled time. This assuming process, of course, could not be applied to the transport of a great body of troops, and all the necessary food and ammunition required at the front. One train in these circumstances would be as important as another, and the effort to pass it would be, not an express train, but the ordinary goods train. How long a goods train at present takes to reach Port Arthur from Moscow is a question that depends for its answer upon innumerable contingencies. But a merchant must consider himself fortunate if his goods cover the distance in less than a month. This is in time of peace; what would happen to the transport trains in stress of war is a matter which is not to be mentioned. At ordinary times the collisions and breakdowns are numerous on the Siberian railway owing to its inherent defects. For it must be clearly understood that the maintenance of this railway has suffered from the common ailment of all official enterprises in Russia. The officers would be inclined to neglect it, and the Siberian railway witnesses to this fact. It is a poor railway—imperfectly graded, carelessly looked after, and the rolling stock is of the most inferior. All these imperfections, for it has been a most costly railway, but it is not a thorough frater perpetrated by the contractors, abetted by the government officials, as is supposed at the present time. The difficulties will be greatest at Lake Balkan, which is the most important point to be crossed on slopes until the usual railway steamer can make the crossing. It is in fact the most difficult part of the railway, owing to its steepness.

There is the further possibility amounting almost to certainty, that the Manchurian railway, at least—the section that branches off at Port Arthur at Kharbin—will be broken at many points by the Japanese, in the event of war. No secret is intended to be made by the Japanese staff, and they have at their command the necessary agents on the Chinese coast to keep the railway in repair, requires a large body of Chinese coolies, and it is not to be said that the world for the Japanese officers from the engineer corps to disperse themselves in China, coast to coast. Apart from this danger, there is the further danger involved in the fact that the railway runs for a thousand miles, at least, through hostile territory, and to guard it adequately will require a whole army. And to feed these guards alone will almost tax the present resources of the railway.

It will thus be seen that, apart from all questions of fighting, the Russians have a big task before them should war be the outcome of the present negotiations. At Port Arthur, the big business is now being fully recognized, and this accounts not only for the long delays made by Russia in the earlier phases of the negotiations, but it will account for any evidence of retreat which they are now exhibiting. For the question of transport is vital to Russia, and in this it is sufficient to mention the issue. It is vital to Japan no less, but to her the problem is comparatively simple. If she retains command of the sea—and nothing less will serve—there is open to her the least a better way in the world, as Great Britain has many times discovered. Given an adequate navy, the Russian communications equal to the cheap, simple, unwieldy, unbreakable line of the sea highway. It was to this fact that we owed our success in South Africa, and if Japan should find herself able to break the power of Russia, it will be due to this fact in an essential degree.

Farre Bred Cattle.—In the last three years British Columbia farmers have spent a big sum on pure bred cattle. Now Mr. L. W. Patsley is going back with with orders to buy \$20,000 worth more. He intends to take in the competition at Ottawa of the National Association of Canadian Stock Breeders before returning home. Few men have done more for British Columbia agriculture than the executive of Chibouctau.

COLLIERIES CLOSING.—Philadelphia, Feb. 18.—The Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Co. announced today that, because of the constricted condition of traffic, all of the collieries operated by the company will be closed tomorrow. It is expected that they will be opened on Saturday and thereafter as usual.

TRACKED BY BLOODHOUNDS.—Negro Murderer Hunted Down and Burned.—Little Rock, Ark., Feb. 10.—Glennie Davis, a negro, was hunted down by a mob and was burned at the stake today near Crowley's.

VOICES OF THE PRESS SUBMITS FREEDOM REPORT. The Deadly Elevator Shaft. Well-Known Canadian Mining Man Sustains Fearful Injuries. Suggestion Thrown Out That Various Societies Might Assist Furnishing. The Grounds Around the New Completed Strathcona Win to be Fixed up.

RUSSIANS CONFIDENT THAT SEVERE DAMAGE WAS INFLECTED ON THEIR FOE

St. Petersburg, Feb. 18.—A long official despatch from Yekaterinburg was given out today, recounting the details of the fight on February 9th at Port Arthur. It does not comment on the Russian casualties, and says it is known that a number of Japanese ships suffered severely, which accounts for their not following up the attack. After giving a list of ships engaged, with the names of their commanders, Admiral Alekseyev says: "According to the reports of the command, the men fought exceedingly well, on which account, in virtue of the important successes of the Order of St. George on the first and second class warships, four crosses on each company of all other ships of the second class, one cross on each torpedo boat, one cross

destroyed so far in the various naval engagements, and that all necessary repairs had already been made. KURDISH CAVALRY REFUSED. Port Arthur, Feb. 18.—A Central Asian magazine named Salabek has arrived at Port Arthur asking the vice-regent's permission to go to the front with 3,000 Kurd horsemen. He asks the government to provide only for the transport of the men, their horses and arms. Admiral Alekseyev declined the offer and referred him to the czar. RUSSIAN TROOPS ENAGED. The railroad is undamaged and Port Arthur is calm, says a despatch. All the troops are eagerly awaiting an opportunity to meet the Japanese in a fair fight. It is believed here the enemy was

THE JAPANESE FLEET AT THE RECENT MANOEUVRES



On the signal station at Golden Hill, the enemy, four crosses on battery No. 15, three on battery No. 13 and one cross on the gunnery on the second class, one man killed, one severely wounded, returned to the battery. "Our losses were, of the squadron, five officers wounded, 14 men killed and 16 wounded; of the fortress and garrison, one man killed, one severely wounded and five men slightly wounded. "In announcing the above to Your Majesty, I am pleased to be able to add that the arrival and land forces in the Far East are inspired by the heartfelt wish to meet the invading force, to breast in order to fulfill their duty in the sight of their sacred ruler, and to maintain the honor and glory of their beloved fatherland. "The belief is general in British diplomatic circles that Russia is about to break the United States in a similar manner to that in which it involved itself with Japan. The note of Secretary Hay, however, is designed to guarantee the integrity of China, has caused a profound sensation in St. Petersburg, and the charge is openly made that for commercial purposes the Russian government is planning to become dominant in China. "That Russia realizes this, and that she will follow up her old-time diplomatic methods, shown by the indication that she will soon send a reply to the note of the United States, is not in doubt, with certain "inconsequential" limitations, she accepts the position taken by

the government at Washington. This she did to Japan in the Manchurian and Korean negotiations, that terminated in the present war, claiming to have made concessions, while at the same time she had made none. So she will do to the United States and hopes to hoodwink that government. "Russia will accept no line of procedure that can in any way be construed as assenting to the proposition that the Chinese government has any sovereignty over Manchuria. She will balk at the Hay plan, and, if necessary, will permit that nation to outline her policy in the Far East. "Russia expects to defeat Japan in the present war. She knows it will take a long time, but she believes that the weight of numbers will finally tell, and that she intends to retain Korea and Manchuria. She will not allow herself to be interfered with, a substantial slice of Japan for her trouble. That will be her reason for refusing to give up to the United States, and her reply to the United States is awaited patiently by European diplomats. "The grounds for this belief were stated as follows: "Admiral Togo's fleet, on watch at the entrance of the port, proved to be more than a match for the Japanese blockade and cutting off the chances of relief from seaward. The Japanese troops near New Chwang and other points in the Liao Tung peninsula, are able to interrupt the railroad supplying the line of communication and supplies between Port Arthur and Harbin. The result is the gradual investment of Port Arthur within the Japanese naval and military lines. It will require bold action on the part of Russian forces to prevent the final accomplishment of the investment and slow reduction of Port

Hospital Board Met Yesterday

Last evening the regular meeting of Hospital Board was held in the Board Room. There were present: Mr. B. S. Day, Mr. Dallas Helms, Mr. Alex. Wilson, Mr. Braverman, Mr. H. Hamilton, Mr. H. Twigg, Mr. T. J. and J. Foreman.

The Deadly Elevator Shaft

Well-Known Canadian Mining Man Sustains Fearful Injuries. Sealers Claims Against Russia Are to Be Carefully Safeguarded.

Ottawa, Feb. 18.—Mr. B. T. Bell, secretary of the Canadian Mining Institute and one of its commissioners to investigate the hydraulic concessions in the Yukon, is lying at death's door at St. Luke's Hospital. Mr. Bell was making a short cut through the frame building to reach Sparks street when he fell into the shaft of an elevator. When picked up it was found his skull was fractured and a collar bone broken. Up to midnight he had not regained consciousness. "There are said to be eighty applications for the position of usher of the Black Rod in the Senate. The cabinet ministers met in council this morning. During the next couple of weeks the House will be dealing with the bill to raise the business of the council to raise the business of the House to raise the business of the House. It is reported that the striking paper makers are negotiating with Edley for a settlement under which the men can return to work with a slight increase in wages.

INSPECTION OF OLD VESSELS

Bill Before Congress to Examine Ships Built Over Twenty Years. The statistics recently sent to the United States Senate from the department of commerce and labor showing the amount of American merchant vessels over 100 tons gross register lost at sea during the past year showed that out of a total of seventy-four vessels and barges lost during the year 1903, thirty-two were over twenty years old, and the hulls of forty-two were over twenty years old. "These figures are not surprising, considering the Chamberlain to suggest that an act of Congress should be passed to subject all American sailing vessels over 100 gross tons to government inspection in such cases as international matters. The inspection will also have two representatives from the United States in London on the 25th inst.

MURDER SUSPECTED IN NORTHERN WILDS

An Employee of Hudson's Bay Company Done to Death and Indian Suspected. From One Own Correspondent. Winnipeg, Feb. 10.—A story comes from Prince Albert that a young half-breed named Rodrick Thomas was shot to death on Lac La Pêche, in the northern wilds, and his body was found on the 10th inst. Six weeks later the homicide had committed the body to be found under circumstances that at once betrayed the fact of a murder. The Mounted Police were notified and are setting out on the trail. The victim was Rodrick Thomas, twenty years of age, an English-born boy, who had been employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, and the supposed murderer is an Indian.

Lame Back for Four Months

Was Unable to Turn in Bed Without Help. Plasters and Liniments No Good. This was the experience of Mr. Benjamin Stewart, Zimvillia, N.B.

Advertisement for Doan's Kidney Pills, including a testimonial and product information.

PHILIPPINE CERTIFICATES

Washington, Feb. 19.—The United States will departures from the Philippines temporary certificates of responsibility to be issued to the Philippine Islands. The certificates will be issued to the Philippine Islands, and the government will be responsible for the actions of the Philippine Islands.

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