

RUSSIA RETREATING BEFORE THE JAPANESE FORCES.

Several Small Engagements Fought on the Yalu.

Japs Now Established in Southern Manchuria.

London Cable says—In the absence of any sort of confirmation of the rumored engagement between the Japanese squadron and the Russian Vladivostok squadron attention is more fixed upon the reported operations between the Yalu River and Mukden, regarding which the stories are more precise and more persistent, but even these appear to rest entirely upon Chinese accounts.

The Government at Tokio maintains its customary silence. The Japanese Legation here has no news.

A despatch to the Daily Telegraph states that the Japanese have advanced from the Yalu River, and have captured Feng-Wang-Cheng. They have driven the Russians from the vicinity of that town to the Ta-Kung-Ling eastern pass, and are now in force seventy miles east of New-Chwang. There are 35,000 Russians strongly entrenched at Liao-Yang and Ha-Cheng, where a battle is imminent. Small engagements have been fought, the Russians retreating with loss. The Japanese are using the same tactics and are advancing along the same route employed in their war with China.

A Tien-Tsin despatch says: Circumstantial reports from various sources confirm the reports that the Japanese have established themselves in Southern Manchuria. It is stated that they have captured Feng-Wang-Cheng, refusing the Russians with loss, but there has been no engagement of a great scale. Convincing reports have reached Ying-How that the Japanese are advancing westward from the Yalu River, and are now about 50 miles northwest of Antung. According to native accounts there has been fighting between the Japanese and New-Chwang and in that neighborhood are acting as if they expected an attack.

A despatch to the Times from Well-Hai-Wei says it is reported on good authority that there has been a collision between the Japanese and Russian fleets near Haijia, resulting in the retreat of the Russians.

The Tokio correspondent of the Times says that the Russian advance south of Possiet Bay continues.

The Times alone reports the fighting at Haijia, which is presumably about sixty miles north of Seoul. Conservative opinion here is that whatever probability attaches to the various stories they cannot at present be regarded as other than rumors.

To some of the military critics it is inconceivable that Japan could really have executed such an unexpected and successful turning of the Russian position on the Yalu River, which it is thought would have necessitated the employment of a much larger force than it is believed Japan can possibly have at this point.

The Daily Telegraph says that if the news of this strange and marvelous collapse of Russian power on land is true, there is nothing to prevent the Japanese from seizing Mukden and the railroad. There has been nothing to compare with this since Napoleon staggered Europe by appearing in the plains of Italy from the Alps.

The Standard's Tien-Tsin correspondent says that the Japanese authorities for some time suspected that information of their movements and plans was being supplied to Russia. The traitor seems to have been discovered in a well-known Japanese forwarding agent in Tien-Tsin, who was arrested last Monday. He committed suicide in the military prison to-day. Several other Japanese are suspected.

Washington Hears Confirmation.

Washington Despatch — The Government here has received advices by cable from a Chief, opposite Port Arthur, to the effect that the Japanese land forces have appeared at Feng-Wang-Cheng and Tashan. No details are furnished. The first named place is about 45 miles north of Antung, in Manchuria, and the latter is a few miles inland from the mouth of the Yalu River, according to the calculations of the naval officers here. They believe that this movement has placed the Japanese on the Russian flank, and perhaps in the rear and on their line of communication.

MOVING SOUTHWARD.

Russian Forces Approaching the Japanese Main Army.

Tokio, Cable says—The Russian forces which have been reported near the Tumen River, on the northern frontier of Korea, are, according to the latest advices from the front, apparently advancing southward. The reports have arrived at Kyojo, six miles north of Gen-san.

Work on the proposed railway from Seoul to Wiju has been begun by the Japanese Government. Some material from the Seoul-Fusan line are available, and a temporary line will, it is expected, be completed in about six months.

The Russian authorities have cleared the houses for a distance of several miles near the Liao-Yang, and

will use them as barracks for troops about to arrive there.

TO ABANDON NEW-CHWANG.

Russians Will Not Wait the Japanese Arrival.

London Cable—A despatch to the Morning Post from Shanghai says that the Russians are not preparing to hold New-Chwang, which probably will be occupied by the Japanese as soon as the ice allows navigation, which is expected to be about March 18. The Japanese mobilization is proceeding methodically and without undue haste. Everything points to the main force being landed somewhere between Port Arthur and the mouth of the Yalu River. A second expedition is being sent to New-Chwang. It is therefore probable that the Russians will withdraw from the Yalu and concentrate at a position more suited for meeting an attack. The correspondent repeats the statement that the Russians intend to leave Port Arthur to save itself.

A Harbin despatch to the Chronicle says that the sea continues to be very rough in the Gulf of Pe-chili, which is swept by constant storms. All the unoccupied men in Port Arthur are being employed in the construction of defence works. The Chinese officials in Southern Manchuria sometimes refuse to sell food and forage to the Russians on the pretext of China's neutrality. It is reported that 200 Japanese are at Shan-Hai-Kwan wearing Chinese uniforms. The Japanese are distributed in China broad sheets representing Port Arthur as being completely destroyed and occupied by the Japanese.

A despatch from St. Petersburg says that the landing of Japanese at Gen-san is going on day and night. A majority of the troops landed there are going to Ping-Yang. The number is kept secret. The Koreans, according to the despatch, complain of the proceedings of the Japanese, and many of them are taking refuge in Russian territory, where there are several Korean villages. It is believed in St. Petersburg that the Japanese will take the offensive generally as soon as they are able. Russian troops will be long confined to the defensive, barring the enemy's advance.

Crop of War Rumors.

London Cable says—Among the various rumors printed in the absence of any known happenings is a Yin-Kow report that the Japanese are advancing upon Tien-Tsin-Cheng, between Mukden and the Korean frontier. This comes from Chinese sources. It is stated, and is partially admitted by the Russians at Yin-Kow, although it is officially denied, and is not carried from any other sources, that the Russians in Northern Korea are gradually but constantly withdrawing to the Yalu River. It is stated in Chinese official quarters in Shanghai that the rival armies are likely to meet at the Yalu River in three or four days.

A despatch from Tokio states that it has been finally decided that only fifteen correspondents will be allowed to accompany the army in the field, nine of them being British, five Americans, and one of another nationality.

The Japanese have taken possession of the whole of the Elliot group of islands, and are using them as a base for their torpedo boats. A report from Chefoo states that fifteen Japanese warships and four torpedo boats have been sighted from there, heading for New-Chwang.

A Shanghai correspondent says that the Russian defense check the Japanese advance in Manchuria include an unbroken line of earthworks from Keulping to Liao-Yang.

JAPS' FLEET DEPARTS.

Long Official Despatch From Admiral Alexeiev.

St. Petersburg Cable says—Viceroy Alexeiev has sent the following message, dated March 6: "I have the honor to communicate to your Majesty the following details of the events of March 6: 'The enemy's squadron approached Vladivostok towards 11 o'clock in the morning, having passed near Askold Island. After several manoeuvres, which involved changes in the squadron's order of battle, two cruisers were left to the north of the island, and the remaining vessels of the squadron steamed along the coast of Ussuri Bay, parallel to the shore, and keeping about fifteen versts (approximately ten miles) therefrom. Upon arriving off Mount St. Joseph and Ussuri Bay Battery, the squadron, preserving the same order, made towards the battery. The ships opened fire from both sides, evidently first using blank cartridges, in order to warm their guns. At 1.35 p.m., when at a distance of eight versts (approximately 5.1-3 miles) from the shore, the leading ship opened fire with her forward gun, and then the entire squadron steamed along the shore, firing their port guns as they went.

"The enemy did not fire while turning. After the third turn the squadron at 2.25 p.m. ceased firing and steamed off to the southward, about ten miles to the right of Askold Island, finally disappearing at 5.30 p.m.

"In all, the enemy fired about 200 shells with no effect. No damage was done to the fortress or the entrench-

ments, and in town and at other parts of the fortifications the damage was insignificant.

"The garrison is in excellent spirits, and the operations of preparing the batteries for action were carried out in perfect order.

"According to reports of the events of March 6, the enemy's squadron reappeared at 11 o'clock in the morning near Vladivostok. They entered Ussuri Bay and proceeded along the coast without opening fire. The squadron then returned and headed for Cape Gamova (Possiet Bay), which was reached at 3.40 p.m.

"The enemy finally turned off when opposite Pallas Bay and departed in a southerly direction."

SEA FIGHT IMMINENT.

Believed the Japanese and Russian Squadrons Will Meet.

St. Petersburg Cable says—The whereabouts of Capt. Rottstein's Vladivostok squadron is carefully guarded by the military authorities, but there is a strong impression here that when the seven Japanese warships appeared off the Russian coast yesterday the Russian squadron was on the outside, perhaps down the coast, co-operating with the Russian land force near the mouth of the Tumen River. If the Russians were outside and the Japanese were inside, the Japanese would be in a position to attack the Russian fleet, and a sea fight is probably imminent, as it is considered certain that in that case the Japanese fleet will be on Vladivostok to prevent the Russian fleet from giving battle if the Russians are engaged in a sea fight. All the harbors along the coast in which the Russians might seek refuge are frozen, and the squadron must eventually be forced to return to Vladivostok for coal. Although the Japanese squadron is superior in numbers and guns, consisting of a battleship and four armed cruisers, two of which are believed to be the Kusunoi and the Yukino, and two unarmored cruisers, the four armored cruisers, the Rurik, the Bogatyr, are among the finest vessels in the Russian navy, constituting a superior force to the Japanese fleet, and experts here are not certain that they could not take the measure of Rear Admiral Uriu's ships.

TO DEFEND NEW CHWANG.

Russians Receive Several Additional Heavy Guns.

Yin-Kow, Cable says—The British Consul strongly and officially urges the foreign women and children to leave New-Chwang before the river opens. The British station gunboat Espiegle will leave as soon as possible, and will not be replaced. The family of the United States Consul, Mr. Miller, will leave to-morrow.

It is understood that the neutral powers will not be embarrassed by the presence of the river here, and therefore neutral vessels at New-Chwang will be officially abandoned.

The tension amongst Russians also occurs. There are circumstantial reports of fighting east of the railroad, and there is an indication of a Japanese advance.

It is reported that the action of the Russians in ordering New Chwang to be defended was due to the withdrawal of the last warships, thus removing the last barrier to the neutralization of this port. The Russians received by train this morning two five-inch guns and two six-inch howitzers. They were unloaded at the New-Chwang railroad station.

WILL QUITE FIN SH.

War to Continue Until a "Logical Conclusion" is Reached.

Paris Cable — The St. Petersburg correspondent of the Figaro telegraphs that he interviewed Gen. Sakharoff, the Minister of War. The Minister said the concentration of Russian troops in the Orient was progressing in the most satisfactory manner. The minimum number concentrated there would be 400,000. He considered that the maximum Japan would be able to draw off to the Far East would require a month to complete the transportation of the troops. No serious conflict could occur in Manchuria within the next six weeks. He insisted that the subject of re-provisioning the troops and garrisons was a purely administrative one. He believed that Japan had landed 100,000 troops in Korea already.

The General added—"The war will last until a logical and necessary conclusion has been reached; for I do not think the Russians are in a mood to stop before quite finishing. I know nothing of any plan of withdrawing the troops behind Port Arthur and leaving the place to defend itself."

Russia's Protest Valid.

Vienna Cable says—It is rumored in diplomatic circles that all the Cabinets have informed Russia that they regard the Russian protest in the note of the 22nd of February against Japan's proceedings as justified by international law. The protest referred to is that issued to the European powers protesting that Japan had isolated the law of nations by forcing the Variaz and Korietz to leave Chemulpo harbor and by attacking the Russian fleet at Port Arthur prior to a formal declaration of war, and before the Japanese Minister at St. Petersburg or the Russian Minister at Tokio had left their respective posts.

Thank British Tara.

London Cable says—The Admiralty has received a telegram from the mothers and wives of the Libau officers belonging to the cruiser Variaz, and from the other women of Libau, to which port the Variaz was attached, expressing "heartfelt thankfulness and infinite gratitude" for the treatment accorded the officers and crewmen of the Variaz and Korietz, who were taken on board by the British cruiser Tabot after

the Russian warships were sunk at Chemulpo.

The Earl of Selborne, First Lord of the Admiralty, replied, thanking the senders of the despatch for their generous appreciation, and adding: "His Majesty's navy will always be glad to give similar aid to the seamen of friendly nations when the occasion arises."

CZAR RECEIVES EDITORS.

Says He Always Finds the Truth in Russian Newspapers.

St. Petersburg Cable — The czar this afternoon received at the Winter Palace the editors of the Novoe Vremya and Viedomosti as a deputation representing the entire press of St. Petersburg. M. Plehve, Minister of the Interior, introduced them to his Majesty. They read an address expressing devotion to the czar and the empire. In reply his Majesty said that he himself read the newspapers, and that he was glad they all, with great truth and dignity, expressed the feelings of the Russian people. The reason the Russian people felt so deeply at the present moment was because the perfidious attack of the Japanese was utterly contrary to the spirit of truth which belongs to the Russian people. The attack caused them great indignation. In conclusion the czar said that he always sought the truth in the Russian newspapers, and was sure always to find it.

Grand Duke Boris, son of Grand Duke Vladimir, started this evening from St. Petersburg for Manchuria.

MARQUIS ITO'S MISSION.

Object of His Visit to the Korean Emperor.

Tokio, Cable says—The Japanese Minister says that the mission of Marquis Ito to the Korean Emperor is well known to the Court of Seoul, and is well known by every Japanese who is conscious of the gravity of the numerous responsibilities placed upon Japan's shoulders with regard to Korea. It must not be inferred that the mission is political in its nature. The Marquis is the bearer of a personal message from the Emperor of Japan to the Korean Emperor, and is not an official representative of the Japanese Government. It is understood that the presence of Marquis Ito at the present juncture of a statesman of Ito's standing and prestige must be productive of beneficial and far-reaching effects on the future relations of the two countries.

The Nichi Nichi says that Japan, appreciating the difficulties facing the Korean Emperor in inaugurating reforms in domestic and foreign affairs, in accordance with the new protocol, as a mark of friendly sympathy, dispatches her most experienced and venerable statesman to counsel him and to cement the friendship between the two countries. Doubtless this will be greatly appreciated by the Emperor and the people of Korea.

The Korean Official Gazette announces the outlines of a reform programme increasing the responsibilities of the Ministers, and correspondingly relieving the Emperor, thus following the Japanese system.

The opening of the Port of Yongampo has been decided upon by the Korean Cabinet. The Emperor's approval is awaited.

USE BODIES AS RAMPARTS.

Czar's Message to the Defenders of Vladivostok.

Vladivostok, Cable — "Long life to our great sovereign and to great Russia!" so concludes the commandant of the fortress in a proclamation to the citizens reporting the Emperor's congratulatory message to Vladivostok on its baptism on March 6. The inhabitants celebrated the receipt of the message last night with general rejoicings, processions along the streets, bands playing the national anthem, and the people, including the officers, singing the national anthem. A crowd assembled in front of the commandant's residence, and he came out and read the text of the Emperor's message, amidst a storm of cheering.

The czar, in his message congratulating the defenders of Vladivostok, expressed his conviction that they would all make a rampart of their bodies to protect Russia's stronghold against the attacks of the enemy.

To the message of the czar the commandant of the fortress added: "In bringing to your knowledge the precious words of the czar, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude for the good order and tranquillity you have maintained, and for the readiness you have shown in fulfilling the onerous duties imposed by warfare. Not only have you uncomplainingly complied with all the requirements of war, but you have done more. From your wives, sisters and daughters there have come 150 Sisters of Mercy, and many of you have joined the foot and mounted corps raised by the town. Whatever forces the incident may bring against the town and the fortress, you will be found faithful and true servants of our father, the czar. Before the eyes of all Russia, and even before the whole world, we will be ready to be our best and our bravest. The defence of the stronghold on the shores of the Pacific, which has been entrusted to our care, long life to our great sovereign, and to great Russia! Hurrah!"

The Attack on Vladivostok.

Tokio Cable — Vice Admiral Kamimura, reporting the bombardment of Vladivostok on March 6, says: The attack commenced at ten minutes of two in the afternoon and the firing was kept up about forty minutes. He believes the bombardment was effective and compelling to the enemy. The Russian forts did not reply to the Japanese fire. Japanese cruisers subsequently reconnoitered several places on the coast, but found no trace of the enemy. The full report of Vice Admiral Kamimura, who commanded the second Japanese squadron, says: "As pre-arranged, we reached the east entrance to Vladivostok on the morning of March 6, through a frozen sea. The enemy's ships were not seen outside the harbor. We approached the batteries on the northeast coast from a point beyond the range of the batteries on the Russian promontory of the Bosphorus Strait. After bombarding the inner harbor for 20 minutes, from 1.30 o'clock in the afternoon, we retired. I believe the bombardment effected considerable damage. Soldiers were seen, but the land batteries did not reply to our fire.

Black smoke was observed at the east entrance to the harbor at about 5 o'clock p. m., and was thought to be from the enemy's ships, but the smoke gradually disappeared.

"On the morning of March 7 we reconnoitered America Bay and Strelak Bay, but saw nothing unusual. We re-approached the east entrance to Vladivostok at noon. The enemy's ships were invisible, and the batteries did not fire. We turned toward Possiet Bay, but not seeing the enemy, retired."

China Troops Must Stop it.

Paris Cable says—It is officially confirmed that the Russian Minister at Peking has made firm representations to the Chinese government concerning the activity of Chinese troops along the Manchurian frontier with a pointed intimation of the defensive measures Russia may be compelled to adopt. The substance of the representations follows:

Russia has taken cognizance of the presence of considerable forces of Chinese troops along the frontier. For the present it is recognized that these forces are independent of the direct authority and control of the imperial government, which, therefore, is not responsible for their presence. But the fact of their presence is called to the attention of the imperial government and should their continuance on the frontier lead to depredations and acts of lawlessness, Russia will take the measures necessary to safeguard her interests.

The foregoing is not the literal text, but it is the purport of the terms of the representations. These troops referred to are those of General Ma and General Yuan-Shi-Kai, the commander-in-chief. The latter is the Viceroy of Chi Li Province and his troops originally were organized by the late Li Hung Chang. Therefore, they are subject to the direct control of imperial control. It is understood here that Viceroy Alexeiev will be entrusted with formulating repressive measures if the depredations spread to the extent of endangering Russian interests.

Japs Assessed for War.

Salt Lake City, Utah Cable says—The Japanese in Utah have been asked to contribute \$100.00 toward the collection fund being collected in this country by the Fokugukai (patriotic society), a branch of which is being organized here. According to E. D. Hashimoto, the organizer, similar assessments have been made on the Japanese of Nevada, Wyoming, Montana and Colorado. Letters, it is stated, have been written leading Japanese of every big city in the country, and every State will have an organization of the Fokugukai to collect funds for the home country in its struggle with Russia. Mr. Hashimoto said that \$280,000 already had been raised in San Francisco alone, and that large sums are coming from Oregon, Washington and British Columbia.

criticizes Alexeiev.

Paris Cable says—The Journal publishes an interview sent in by its correspondent at Nino with General Baron Moller Zakomelsky, commander of the Seventh Army Corps, of Russia, which is stationed in the Crimea.

The correspondent expressed surprise at the general's absence from Russia in time of war, whereupon the general declared that the war in the far east had little effect upon the life and duties of a majority of the men in the Russian army, and that Russia had not reduced her forces on the German and Austrian frontiers. He severely criticized the management of the campaign in the far east, and said he thought Viceroy Alexeiev would soon ask to be recalled. He said also that no staff had been formed for General Kurovakin, who, he said, was to take over the duties of Viceroy Alexeiev. Gen. Zakomelsky expressed the belief that the war would not last long, and said that General Konroff, who was well acquainted with the Japanese, had been opposed to the war, but had foreseen that it was inevitable.

Battle Expected Soon.

St. Petersburg Cable says — p.m.—The only piece of important news up to this hour to-day from the seat of war was the Associated Press despatch from Port Arthur announcing a fresh attack on that place by the Japanese fleet. The despatch contained no details.

Another telegram to the Associated Press from Vladivostok has been received. It makes no mention of fighting, and it is assumed that all is quiet there. The reports that the Japanese fleet entered Manchuria west of the Yalu River and have reached Feng-Hang-Cheng on the Pekin road, which is the Russian line of communication to the Yalu, cannot be confirmed. If the information proves true, a land engagement of some magnitude cannot long be delayed, as the Russians have a heavy force south of the line, between Liao-Yang and Mukden, and they are also occupying strong positions along the Yalu. A Japanese column between them would be in a desperate strait unless it moved by the flank to take the Russians on the Yalu in the rear, and was energetically supported by a forward Japanese movement from Corea.

BRITAIN A GREAT POWER.

Her Army Estimates Must Be Framed Accordingly.

London, March 14.—During the discussion of the army estimates in the House of Commons to-night, Premier Balfour said that so long as the army home defenses were maintained in an adequate condition, any invasion of this country by an organized force capable of reducing it to submission was merely a dream. But, no man could blind himself to the fact that circumstances in the East were making Great Britain a great continental power, and that those circumstances must be taken into account in framing the British army estimates.

The London Daily Chronicle reports a gratifying improvement in the character of advertising posters in London, and says that advertisers are beginning to find that cheap and nasty art does not pay. Even the railways have discarded the merely utilitarian poster, and their latest cards show considerable artistic taste.

Remarkable Attitude for Russia as Pointed Out by Balfour.

London, March 14.—Answering a question in the House of Commons this afternoon Premier Balfour said the Government considers that the Russian declaration that she proposed to treat coal as contraband of war was of the greatest importance. The Premier admits he was aware that the Russian plenipotentiary at the West African conference held in Berlin in December last, in relation to the neutralization of the Congo, declared Russia never would accept an interpretation that coal should be considered by international law as contraband of war, and that the czar's government would categorically refuse to consent to recognize coal as contraband, either in relation to the Congo, or any other district whatever. In view of this, Mr. Balfour concluded, the British Government was taking steps to obtain more precise information in regard to the interpretation of the Russian declaration respecting contraband of war.

EXPLANATION OF CABINET CRISIS.

Mr. Balfour Talks of the Famous Spilt.

Colleagues Knew of Chamberlain's Resignation.

Scottish Curlers Had Only One Regret.

London Cable—Premier Balfour, replying to a question by Mr. Ellis, M. P., gave an explanation regarding the cabinet split. He said the Government crisis in the matter came about when Mr. Chamberlain made his memorable speech in May last. The Cabinet was divided on the subject of fiscal reform, but it was practically decided among them that the subject was not to be raised, but was to be put on one side till the end of the session. In the beginning of August he circulated among his colleagues his notes on insular free trade. Up to the date of the last Cabinet meeting in August he hoped to keep all his colleagues, but no compromise being suggested on the fiscal question by the members of the Government who afterwards retired, he began to abandon hope. His view at the time was that it was contrary to his public duty to leave his position at the head of the Government so long as he retained the confidence of the House and the House. In September he came to the conclusion that some break-up in the Cabinet was inevitable, and Mr. Chamberlain had arrived at the same view. Under these circumstances the Cabinet meeting of Sept. 11 assembled. Mr. Chamberlain expressed his view clearly at the meeting that he would resign if a colonial preference was omitted. In his letter Mr. Chamberlain expressed the view that he preferred to carry on a propaganda in an independent position.

Would be a Benefit.

All the gossip which reached his ears led him to believe that Lord Geo. Hamilton and Mr. Ritchie had abandoned any hope of remaining members of a Government pledged to fiscal reform. He heard even the speculation of what might occur when in consequence of a break in the Government, he would resign his place as Premier. He then altered the views previously held, and came to the conclusion that it was not within range of practical politics to have a good tax. No human being denied that a conceivable concession on the part of Canadian protectionists, combined with a conceivable minimum duty on food, would enormously subserve the interests of free trade.

Devonshire an Ass.

He sympathized with Mr. Ritchie and Lord George Hamilton, and decried jockeying them out of the Cabinet. He had reason to complain of the course pursued by Lord George Hamilton in stating that he had kept them ignorant of Mr. Chamberlain's retirement. He knew it in writing; they knew it by speech. He also complained that Lord Geo. Hamilton had allowed Lord Rosebery to make misstatements regarding the documents.

Mr. Balfour, referring to the Duke of Devonshire, said he was sorry if a correspondent of an unduly controversial nature had occurred regarding the latter's resignation. Devonshire was one of the assets of our public life, and the country would never forget his great and permanent services.

Protectionist Proposals.

Lord George Hamilton asserted, without denial, that the document placed before the Cabinet contained proposals for the taxation of food, but he had not signed it because he could get no guarantee that protection would not form a part of the Government programme. The document he referred to never had, so far as he knew, been withdrawn.

Mr. Ritchie, Lord George Hamilton, Mr. Winston Churchill and other Unionists walked out in order not to vote against the Government, whose majority was 65.

The Curlers' Regret.

Rev. John Kerr, one of the Scottish curlers, who visited Canada in 1903, has published an account of his tour in a book of 800 pages, profusely illustrated and printed by Lord Minto. He says the reception could not have been better for royalty. The only fly in the ointment was Rev. Dr. Milligan's denunciation of the party, who visited Niagara on Sunday. He says the tour advanced the cause of the empire.

COAL AS CONTRABAND.

London, March 14.—Answering a question in the House of Commons this afternoon Premier Balfour said the Government considers that the Russian declaration that she proposed to treat coal as contraband of war was of the greatest importance. The Premier admits he was aware that the Russian plenipotentiary at the West African conference held in Berlin in December last, in relation to the neutralization of the Congo, declared Russia never would accept an interpretation that coal should be considered by international law as contraband of war, and that the czar's government would categorically refuse to consent to recognize coal as contraband, either in relation to the Congo, or any other district whatever. In view of this, Mr. Balfour concluded, the British Government was taking steps to obtain more precise information in regard to the interpretation of the Russian declaration respecting contraband of war.