

on that side of the ocean, that the geographical position of the United States protects it against any attempt to land troops, and even in the event of a successful landing, that no enemy would dare to take chances with the 10,000,000 citizens of the union available in time of war. It is only recently, however, that military critics there have dared to express a doubt, and, as will be shown, with good reason, concerning the correctness of those deductions. To oppose a Japanese invading army in California the coast fortifications, in co-operation with the fleet, would have to be depended upon, and, considering the long stretch of coast line, would be insufficient. Fortifications are to be found in the vicinity of the larger cities of good harbors, but these provide for a bombardment seaward. Should a hostile fleet once obtain a landing for troops at an unprotected point, and such points are numerous along the extensive coast line, the coast fortifications could be easily attacked from the rear and would in a short time be at the mercy of the enemy."—Denver News.

Washington Letter

Washington, July 15.—The phrase is that to be prepared for war is the best guarantee of peace. But there are other militant phrases which count. In our own country there are certain sections in which a significant movement toward a hip-pocket justifies a shot from the men thus menaced. Among nations an apparently innocent movement of some 200,000 tons of fighting ships to a strategic point suggests trouble.

Of all the things that the United States or any other civilized nation should avoid, war comes first. It can be avoided if jingo newspapers, and a fighting administration will keep still. But when a great section of the press, and the spokesmen of the administration join in discussing a war between Japan and the United States, it is fair to say that danger is ahead.

The Pacific coast of the United States is as much its territory as the Atlantic coast. The navy department is quite as thoroughly justified—under ordinary circumstances—in sending a fleet to San Francisco as it would be in forwarding such a fleet to Cape Cod.

But the circumstances are not ordinary. For nearly a year past men of influence and standing; members of the cabinet, newspaper owners, builders of battleships, politicians great and small have joined in an effort to force a war between Japan and the United States.

Some months ago Japan planned to send a fleet of warships—only three or four—to visit our Pacific coast ports. The proposition was a friendly one. The Pacific coast response was unfriendly. Japan was courteous enough to withdraw its plan for a visit, lest it should antagonize some of our people in the Pacific coast. Thus far the chorus of jingoism has been sounded from this side of the Pacific; not from the Asiatic side.

What, after all, may be the outcome of this newspaper jingoism? A war that might embroil all Europe.

What are the forces that might bring it on? Newspaper outcry and the action of an administration looking for war, founded upon war, ready for war and eager to continue itself in power by a new power.

Let us not forget that Mr. Roosevelt's political fortunes are based upon his one fortunate experience in a very brief war.

It is now made clear that the greatest fleet of American battleships ever gathered under one admiral's flag will presently proceed to the Pacific coast. True, on the second of July everyone connected with the navy department or the administration denied that they were going. But at the critical moment Secretary Metcalf in San Francisco promised the people of the Pacific coast the opportunity to look upon this great array of floating forts.

Now it is fair to say that the United States government has a right to send its warships wherever it chooses; and particularly to send them into harbors over which its own flag floats. From our point of view there is no reason to question the announced purpose of the administration to send the biggest fleet ever gathered under the flag of one admiral to our Pacific ports.

But what of the other fellow's point of view? Let us just suppose for a moment that jingo newspapers, like the New York Herald, had been systematically working up a sentiment in England against the United States. That English immigrants had been denied en-

trance to this country; that English boys had not been permitted access to the schools of Boston; that hoodlums in Boston had broken the windows of every English chop house or ale house there; and then that the admiralty of Great Britain had thought it wise to have its Channel fleet, the greatest fleet that England knows, take a cruise to Halifax and anchor there twenty battleships strong?

Would the United States regard that as a compliment, or as a hostile move? Would the present government at Washington look upon that as merely a transfer of the ships of a friendly nation from one of its ports to another?

International law is one thing. International courtesy another. When you mass troops along the frontier of a friendly nation, you are within the bounds of law, but not within those of courtesy. If President Roosevelt shall permit the most powerful fleet that the United States has ever possessed to enter the Pacific, he will be inviting troubles. If they do not come, the action of this government, taken by the president, will only be that of a bully attempting to over-awe a weaker neighbor.

The court proceedings in Chicago to attend which Mr. John D. Rockefeller was haled with so much trouble, were merely intended to discover whether it was proper to fine the Standard Oil company something in the neighborhood of twenty-nine million dollars—a million, more or less makes little difference to that concern—on its conviction of rebating. The conviction covered fourteen hundred counts. It is, of course, too early now to determine what Judge Landis may believe it his duty to do after listening to the testimony of the president of the Standard Oil company. But it is not at all too early to point out the utter futility of any merely financial penalty inflicted upon the heads of great corporations like the Standard Oil. It is of course improbable that the full letter of the law shall be enforced against the Standard Oil company. If it were so enforced, \$29,000,000 at the utmost would be collected from the corporation, which in turn the corporation would within six months easily collect from the people. A half a cent a gallon raise in the price of oil in some sections, a cent a gallon in others and a corresponding reduction in what the company pays to the oil producers who must sell to it or not sell at all, would make it all up in a very brief space of time. To fine a monopoly means only to fine the people who must deal with it. To punish the head of a monopoly by incarceration in jail, making him wear the stripes exactly as any other confidence man does when caught, would help. But the way, to destroy monopoly is to take away from it the unjust privileges which it enjoys, to smash its tariff protection, to destroy its partnership with the railroads, to break down its political influence and to see that it, whether called Standard Oil or steel trust, shall no longer be allowed to hold itself superior to the law.

The president's insistence that the sending of the greatest fleet ever gathered under the American flag around the Horn to San Francisco should not be a cause of offense to the Japanese, has led some readers of history in Washington to look up the views of Theodore Roosevelt, assistant secretary of the navy just prior to the Spanish war.

One of Mr. Roosevelt's closest friends, now holding, by grace of the president, a most important federal office, is Francis E. Leupp. Mr. Leupp, like most of Mr. Roosevelt's appointees, has written a eulogistic biography of his benefactor, although it is fair to say that in his case the biography preceded the benefaction. Concerning the matter of sending fleets to menace the shores of friendly nations, the president's biographer relates from memory this conversation with his hero:

"One Sunday morning in March, 1898, we were sitting in his (Mr. Roosevelt's) library discussing the significance of the news that Cervera's squadron was about to sail for Cuba, when he suddenly rose and brought his two hands together with a resounding clap.

"If I could do what I pleased," he exclaimed, "I would send Spain notice today that we should consider her dispatch of that squadron a hostile act. Then, if she did not heed the warning, she would have to take the consequences."

"You are sure," I asked, "that it is with unfriendly intent that she is sending the squadron?"

"What else can it be? The Cubans have no navy, therefore the squadron can not be coming to fight the insurgents. The only naval

power interested in Cuban affairs is the United States. Spain is simply forestalling the brush which she knows, as we do, is coming sooner or later."

"And if she refused to withdraw the orders to Cervera?"

"I would send out a squadron to meet his on the high seas and smash it. Then I would force the fighting from that day to the end of the war."

That was Assistant Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt when Spain, then a friendly nation, thought of sending a fleet to its own territory, Cuba. He thought that such an act would be distinctly hostile and justify the United States in bringing on a naval battle without the formality of a declaration of war. The case absolutely parallels that of his sending today a monster fleet of battleships to the Pacific coast. For just as the Cervera demonstration could only have been construed as hostile to the United States, so the proposed expedition of Admiral Evans can only be construed as hostile to Japan. The one point at which the cases are not parallel is that Japan could by no possibility meet our fleet and smash it. But because we happen to have the "big stick" affords no reason why we should use it as a highwayman uses a club.

Mr. Roosevelt was always prone to over-enthusiastic use of the ships and guns at his command. The former secretary of the navy, John D. Long, under whom he served, wrote a very good story of the new American navy. This is a paragraph which might interest our people and which no doubt has been carefully studied and discussed in the Japanese embassy:

"Mr. Roosevelt was an interesting personality as assistant secretary of the navy, as he is indeed in any capacity. * * * He was zealous in the work of putting the navy in condition for the apprehended struggle. His ardor sometimes went faster than the president or the department approved. Just before the war, when the Spanish battle fleet was on its way here, he as well as some naval officers regarding that as a cause of war, approved of sending a squadron to meet it without waiting for a declaration of war."

It would be interesting to know whether the president who professes to think that sending Admiral Evans' fleet to the Pacific is the surest guarantee of peace, is ready now to condemn the views and the utterances of one Theodore Roosevelt, assistant secretary of the navy just prior to the war with Spain.

WILLIS J. ABBOTT.

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