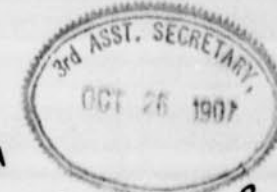




1797

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BERLIN

July 10, 1907.

*Recd by W. Bacon
Oct. 26. HW*

Dear Mr. Root,-

The current reports of strained relations between the United States and Japan, growing out of the disturbances in California and the possibility of a serious breach between the two countries, have occupied the European press very constantly of late and have attracted public attention especially throughout Germany,- where the subject has suddenly assumed the place of prime importance amongst the international questions of the day.

I have translated and enclose to you herewith a copy of an article which appeared on the 1st. instant in an influential newspaper of Berlin, the Tageblatt, relating to this matter, particularly with a view to the commercial side of our intercourse with Japan and the probable damage that would result from a dispute,- even without its reaching an armed conflict,- to the trade of America. I trust that it will interest you, at least, to observe the mental attitude of people who are not immedi-

ately connected with the questions at issue, but who follow the course of events from afar.

The writer of this article describes the reports of misunderstandings between America and Japan as disquieting, in spite of the efforts made under the official authority of the Japanese government, and those of the more stable of the American journals, to suppress the feeling of alarm in both countries:- but he intimates very strongly his belief that hostility has been aroused amongst the people of Japan and that that hostility not only does not depend upon, but can not be controlled by, the Japanese government; for, he declares that if we take note of the course of events in the democratic age in which we live, we shall find by experience that vox populi is today more than ever vox dei.

This statement, somewhat veiled as it is by an evident intention not to treat a great international question with too great harshness of language, is striking, however, because it allows the ideas to penetrate with sufficient clearness that are prevalent now throughout Europe,-namely, that we are bound to have trouble in spite of ourselves, that the Japanese are aggressive and that if we do not find a remedy to prevent it we shall be involved forthwith. You will notice that he declares that there

there is still one way open, which is "that the Americans "may yield"; but that, in the meantime, there is grave danger that a boycott will be declared against American goods in Japan. He points out as an indication of this the representations recently made by the seven Chambers of Commerce in Japan to the Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco as well as in other American cities, and expresses his belief, which he supports by a telegraphic communication from London,- that this Japanese address is not an effort to maintain peace, but is a threat against American trade.

I am in a position to say upon excellent information that the view of the present situation taken by the highest government authorities not only in Germany but also in England is, that this contest is not one merely as to the rights of Japanese school children or Japanese laborers, in San Francisco or elsewhere in the United States, but that it involves the great question of the control of the Pacific Ocean which the Japanese claim to be theirs and which they are determined to assert against us, the only great Power that can dispute it with them. I know this to be the opinion of the British Foreign Office and the English Admiralty. It is also the accepted belief in similar quarters in Berlin. The small irritation at San Francisco would be looked upon as almost insignificant if it

if it were not considered to be a symptom of a radical difficulty which threatens to destroy the peaceful relations of the two countries. It is suspected that the question of the school-children is being made much of in Japan merely for the purpose of inflaming public sentiment against America, and that if it can be brought to lead up to a boycott of American goods, a tension will have been established which may produce open hostilities. Military and naval observers incline to the belief that it is only a question with the Japanese as to the moment most favorable to them to open hostilities with us.

Additional weight would appear to be given to this opinion by the fact that British naval officers maintain it as the result of their observation amongst the Japanese, with whom they come into closer contact than other foreigners by reason of the relations growing out of their interests as allies and to some extent, at least, as comrades.

Both here and in England the question of the military and naval results of a war between the United States and Japan has been submitted to technical consideration, the problem having been worked out by the German General Staff in Berlin and at the Admiralty in London. Although these calculations have been made quite separately

ly, indeed without any combination or connection whatever with each other, they have been found to produce the same, or about the same, result,- which, I am sorry to report, is not favorable to us. The conclusion in each case is, that the outcome of a trial of strength, under the circumstances in both countries as they are today, would be as about 5 to 4 in favor of Japan.

All of this is not very agreeable news for me to send you, and it may or may not be true in so far as it reproduces the actual situation of the United States at this time. But I feel that it ought to be brought to your notice, at all events, in order that you may be familiar with the view that people take, and the opinions they hold of us in connection with our relations with Japan, on this side of the Ocean.

The Japanese are not liked in Germany,- far from it. They are held here in universal suspicion and distrust, as I intimated in the letter which I wrote you some months ago upon the subject of disarmament. The natural inclination of the people here is, to side with the United States; and whilst I am not much given to relying greatly upon mere sentiment in international matters, I am convinced that, in a war between the United States and Japan, the moral support and the public sympathy of the German

German people would be unequivocally upon our side.

Very sincerely yours,

Charles Magnusson

Honorable Elihu Root,

Secretary of State.