

## The Japan Daily Mail.

YOKOHAMA, TUESDAY, JULY 9, 1907.

### THE SAN FRANCISCO QUESTION.

This problem is now attracting a great deal of attention in Japan. A telegram to the *Asahi* from San Francisco says that with reference to the Municipal Authorities' decision not to renew the licenses of various Japanese tradesmen, the Central Government has ordered the District Attorney to make a minute investigation into the nature of the trades concerned, the manner in which they have hitherto been conducted, and the validity of the plea that they interfere with the preservation of good order. This instruction was of course conveyed through the Municipal Authorities, but although they have received the document compiled by the District Attorney they refuse to publish its contents until after its discussion by themselves in council, which was to take place on the 9th inst. They are said to regard the affair as one of considerable gravity, by which we presume they are to be interpreted as referring to the conflict which must take place before long between State rights and Federal authority in America.

Of course all sorts of rumours are flying about in these circumstances. Thus there is a story of a collision between American sailors and Japanese subjects, and there is also an obviously false report that the United States Government has ordered the dismissal of all Japanese subjects employed in the Philippines.

There is further a great deal of talk about the despatch of a large fleet by America to the Pacific. The *Asahi* has a most temperate article on the subject. It finds nothing more natural than that America, having adopted an imperial policy, should make some adequate show of strength in the regions of her expansion. From this point of view the coming of the fleet may be regarded as a normal incident, and the only thing to be regretted is the shortness of its stay in Eastern waters. If the ships had time to visit the various Japanese ports and to receive the welcome that would assuredly be afforded to them there, a welcome certainly not inferior to that received by Admiral Ijuin's Squadron at Jamestown, a large contribution would certainly be made towards a better mutual understanding. The *Asahi* emphatically denies that there is any question between the Japanese and American nations. The only point in dispute is the conduct of a party of labourers in a remote district of the great Republic. The *Mainichi Dempo* writes in much the same strain. It says that Japan has nothing to do with the evolutions of foreign navies, especially the navy of a friendly and peace-loving Power like the United States. America's Far Eastern possessions are admittedly deficient in defensive works, and it is quite reasonable that she should despatch a fleet to these waters for the purpose of showing her capacity to protect her possessions. As to the despatch of the fleet being in any sense an armed demonstration against Japan, the idea is not tenable for a moment. There is a rumour that Germany has offered to assist the fleet by supplying it with coal, but if the ships want coal Japan will give them as much as they please. Some people in America seem to be rather excited, and their

excitement leads them not only to exaggerate the present state of affairs but also to read into the action of their own Government unreal motives. The San Francisco question is a petty affair, but unfortunately it constitutes a small thorn in the side of the two friendly nations, and the pricking cannot be radically removed until the last clause of the 2nd Article of the Treaty is eliminated, which cannot be done until the time comes for revising the Treaty. This remark of the *Mainichi Dempo* is almost identical with one made editorially by the *Asahi*. Even the *Niroku* writes in a most moderate tone. It says in effect that there can be no trouble between Japan and the United States as long as the people of the two countries regard each other with friendly eyes. The only danger is that this feeling of mutual friendship may be disturbed by false rumours which are freely coined at such a time by sensation-mongers. It is the duty of everyone to withhold belief from these stories and to refrain from giving them currency. The *Hochi Shimbun*, which, as our readers well know, has hitherto been the only leading Japanese journal that discussed the San Francisco question in anything like an intemperate spirit, treats this matter of the coming of the American fleet in a thoroughly gentle manner. It declines to regard the incident as having any concern whatever for Japan. Indeed if the fleet were intended as a demonstration against this country, the procedure would be a reversal of the proper order of things, for it is Japan that has complaint to make, not America. The American press seems to be making a good deal out of the situation but Japan is quite undisturbed. Count Okuma, estimating from the story of Rojestvensky's voyage, concludes that the fleet could not reach Japan much before November, which would just be the right time for the officers to participate in Japan's chrysanthemum festivals. The *Hochi* is nevertheless disposed to think that the American Government will incur some reproach for tactlessness if it makes such a demonstration in Far Eastern waters just at present. Japan on her side refrained from allowing her training squadron to call at San Francisco a few months ago though a visit to that place had been part of the squadron's original programme. That was a courteous act of self-restraint, but will America be choosing her times and seasons with equal judgment if she prosecutes her present programme? Of course the matter concerns the United States herself alone. It is her judgment that the world will call in question: Japan has nothing to do with it.

Rear-Admiral Sakamoto is quoted by the *Hochi Shimbun* as making some statements which we do not for one moment credit as having emanated from any naval officer of high rank.

The *World* appears to have addressed itself to Count Itagaki also in order to elicit an expression of opinion as to the impression produced in Japan by the projected visit of an American fleet. The Count's reply is given by the Tokyo press. He said that in these days of armed peace it is quite natural and proper that a great Power should make preparations for all emergencies, but as to war, experience had shown what kind of thing it is, and no two civilized nations would have recourse to it except in the event of unavoidable necessity.