

NEWS AND NOTES

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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By the conclusion of a convention with France on the tenth of June, and with Russia on the thirtieth of July, Japan has succeeded in giving the present situation in the Far East the appearance at least of a certain permanence and quiet. The very general character of these conventions is apparent from the text of the Russian, which closely resembles the French treaty:

The Russian government and the Japanese government, animated by a desire to strengthen the peaceful, friendly, and neighborly relations, which happily have been re-established between Russia and Japan, and in order to avoid the possibility of future misunderstandings between the two empires, have concluded the following accord:

First Article.—Each of the two contracting parties engages itself to respect the territorial integrity of the other party, as also all the rights conferred upon each of them by existing treaties, accords, or conventions concluded with China and at present in force, copies of which have been exchanged between the parties; in as far as these rights are not incompatible with the principle of equal opportunities announced in the treaty of Portsmouth, of September 5, 1905, and with all the special conventions concluded between Japan and Russia.

Second Article.—The two contracting parties recognize the independence and territorial integrity of the Chinese Empire, as well as the principle of equal opportunity for all nations in the matter of commercial and industrial enterprises in that empire.

They also engage themselves to maintain the status quo and to cause this principle to be respected by all pacific means at their disposal.

[Signed] ISWOLSKY,
MOTONO.

This treaty is accompanied by a Russo-Japanese fisheries convention, which was ratified on September 9, and by a treaty of commerce and navigation, published on September 11. Both of these treaties render more definite the general provisions contained in the treaty of Portsmouth, which left all details to be defined later. The treaty contains a mutual guarantee of most-favored-nation rights in addition to a grant of special privileges. Within a certain sphere, moreover, both nations

retain the right of making special commercial arrangements (Russia within a frontier strip thirty-three miles in width, Japan with neighboring far eastern countries east of the Straits of Malacca).

The reception accorded the French treaty in Japan itself was very cordial, and almost universal satisfaction was expressed with this settlement. The arrangement with Russia, however, was not so favorably received by the opposition papers. It was reported that Japan in a secret protocol had given Russia a free hand in Mongolia. The report of the existence of any such secret understanding was immediately denied by the Japanese minister of foreign affairs.

The fact that the main conventions are so brief and composed of very general and flexible phrases has led many Oriental publicists to seek the sole significance of these treaties in the desire of the powers concerned to rest on their laurels for a number of years. In China, these treaties have made a very unfavorable impression. They are interpreted by the majority of Chinese publicists as being an attempt on the part of the powers mutually to guarantee their special privileges as over against the Chinese Empire, and thus, while making an empty declaration in favor of Chinese territorial integrity, really to advance the partition of China and to fix upon that country the system of special foreign interests and ex-territoriality from which she would so gladly free herself. Whether the understanding thus arrived at between the powers will be used for the purpose of a concerted advance of their interests in China, as is feared by the Chinese themselves, is at present perhaps the most important question in the Far East.

At the opening of the peace conference at the Hague, a delegation from Korea attempted to present its credentials, which had been issued with the consent of the emperor of that country. As by the treaties concluded during, and immediately following, the Russo-Japanese war, the entire conduct of Korean foreign affairs had been entrusted to Japan, the delegation was without international status. As a result of his indiscretion in this matter, the Emperor Yi Yung was forced to resign in favor of his son. At the same time a new treaty was concluded between Japan and Korea by which the protectorate over the latter empire is turned into a stricter suzerainty. The provisions of this latest treaty are as follows:

Article 1. The administration of Korea is subjected to the direction of the Japanese resident-general.

Article 2. Every law and decree as well as any other measure concerning important affairs of State must be submitted to the resident-general for his approval.

Article 3. The appointment of high and responsible functionaries must likewise be submitted to his approval.

Article 4. Only candidates recommended by the resident-general are to be appointed functionaries of the Korean government.

Article 5. There is to be a strict line of demarcation between administrative and judiciary affairs.

Article 6. The employment of foreigners requires the authorization of the resident-general.

Article 7. The first clause of the convention of August 22, 1902, concerning the employment of a financial counsellor is annulled.

Though the announcement of these measures caused uprisings in various localities, the Japanese authorities did not encounter any serious difficulties, as the Korean army had been disarmed and disbanded with liberal payments. The control which the Japanese government will henceforth exercise in Korea resembles the Tunisian system rather than that of Egypt. Large numbers of Japanese officials will be employed and, though the form of the Korean government is to be preserved, in all essential respects control will be exercised by Japanese authorities.

In order to carry out the reform policies proposed for Korea by Marquis Ito the Japanese council of state has decided that Japan will grant an annual subsidy of from two to three million yen, until the Korean finances are readjusted. The program of Marquis Ito comprises measures leading to a radical reform of the Korean political and economic system in all its branches. Among the most important administrative improvements planned are the following: A reform of the judicial system, both in the character of its officials and in methods of operation; a separation of judicial and administrative functions; an entire separation of the imperial household from the executive; a reduction in the number of officials, together with an increase in salaries. The financial and monetary system of the country is to be assimilated to that of Japan; modern sanitation is to be introduced in the cities; roads and railways are to be constructed; and a system of general education inaugurated. Important public works have already been begun, and the greatly improved system of communication has added materially to land values in the interior.

The negotiations for the opening of the Tairan (Dalny) customs have been completed. The entire leased territory of Kwan Tung (the southern end of Liao-tung peninsula, where Port Arthur and Tairan are situated) is to be made a free zone. Only imported articles which are to be transported immediately through and beyond the territory will be dutiable.

The long continued negotiations between Russia and Great Britain have finally resulted in a treaty, published on September 23, by which the relations between these two powers in Asia are adjusted. Under the terms of this agreement, the northern quarter of Persia will continue under the more special influence of Russia. For some time, Russia has been sending detachments of Cossacks to the northern provinces of Persia for the protection of Russian traders and settlers. On account of the popular agitation accompanying the establishment of the Persian parliament, local disorders have frequently arisen, which the Persian government has not always been able to cope with.

The specific provisions of the Anglo-Russian treaty are as follows:

I. CONCERNING PERSIA

Great Britain engages not to seek for herself, nor in favor of others, any concessions of a political or commercial nature in the northern third of Persia (i. e., beyond a line starting from Kasr-i-Shirin, passing through Isfahan, Yezd, Kakhk, and ending at the intersection of the Persian, Russian, and Afghan frontiers).

Great Britain will not oppose concessions in this region which are supported by the Russian government.

Russia makes a similar promise in favor of Great Britain with respect to the southeastern portion of Persia (i. e., beyond a line from the Afghan frontier to Gazik, Birjand, Kerman, and Bunder Abbas).

The arrangements by which revenues from Persian customs have been mortgaged for the payment of certain loans are not to be disturbed. Should, in the event of failure of payment, it become necessary for either power to establish a control over the sources of revenue affected, there is to be a friendly exchange of ideas concerning the organization of such control as affecting the sphere belonging to the power which does not establish such control.

II. CONCERNING AFGHANISTAN

The Russian government recognizes Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence, and it engages to conduct all its political relations with Afghanistan through the intermediary of the British government. The British government, on the other hand, engages to exercise its influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense; it also agrees that it will neither annex or occupy any portion of Afghanistan nor interfere in the internal administration of that country provided that the Ameer fulfills his engagements under the Treaty of Kabul, of March 21, 1905. The principal of equality of commercial opportunity in Afghanistan is established, as far as the two treaty powers are concerned.

III. CONCERNING THIBET

The two high contracting parties engage to respect the territorial integrity of Thibet and to abstain from all interference in its internal administration. They engage not to enter into negotiations with Thibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese government. Relation between British commercial agents and the

Thibetan authorities, provided for in the Thibetan Treaty of September 7, 1904, are, however, not excluded. Neither power will send representatives to Lhasa nor seek any concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, or mines, in Thibet.

The second peace conference at the Hague held its concluding session on October 18. The most important among the conventions worked out by the conference is that providing for the establishment of an international prize court to hear appeals from the national courts which have hitherto judged of the lawfulness of captures made in war at sea. The significance of this new institution lies in the fact that it will be a regularly constituted and permanent tribunal with compulsory jurisdiction. The work accomplished by the conference in the form of conventions and resolutions may be summarized as follows:

1. The establishment of an international prize court.
2. The recommendation of a further study of the question of limiting military burdens.
3. The principle that contractual debts of States shall not be collected by force of arms until arbitration has been resorted to.
4. The inviolability of neutral States.
5. Further definition of the rights and duties of neutrals in time of war.
6. The requirement of a declaration of war before hostilities are begun.
7. The prohibition of the bombardment of unfortified ports and towns.
8. Certain restrictions upon the placing of floating mines.
9. Application of the Red Cross Convention of 1864, and its revision of 1906, to maritime warfare.
10. The transformation of merchantmen into warships.

Before adjourning, the conference officially recognized the good services of the president of the United States in taking the first steps toward its convocation.

The assassination of General Alikhanoff at Alexandropol ended a career of singularly romantic interest and of typical importance in connection with the advance of Russia into Central Asia. Ali Khan Avarski was a Mohammedan born at Baku in 1846. He served in the Russian army from the ranks up, and took part in the various Turcoman campaigns. The conquest of Merv was due to his initiative and he became the first Russian governor of that province. The rise of an Oriental to the position of major-general in the Russian army has been pointed to as a proof of the liberality and the assimilating ability of Russia. In his methods of government and military control this general remained thoroughly Oriental. His attempts to suppress insurrection in Georgia and the Caucasus were so mercilessly severe, especially as against the Armenians, that he incurred fierce popular hatred, to which he ultimately fell a victim.

The intervention of France and Spain in Morocco as the mandataries of the Algeiras treaty-powers has so far not led to any international complications. The general, and it is claimed unnecessary, destruction of the property of Europeans at Casablanca in consequence of the bombardment has caused indignant protests on the part of German merchants. The German government has, however, so far exhibited a very quiet attitude. The proposal of France, contained in a joint note to the signatory powers, for the provisional formation of a French and Spanish police corps in the Moroccan ports was accepted by the German government upon the presumption that it would not be given such a form as to prejudice the provisions of the Algeiras act. The French cabinet council, following the precedent of the bombardment of Alexandria, has decided that the Moroccan government will be held financially responsible for the damage sustained in the pillage and other disturbances at Casablanca. The indemnities due are to be fixed by an international commission.

The diplomatic sky of Europe was unusually serene during the summer of 1907. With the exception of the troubles in Morocco and the possible consequences of an American-Japanese misunderstanding, no cloud could be discovered. Such a temper was of course an eminently fitting accompaniment to the peace conference at the Hague. The desire for an adjustment of international relations, which manifested itself in the conclusion of the treaties between France, Japan, Russia, and Great Britain, was also expressed by an unusual number of meetings of sovereigns and ministers of State for the purpose of a friendly interchange of opinions and civilities. King Edward VII. met the emperor of Germany at Wilhelmshohe and the emperor of Austro-Hungary at Ischl; he also had an interview with M. Clemenceau, the president of the French council of ministers, at Marienbad. M. Jules Cambon met Prince Buelow at Norderney. The Austrian and the Italian ministers of foreign affairs had a meeting at Desio on the Semmering, upon which occasion various matters concerning the Balkan States were discussed. Another very important meeting took place at Swinemünde between Czar Nicholas, accompanied by his minister of foreign affairs, M. Iswolsky, and Emperor William, accompanied by Prince Buelow. The sovereigns remained together for four days and had many long conversations, at which their ministers also were frequently present. There evidently exists a desire for a better mutual understanding and for a guarantee of peaceful relations through the adjustment of prob-

lems in outlying regions and through the recognition of a certain European solidarity of interest.

At a meeting of the ministers of the Central American republics represented in Washington, on September 18, a protocol was signed providing for a general conference to be held at Washington in November for the adjustment of the mutual relations of the Central American republics.

The agitation against further Asiatic immigration into British Columbia has assumed serious proportions. Local riots have taken place, Asiatics have been threatened and attacked, and a Japanese school set on fire by local rowdies. The agitation is directed against all Asiatics, Japanese, Chinese, and Hindoos, and thus affects the British government in several capacities; in its duty to the Hindoos as their protecting sovereign, and in its international responsibilities to friendly powers like Japan and China, the former of whom stands in a relation of special alliance with Great Britain. The Canadian government is attempting to secure from the government of Japan a modification of the clause in the treaty of 1906 which permits a subject of either country to enter and freely reside in the territory of the other. As this treaty accords very substantial trade advantages to Canada, which are especially favorable to British Columbia on account of its situation, the Dominion government hopes that the provincial authorities may be induced to make special efforts to secure the treaty rights of Japanese residents.

At the opening of the Transvaal parliament on June 20, the premier, General Botha, announced that the government had decided not to re-enact the labor ordinance, but to repatriate all Chinese laborers immediately upon the expiration of their contracts. The premier asserted that it would be easy to secure an adequate supply of native laborers for the mines. The latter are to be recruited under the supervision of the governmental native labor bureau.

The German secretary of state for colonies, Dr. Dernburg, has taken steps towards the founding of a colonial academy at Hamburg, a city which is specially adapted to be the seat of such an institution. Hamburg already has an institute of tropical medicine, which is to be incorporated with the new colonial academy.