The Semi-Weekly Colonist.

VOL. XLVI., NO. 23. VICTORIA, B. C., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1904. FORTY-FIFTH YEAR.

Choking The Pacific Cable

Action of Commonwealth Authorities Will Divert Australian Business.

Japanese Government Treats With Scant Courtesy Canadians' Applications.

Chaplain of Fifth Regiment Assumes Honorary Rank of Captain.

From our own correspondent.

Ottawa, Feb. 24.—The idea prevails in some quarters that a deliberate attempt will be made to choke the pan-Brittanic Pacific cable project to death. It will be remembered that the Commonwealth senate blocked an arrangement with the Eastern Extension Company, granting authority to the rival of the Pacific cable to connect its land lines with all the state capitals and to actively canvass for business. The senate rejected the proposed arrangement on the protest of Canada that if granted it would be inimical to the interests of the Pacific cable project. Premier Laurier suggested that a conference of all the partners in the Pacific cable enterprise should be held to determine what effect the proposed concession to the Eastern Extension company would have. Several months have elapsed since the suggestion went in from Canada, but nothing has been heard of the conference. It now transpires that despite the action of the Senate the Eastern Extension Company has been permitted to connect its wires with the different state capitals

WILD RUMORS

St. Petersburg, Feb. 25.—(12:10 a. m.)—The wildest rumors have been afloat here regarding the reported Japanese repulse at Port Arthur, but up to midnight nothing official could be learned. It is reported, unofficially, that the Japanese, while attempting to land at Pigeon Bay, lost two cruisers and two transports.

and as a consequence are grabbing nearly all the business.

The past year was a record one in fish culture carried on under the direction of the commissioner of fisheries. A total of 214,514,000 young fish were put out, an increase of [illegible] millions over the previous year. For the first time the department reared a number of salmon up to the finger-length stage.

For the position of Black Rod out of nearly 100 applications the choice now lies between Capt. Adamson of G. G. F. C., Ottawa, and Capt. Chambers of the Guildes Corps, Montreal.

The statement published here that the Japanese government has accepted the services of a number of Canadian nurses is absolutely without foundation. The Japanese did not even acknowledge the applications.

A number of honorary chaplains are appointed with the honorary rank of captain, among them are Rev. C. E. Sharp, Fifth Regiment. Officers of the new signaling corps have been gazetted as follows: Major, Capt. Bruce Carruthers from unattached list; Acting adjutant, Capt. F. A. Lister, Royal Canadian Regiment. Major Carruthers will be inspector of signaling in all Ontario military districts and west to the Pacific coast. Capt. Lister will be the inspector of Eastern districts. Militia changes gazetted today: Sixth Regiment, to be chaplain with honorary rank of captain, Rev. C. C. Owen. Officers of the Sixth are permitted to adopt staff or naval pattern forage cap.

GERMAN BARON KILLED BY BEAR

Corpse Found Near Dead Quarry in Woods at Port Angeles.

Port Angeles, Wash., Feb. 24.—The body of Baron Martin Von Schlozer, formerly an officer in the German army and for many years a resident of this city, has been found on the range south of the hot springs, near the body of a dead bear. The baron undoubtedly had been killed by the bear while hunting.

The body was found on Monday evening, and the news of the fact was first brought to this city today by C. Bowine, a ranger.

The baron started on a hunt Monday morning. On his body were found receipts from banks in Portland, Oregon, Chicago and New York for over one hundred thousand dollars. A letter found on the body directed that Judge Hatch should administer his affairs. The body will be brought here tomorrow. Baron Von Schlozer had been a resident of Port Angeles for several years and only recently had taken out naturalization papers.

CONSTRUCTION POSTPONED.

Malta, Crimea, Feb. 23.—The building of the railroad along the southern shore of the Crimea with state funds has been postponed on account of the war.

RUSSIA'S PROTEST.

Washington, Feb. 23.—At an important conference scheduled for tomorrow noon at the American State department, between United States Secretary of State Hay and Count Cassini, the Russian ambassador to the United States, Russia's protests to the powers against Japan's violation of international law will be communicated to the Washington government.

The cabinet session interfered with the presentation of the note today.

CHAMBERLAIN'S COUGH REMEDY CURES COLDS ON NATURE'S PLAN.

The most successful medicines are those that aid nature. Chamberlain's Cough Remedy acts on this plan. It aids expectoration, relieves the lungs, opens the secretions and aids nature in restoring the system to a healthy condition. It not only relieves, it cures effectually and permanently, and is unquestionably the most successful medicine in use for this purpose. It is pleasant to take and contains no opium or other harmful drug. For sale by all druggists.

LOCOMOTIVE EXPLODES.

Terrible Fatality on the Philadelphia & Erie Railroad.

Williamsport, Pa., Feb. 23.—Lewis Swatseer and John Mahey, of Erie, lost their lives today by the explosion of a locomotive on the Philadelphia & Erie railroad near Kane, Pa. Both were asleep in the caboose at the time of the explosion. Mahey's body was burned to a crisp, while Swatzer died a short time after being taken from the burning wreckage. The engineer and fireman were blown out of the cab of the engine, but were not fatally injured.

A DEMENTED KNIGHT.

Mentone, France, Feb. 23.—Sir Hon. Seton Gordon, Bart., became suddenly demented here and behaved in such a manner that he eventually was taken into custody and placed in charge of a doctor. He telegraphed to numerous hotels ordering rooms for three hundred imaginary friends, and created a scene at the British consulate. He also sent a telegram to King Edward and the British foreign office complaining of the way he had been treated.

ENTERPRISING CANADIANS.

Helena, Mont., Feb. 23.—A convention of Milk River Valley residents at Chinook has addressed a resolution to President Roosevelt and the secretary of the interior calling their attention to the fact that the Canadians are building a great canal with a view to diverting the waters of the Milk river in Northern Montana. Thousands of dollars have been spent in irrigating works which would be of no value if the Canadians secured the water. The President is urged to act promptly.

United States Asiatic Fleet

Naval Officials Considering the Necessity of Strengthening Squadron.

Rear Admiral Evans Desirous of Remaining in the East For Present.

Washington, Feb. 23.—United States naval officials are considering earnestly the strengthening of the American Asiatic fleet in view of the vast interests of the United States in the Philippines and in China and Korea, and the probability that disturbances may necessitate their protection at any time. While the fleet is regarded as too small there is a desire to avoid exciting the suspicion of interfering. A high official tonight said: "The need of increasing the Asiatic fleet has long been felt. It was intended that the new battleship Ohio, building at the Union Iron Works, San Francisco, should be sent to the Asiatic station in the spring and that she should be followed there by the armored cruiser South Dakota, and the protected cruiser Milwaukee as soon as these vessels are completed. The Ohio, however, will not be ready before autumn, and we are now considering the despatch within the next month or two of an additional battleship. It has been suggested that the Iowa be selected for this mission. She is now receiving rush repairs at New York."

The official said that events are moving so rapidly that it is impossible to tell what a day's developments may demand. Repairs to the valves of the Kentucky, the flagship of the Asiatic squadron, have necessitated the sending of that ship to Hongkong to be docked, and it is probable the other ships of the battleship squadron will accompany her. In the meantime the cruisers will be used to keep in communication with the agents of the United States at Niau Chwang, Chefoo, Chemulpo and Seoul. Rear Admiral Evans has cabled the navy department expressing a wish to remain in the Far East for the present. He feels the situation is extremely important and offers to remain, although his tour of sea duty is up next month. The department has cabled him, leaving the matter entirely to his own judgment. The announcement was made tonight that the department had every confidence in the wisdom of Admiral Evans' decision.

RUSSIA'S PROTEST

Note Handed to Washington Government by the Ambassador.

Washington, Feb. 24.—Promptly at noon today Count Cassini, the Russian ambassador, handed Secretary Hay Russia's communication to the powers protesting against Japan's alleged violation of international law. The conference between Secretary Hay and the ambassador lasted an hour. The full text of the note is coming by mail, the substance of it being communicated by the ambassador on the basis of cabled advices. This government has not yet determined what reply it will make to Russia on the subject beyond a formal acknowledgement. Secretary Hay will bring the matter to the attention of the President.

THE IROQUOIS GRAND JURY MAKES REPORT

Ground Upon Which the Recent Indictments at Chicago Were Secured.

Chicago, Feb. 23.—The special grand jury which investigated the Iroquois theatre fire, made its report today to Judge Chytraus.

The report says that, in fixing the liability, the jury ascertained upon whom rested the responsibility for furnishing the apparatus necessary to extinguish fires, and that full authority to procure the necessary apparatus was vested in Will J. Davis, manager; Thomas J. Noonan, business manager, and James E. Cummings, stage manager. These three were indicted for manslaughter.

As to the liability of public officials, the jury inquired as to who were responsible for theatre inspection, and found that such inspection devolved primarily upon the commissioner of buildings, Building Commissioner Geo. Williams and Building Inspector Laughlin were indicted for palpable omission of duty.

As to the mayor, the report says there is no evidence that a violation of the fire ordinance in connection with the Iroquois theatre was ever reported to him.

SENATOR HANNA'S SUCCESSOR.

Columbus, Feb. 24.—The Republican legislative caucus this evening nominated General Charles Dick to succeed Senator Hanna by acclamation.

RUSSIANS WILD WITH JOY

News of The Defeat of Japanese Fire Boat Flotilla At Port Arthur Creates Excitement At St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg, Feb. 25th—2:45 a. m. A telegram from Viceroy Alexieff to the Czar says: "At a quarter before three in the morning of February 23rd, numerous Japanese torpedo boats attempted to attack the battleship Retvizan and sink large steamers loaded with inflammables. The Retvizan was the first to observe the torpedo boats, and opened strong fire on them. She was supported by the land batteries. She destroyed two steamers near the entrance of the harbor. They were coming directly towards her. One of them went on the rocks near the lighthouse on Tiger Tail Peninsula, and the other sank under Golden hill. The Retvizan observed four steamers in a sinking condition and eight torpedo boats departing slowly to rejoin the waiting Japanese warships. A portion of the crews of the Japanese vessels were drowned. The grounded steamer is still burning. The enemy is observed in the offing of Port Arthur in two lines. The Japanese crews saved themselves in boats and it is possible that some of them were picked up by the enemy's torpedo boats. I am proceeding to examine the coast. The entrance of the harbor is open. I attribute the complete derangement of the enemy's plan to brilliant and decisive fire from the Retvizan. Floating mines are still visible in the roadstead. Have recalled the three cruisers sent in pursuit of the enemy in order, in the first place to clear the roadstead of floating mines. We had no losses."

St. Petersburg, Feb. 25.—Reports of a Russian victory at Port Arthur were current late yesterday, and about midnight they seemed to have been definitely confirmed, but in the absence of official announcement the stories of the dimensions of the victory were most conflicting.

Rumors were spread far and wide over the city during the early part of the evening, and the crowds which had gathered in the streets in spite of the severe cold, to discuss the news were greatly excited. One newspaper printed an extra exlating the victory based on a meagre telegram from London, but as the night wore on without official confirmation the crowds disappeared, except from around the newspaper offices. These remained thronged with officers and others awaiting official information. The news was accompanied by two stories, one that after the first Russian victory the Emperor would offer peace, and the other than Japan had deposed the Emperor of Korea and formally annexed that country. Both these reports are without confirmation, and they are given simply as examples of the stories which floated about the excited crowds.

The crowds at the admiralty and newspaper and telegraph companies offices increased during the night and the excitement attained the fever point when it was known that the Emperor had received a telegram giving more details and showing the Russian victory was even greater than at first reported. When the report was distributed at the admiralty at 2:30 o'clock this morning, a rush was made for the exits and the assembled officers cheered wildly and repeatedly. The crowds showed no inclination to disperse, hoping that further news would be received showing the extent of the Russian victory.

It was observed that in his despatch Viceroy Alexieff does not mention the number of steamers which the Japanese tried to sink or drive upon the Russian ships, and it is not yet known whether the four vessels the captain of the Retvizan observed going down, in addition to the two destroyed, were also laden with inflammables, or whether they were warships. The greatest praise is given to the commander of the Retvizan and the splendid action of this American-built boat places her name foremost in the roll of the Russian navy.

Viceroy Alexieff's despatch was in amplification of a briefer telegram received by the Emperor earlier, but which was not given out.

Later it was said the Russian's sustained no losses in the engagement. It is evident that Vice-Admiral Stark no longer commands the Russian Port Arthur naval forces, Viceroy Alexieff mentioning a temporary commander of the fleet without giving any names.

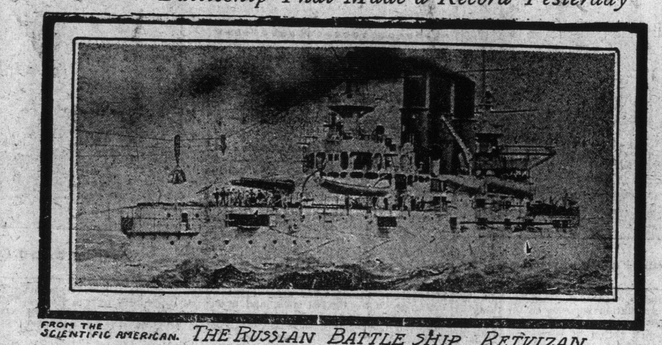
Stories to the effect that the Japanese designed an attempt to land on Pigeon Bay at the same time an engagement occurred, is not mentioned in the despatches, but it is assumed these are without foundation.

It appears that the announcement from Port Arthur that four Japanese battleships and two Japanese transports had been sunk in a fresh attack on Port Arthur, was given out as official by mistake. There is no official confirmation here of a Russian victory at Port Arthur. Both the report of the sinking of the Japanese ships and the denial that the announcement was official were sent out by the semi-official telegraph bureau, the Russian news agency.

ALEXIEFF'S HEADQUARTERS.

St. Petersburg, Feb. 24.—Viceroy Alexieff, with a complete staff, now has his headquarters on a special train which at present is about four miles from Mukden, fully equipped and ready to move from place to place as the necessities of the situation require.

Russian Battleship That Made a Record Yesterday



FROM THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. THE RUSSIAN BATTLE SHIP RETVIZAN.

Paris, Feb. 25.—The Harbin correspondent of the Matin says that the Japanese, in an attempt to repeat at Port Arthur the experiment of the Americans at Santiago, sent in three merchant ships to be sunk in the entrance to the harbor. The Russian battleship Retvizan, although she was still stranded, perceived them and sank them before this design could be carried out.

WOULD NOT STOP.

Kingston, Jamaica, Feb. 24.—The German steamer Allenburg, Captain Kuhls, from Hamburg and West Indian ports, arrived here today and reported that between San Domingo and Sancheza, Santo Domingo, the Dominican gunboat Presidente hove in sight and fired a blank shot across her bows. Capt. Kuhls, however, refused to stop and no further interference was attempted.

SHORTAGE OF CARS.

Minneapolis, Feb. 24.—Minneapolis flour millers are hard pressed for cars in which to load their output. The roads have been appealed to for aid in securing cars so as to prevent curtailment of production. Wheat arriving in cars of roads that permit reloading for the East, commands a slight premium over wheat in cars not allowed to go East. Blockades at Chicago and Buffalo are responsible.

WAR EAGLE MINING CO.

Manager Kirby Criticizes Two Per Cent Tax in Annual Report.

Toronto, Feb. 24.—Thomas G. Blackstock, vice president of the War Eagle Consolidated Mining and Development Company, left yesterday for British Columbia. Before his departure the financial statement of the company to December 31, 1903, was presented and adopted after discussion. In the report General Manager Kirby criticized the 2 per cent tax imposed by the British Columbia government as a serious obstacle to mining on a large scale in that province. Another meeting will be held in the fall. In the meantime a thorough test will be made of the arrangement for the concentration and milling of the company's ore under the contract which it has with the Rossland Power Company. Mr. Blackstock before leaving said he was going west to endeavor to contract for the St. Eugene mine at Moyie, B. C., which has been shut down on account of the low price of lead. He says there is a possibility of the finding a market now and he is after the market.

Russians Are Moving South

Reconnaissance In Force Was Made in Direction of Anju Yesterday.

Cruiser Variag at Chemulpo Being Repaired But Korietz Total Loss.

SPECIAL CABLE TO THE LONDON TIMES AND VICTORIA COLONIST.

London, Feb. 25.—The Tokio correspondent of the London Times cables that information has reached the Japanese intelligence department that the Russian Ussuri forces are concentrating at Possiel bay on the northern boundary between Korea and Siberia. Their scouts are declared to have penetrated into Hamg Yong Do and to have cut the new telegraph line between Song Chin and Won San.

It also appears that Russian troops from north of the Yalu river are making a reconnaissance in force in the direction of Anju. It is reported by Japanese scouts that about 1,200 Russians have already penetrated south of Anju. These military movements on the part of Russians are apparently not taken seriously here in Japan. Ping Yang is considered as a safe base of headquarters.

Good progress is being made at Chemulpo in the raising of the Russian cruiser Variag, which is declared not to be seriously damaged. The Korietz, however, is a total loss.

The constant exodus of Chinese coolies from Manchuria is declared to be causing much inconvenience to the Russian commanders who had intended pressing them into service for transport duty and as camp followers.

Four Japanese Warships Abandoned.

(Special Cable to London Times and Victoria Colonist.)

London, Feb. 25.—The Paris correspondent of the London Times cables that the Paris Presse declares that confirmation has been received by the foreign office from the French consul at Port Arthur of the Russian naval success reported from St. Petersburg. According to the Presse the Russians repelled a Japanese attack with such vigor that four Japanese ironclads were abandoned and stranded.

ASKED DIVINE GUIDANCE.

Chicago, Feb. 24.—So deeply impressed with responsibility were the members of the special grand jury, which indicted five persons for the Iroquois disaster, that the jurors opened the proceedings with prayer each day. Foreman J. E. Field, led the members of the special body in an invocation, and when their work was done they knelt and thanked God that all in their belief had exercised their best judgment.

SKAGWAY'S PREDICAMENT.

Early Municipal Records Disappear and Much Confusion Will Arise.

Seattle, Feb. 24.—The town of Skagway, Alaska, is in peculiar municipal straits, as all the early town records have disappeared along with the files of the newspapers. This is particularly perplexing situation, since it is impossible to tell what franchises have been granted or what privileges the franchises contained. The disappearance of these records is mysterious. It is generally recognized, however, that it might be to the advantage of certain companies if the recorded past was blotted out.

LOSS ON RUSSIAN SECURITIES.

Berlin, Feb. 23.—Fritz Meyer, a banker, says the Tageblatt, left Berlin in consequence of liabilities, amounting to $500,000 incurred on account of loss due to the depreciation of Russian securities.

CHARGED WITH MURDER.

Brantford, Ont., Feb. 23.—The grand jury has brought a true bill against Joseph Kennedy charged with the murder of little Irene Cole in September last.

KISHINEFF MASSACRE.

Kishineff, Russia, Feb. 23.—At the resumption today of the trial of prisoners connected with the massacre here, Kurban and Rotar, accused of murdering Abraham Kogan, were acquitted, but the former was condemned to a year's imprisonment for participating in the riots. The damage suits were dismissed.

FIRE AT GLACE BAY.

Glace Bay, C. B., Feb. 23.—Fire, followed by an explosion, destroyed the large warehouse owned by A. C. Thompson & Co., this morning; loss, $8,000. Chief Leaman of the fire department was badly injured by falling walls.

BANKS REOPENING.

Baltimore, Md., Feb. 23.—The banks in this city resumed business today in all their branches for the first time since the fire. Part of the militia guard was removed from the fire district today, where 400 men remain on duty. The dynamiting of walls has also been stopped, all dangerous walls having been razed.

Passage Of The Dardanelles

No Foundation For Rumor That Russian Fleet Contemplates Movement.

Anglo-French Entente Cordial Not Affected By Sympathy For Czar.

SPECIAL CABLE TO THE LONDON TIMES AND VICTORIA COLONIST.

London, Feb. 24.—The Paris correspondent of the London Times cables that there is absolutely no truth in the report spread broadcast in England and the United States that negotiations are in progress among the powers regarding the request of Russia that her Black Sea fleet be permitted to pass through the Dardanelles. The correspondent declares that the disturbance of international equilibrium which might and probably would follow any such action of Russia, could hardly be a matter of indifference to the other powers besides England. There is nothing substantial in the report that the idea has been seriously entertained in St. Petersburg of making the request.

It is also true that there is not a particle of evidence to justify the supposition that the sympathy generously displayed throughout France for Russia has in any way affected Anglo-French entente cordial. The relations between the two countries are declared to be as satisfactory as before the outbreak of the war. In fact, the hope is generally expressed in all quarters that there shall be no interruption of the present conditions. The panic on the Bourse has only served to fortify the desire for peace, as France now realizes what a national calamity a war would be.

The Berlin correspondent of the Times states that the Cologne Gazette declares that negotiations are now in progress between Norway, Sweden and Denmark, looking to the preparation of a programme for joint action, should the war between Russia and Japan extend to European waters. An understanding is held to be desired in order that the coasts of the three nations may be adequately protected.

DULL DAYS AT ST. HELENA.

Mark Tapley would have enjoyed himself in St. Helena at present, judging from the pessimistic tone of the leading article in the latest issue of the local paper, which is one of the smallest journals in the world, not much larger than a sheet of foolscap. The lonely little island is suffering severely by reason of the "reaction from the abnormally prosperous days of the Boer occupation." This is a somewhat Hibernian way of putting the case. As a rule the conquerors occupy a country, not the prisoners of war.

Now that the 6,000 Boer captives are all gone, there is no longer a remunerative market for St. Helena produce, and "vegetables are left to rot." To make matters worse, the visits of ships—the principle source of income to St. Helena before the construction of the Suez canal—are getting more and more angelic in their infrequency. The editor of the St. Helena Guardian declares that "everybody is getting disheartened, the island is very dull, there

A NGER LURKS IN FREE PASSES

If Traveler Is Killed Cannot Get Damages From Railroad Company.

Washington, Feb. 23.—The question as to whether a passenger on a train riding on a free pass who loses his life on account of carelessness on the part of the railroad company stands on the same footing as a passenger who pays his fare, today was decided by the United States Supreme court against the free passenger. The case in which the opinion was rendered was that of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company vs. Louise H. Adams and Frank Adams, heirs of James Adams, attorney-at-law, of Spokane.

Mr. Adams was killed while riding on a pass which contained a stipulation exempting the railroad company from liability in the case of accident. The Supreme court held that there is nothing in public policy to prevent a contract between a common carrier and a free passenger exempting the carrier from liability in case of accident.

REPAIRING DAMAGES.

London, Feb. 23.—The damaged portions of the British steamer Lake Michigan, which collided with the British bark Matterhorn on Friday last, and was beached near Dungeness, have been located and some of the holds are now dry.

Alexieff's Proclamation

Czar's Representative In Far East Warns Manchurians of State of War.

Russian and Chinese Interests Are Declared to Be Identical.

Railroads and Telegraphs Left In Keeping of the People.

Yin Kow, Feb. 24.—Viceroy Alexieff has caused a proclamation to be issued throughout Manchuria notifying the Chinese that Russia is at war with Japan on account of Japan's treacherous attack on the Russian fleet.

The proclamation is under six headings:

First—Warns the inhabitants that they must prevent the encroachment of Chinese on Russian territory.

Second—Russian and Chinese interests are declared to be identical, but as China says she wishes to maintain neutrality, therefore all officials in Manchuria, instead of hindering, must assist the Russian army.

Third—The people shall continue their occupations, and shall treat the Russian troops with confidence.

Fourth—The railroad telegraphs are left to the protection of the people, who will be held responsible in case they are injured.

Fifth—Warns the people not to obey the threats of the bandits, but to assist the troops to exterminate them. If they do not assist in this they also will be treated as robbers.

Sixth—If the people antagonize the troops or obey them at once they will be exterminated without mercy. The government is taking all steps in any event to protect its interests.

The proclamation makes an earnest appeal for the sympathy of the people in the present crisis, when it says, "Russia must put her back to the wall."

H. E. Miller, United States consul at New Chwang, is increasingly active in his endeavors to protect Japanese refugees, and has made further demands for information as to the whereabouts of refugees.

He has made strong representations in the matter of right of search and inspection.

The reorganization of the vice regal administration is now going forward, and is expected to take one month. In the meanwhile there is considerable complication and uncertainty in all international and domestic matters.

RIFLE INVENTOR DEAD.

Branford, Conn., Feb. 24.—James Parish Lee, the inventor of the Lee rifle, died tonight at Fort Beach. Mr. Lee was born in Hawick, Scotland, seventy-one years ago.

AMERICAN SAILORS SCORE A VICTORY

In Fisticuffs With Spaniards Several Men Are Wounded at St. Thomas.

St. Thomas, B. W. I., Feb. 24.—A fight occurred here yesterday between sailors from a Spanish war vessel and from an American warship which resulted in the wounding of several men and an ultimate victory for the Americans. The fight originated when a man from the United States cruiser Columbia jostled a sailor from the Spanish cruiser Rio de la Plata, as he passed him in the street. The Spaniard was with a companion from his ship as was the American sailor. The Spanish sailor drew a stiletto and seriously wounded the American who had brushed against him. The men from the Columbia, who were on the shore gathered around their companions and attacked the two Spaniards, who defended themselves with their knives and succeeded in slightly wounding several other Americans. They finally escaped, ran to the wharf and jumped into the water. They were picked up by a boat and taken on board their ship. The wounded American sailor is in a critical condition.

COLON REJOICES.

Colon, Feb. 24.—Large and excited crowds soon gathered in the streets this evening when the news that the United States had ratified the canal treaty became known. The shops were decorated with colored electric lights. Fireworks and music lasted all night, and everywhere there were manifestations of frantic delight.

FIRE AT LEAMINGTON.

Leamington, Ont., Feb. 24.—One of the most disastrous fires in the history of Leamington occurred early this morning in which the new large brick block owned by William McSween burned to the ground, involving a loss estimated at $35,000. The block was occupied by Cullen & Bancroft, furniture dealers; Norman & Dawson, dry goods; Mrs. Maycock, furs; Leamington Business College and inland revenue and customs offices.

SITUATION IN BALKANS.

Rome, Feb. 24.—The situation in the Balkans is considered here to have improved today from the fact, among other things, that Turkey has ordered seven torpedo boat destroyers from Italian shipbuilders. It is believed she would not do this if she thought serious trouble in the Balkans not to be immediate.

Japanese Squadron Sails

(London Times Special Service.)

London, Feb. 24.—The Wei-Hai-Wei correspondent of the London Times confirms the report that a portion of the Japanese fleet commanded by Vice Admiral Togo had passed there. He cables that the Japanese squadron passed there Wednesday evening sailing eastward, and consisted of nine cruisers and four battleships. There were no destroyers with the fleet, which gives rise to the belief that they have been left to watch the Port Arthur harbor.