

BOOM OF CANNON

Russian Warships Off Coast of Japan.

STEAMER IS GIVEN CHASE

Vessels Are Evidently the Vladivostok Squadron.

SEARCH IS MADE FOR CABLE

Czar Will Probably Proceed to the Front in the Spring, to Take Command of the Army.

THE WAR SITUATION.

News of a small skirmish at Wulu shows that both armies have thrown reconnoitering parties forward to the Yalu River. Wulu, near the mouth of the river, lies on the great Korean highway, which passes through Fins Yang, reported to be occupied in Korea by the Japanese. It is of easy access, therefore, from a Japanese base, as well as from the Russian railroad. The Russians were reported to have a considerable force of cavalry within close distance of the Yalu, and the present skirmish confirms the reports. It is in cavalry that the Japanese are most deficient, and their loss of a small detachment was probably due to this lack.

MERCHANT SHIPS ARE WARNED

Russian Minister Tells Them to Remain South of Shanghai. ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 20.—The Ministry of Finance has warned the Russian merchant ships to remain south of Shanghai, as the Japanese have a squadron composed of one battleship, two first class and two second class cruisers and 11 torpedo boats off Amoy, China, for the purpose of intercepting merchantmen.

CZAR MAY GO TO FRONT.

Will Probably Take Charge of the Land Forces in the Spring. SPECIAL WAR SERVICE. NEW YORK, Feb. 20.—The American's Rome correspondent cables as follows: "It is reported here that the Czar intends to proceed to the front in the Spring to take personal command of the army."

FIRST LAND ENCOUNTER.

Cossacks Attack Japanese Troops in Korean Territory. ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 20.—A dispatch from Port Arthur today says the first land encounter occurred yesterday. A platoon of Cossacks attacked a small detachment of Japanese troops on Korean territory. The Cossacks captured some Japanese prisoners, on whom they found maps and papers.

The collision was presumably between reconnoitering parties. A general engagement is not anticipated immediately. A special Port Arthur dispatch says the

BRIGANDS GUARD RAILWAY.

Russia Greatly Fears Japanese Attack on Manchurian Line. SPECIAL WAR SERVICE. NEW YORK, Feb. 20.—The Tientsin correspondent of the World cables as follows: "So great is the danger that the Manchurian Railway will be cut by Japanese spies or roving bands of Manchurians, that the Russians are paying Manchurian brigands a heavy sum per month to guard the railway."

SUGGESTS ONLY ENDLESS WAR

Russian Journal on Sympathy of Great Nations for Japan. ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 20.—The Viedomost publishes an editorial article on the pride shown in Great Britain and the United States in their pro-Japanese sympathies, and asks what these will ultimately cost the "cultured West."

SOVEREIGNS WRITE TO HIM

Emperor William Expresses His Sympathy, and Concludes With Significant Words, "God is With Us."

ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 20.—The Czar, according to those who have access to his presence, feels keenly the outbreak of hostilities and sorrows at the burdens war entails.

WILL ARM VOLUNTEER FLEET

Russia Proposes to Have Steamers Sees Hard Service. ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 20.—It is reported here upon good authority, but the report lacks official confirmation, that all the steamers of the volunteer fleet are to be armed.

CHINA DENIES REQUEST FOR AID

Alexieff Presumes Too Much in Asking Troops to Guard Railway. TOKIO, Feb. 20.—Advices to the Japanese government from Peking say that while at Mukden, Viceroy Alexieff had the Chinese troops to aid in guarding the railway, so as to prevent the interruption of traffic. The Chinese refused the request and asked for instructions from Peking.

FRANCE FEARS NO JAPANESE INVASION.

PARIS, Feb. 20.—The Foreign Office here has declared to be absurd the report circulated yesterday in New York, alleged to be from Paris, to the effect that 60,000 Japanese troops had been concentrated at the island of Formosa, with the intention of invading French possessions in the Far East in case of France siding with Russia against Japan.

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CZAR LOOKS SAD

He Feels Keenly the Outbreak of War.

APPEARS LITTLE IN PUBLIC

Sole Recreation Consists in a Morning Saunter in Garden.

SOVEREIGNS WRITE TO HIM

Emperor William Expresses His Sympathy, and Concludes With Significant Words, "God is With Us."

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KAISER EXPRESSES SYMPATHY.

It is known that the Czar has received at least three personal letters from European sovereigns expressing their sympathy. The potentates are Emperor William, King Christian of Denmark and King Oscar of Sweden and Norway. The letter from Emperor William was brought by Colonel Von Schenk, commander of the Alexander Third Regiment of Prussian Grenadiers, of which the Czar is honorary Colonel, and concluded with the significant words: "God is with us."

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HIT HIS POCKET

Spokane Shippers Combine Against Hill.

WILL DIVERT THE FREIGHT

Agreement Signed to Ship Only by O. R. & N. Road.

TO FORCE RATE REDUCTION

Merchants Who Pay \$750,000 a Year Boycott Merger Roads—Will Invoke Elkins Law to Obtain Justice.

SPOKANE, Wash., Feb. 20.—Spokane shippers, who pay to the railroads in freight rates annually \$750,000, met yesterday and combined to throw all their traffic to the O. R. & N. until the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railroads offer satisfactory rates.

FIRMS IN THE COMBINE.

The following firms signed the resolution and solemnly pledged themselves to keep the agreement: Childs Bros. & Day, Holly, Mussen, Maras & Jones & Dillingham, John W. Graham & Co., B. L. Gordon & Co., Spokane Drug Company, Spokane Paper Company, Crane Shoe Company, Empire Shoe Company, Shaw-Borden Company, E. B. Wright & Co., Grote Bankin Company, Booth McClintock, Best Clothing Company, Cohn Brothers, Griffith Heating, Plumbing & Supply Company, Jensen-King-Byrd Company, Spokane Paint & Oil Company, Tall & Gibbs, Miller, Mower & Flynn, White House Drygoods Company, Spokane Implement Company, Washington Liqueur Company.

WAR CALLS FOR '04 MONEY.

Russia Officially Notifies St. Louis She Will Not Participate.

ST. LOUIS, Feb. 20.—Official confirmation of Russia's intention to abandon participation in the Exposition was received today in a cablegram to President Francis from Commissioner-General Alexandrovsky at St. Petersburg. The cablegram follows: "Notwithstanding the best of feeling to America and a readiness for participation in the World's Fair, Russian tradersmen think their patriotic duty is to give the money appropriated for the Exposition to the Red Cross and wounded soldiers. I am going personally as the chief delegate of the Red Cross to the Far East. My sincere thanks for your kind attention to our staff and me personally. My best regards to all directors and chiefs." None of the Russian exhibits has been shipped to St. Louis, but a large railroad exhibit and a number of other exhibits were in readiness for transportation at St. Petersburg. Four hundred thousand dollars was to have been spent on Russian exhibits.

COMMERCIAL WHICH IS WORKING TO GIVE THE INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION POWER TO ENFORCE ITS DECREES.

All Complaints Ignored. The movement has grown out of the recent meeting of the freight managers of the Western roads at Chicago, at which every request of the Spokane men was ignored. There is hardly a large shipping firm in the city that did not have some complaint laid before that body of freightmen, and they were not only ignored, but in some cases the rate on their goods was actually raised.

RELY ON ELKINS LAW.

The association was formed 15 years ago and this is the third concerted attempt that has been made by it to secure better rates from the railroads, the first being before the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1893. At that time thousands of dollars were spent in a vain attempt to beat the railroads. Then the association embarked upon a scheme similar to the one now on hand, but as it did not have the Elkins bill to aid it, it soon went to the wall.

CAUCUS WRECKS HALL.

Fierce Fight Among Republicans in Seattle's Tough First Ward.

SEATTLE, Feb. 20.—(Special).—The entire front of Butnick's Hall was broken out, every window in the building demolished and doors broken from their hinges in a Republican caucus fight in the First Precinct of the Second Ward tonight. Eight chairmen were swept off their feet at various times during the evening, a coal oil lamp was exploded and shooting flames of fire ran across the floor, threatening the destruction of the building and endangering the lives of nearly 1000 men who attended the caucus. The fire was stamped out, the burning wick being thrown through a broken window by a ward worker.

GREAT GAIN IN THREE MONTHS.

May wheat, opening, \$1.02 1/2. High point, \$1.07. Closing, \$1.05 1/2. November price, 76c. Gain in three months, 23 1/2c.

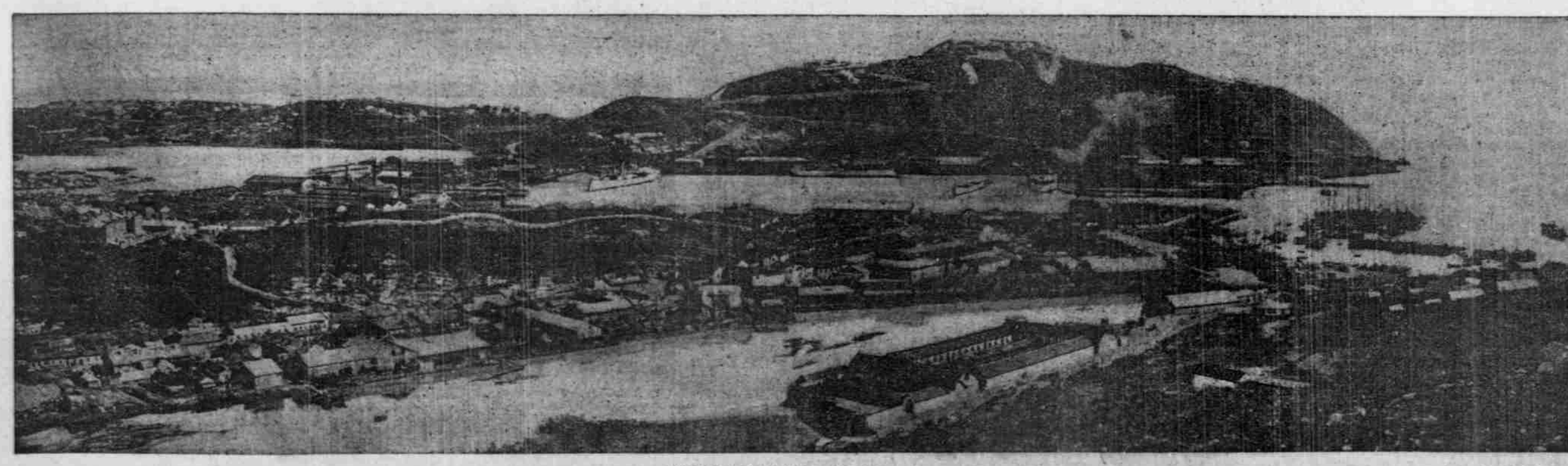
CHICAGO, Feb. 20.—(Special).—With a roar and a bound that was irresistible May wheat today leaped to \$1.07, a jump of 1/2 cent in 30 minutes, and more millions were added to the Armour pile, and stuffed into the pockets of the farmers who were wise enough to hold their grain.

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ALTHOUGH A GREAT STRONGHOLD, RUSSIA NOW CONSIDERS HARBIN A BETTER BASE FOR WAR OPERATIONS



PANORAMIC VIEW OF PORT ARTHUR.

—From Leslie's Weekly.