

The Japan Chronicle.

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MR. TAFT'S VISIT.

MR. WILLIAM H. TAFT, Secretary of War for the United States, has come and gone. His visit was opportune, though all too short; but brief as it was it has had the effect of allaying any alarm that may have been felt as to the danger of a severance of the good relations which—despite the unfortunate happenings on the Pacific slope—have existed between Japan and America for so many years. Mr. TAFT knew by previous experience that his reception would be of a most cordial nature; and when he stated, on the verge of his departure from Kobe, that he was beginning to feel himself quite at home in Japan, he spoke with undoubted sincerity, and there can be no doubt that Mr. TAFT is very popular in Japan. When it was announced that he would visit this country again it was instinctively felt that he would be the means of pouring the proverbial oil on the troubled waters. Despite the persistent vapourings of the American Yellow Press—which have apparently been turned out with extra vigour during Mr. TAFT's visit, but have not been flashed to the Orient as speedily as the manufacturers would desire, by reason of the break in the Pacific cable—the absurdity of war talk is fully recognised by the vast majority of thinking Japanese. And Mr. Taft has confirmed the view that we have more than once put forward since the San Francisco trouble threatened to injure the friendly relations between Japan and the United States—that the anti-Japanese feeling hardly exists beyond that section of the country which is affected by the immigration of cheap Japanese labour. As we have repeatedly urged, and as Mr. TAFT emphasised, there is no valid reason for the war talk, which it must be admitted has been far more prevalent in America than in Japan. Neither country wants to fight; neither country has any excuse for fighting. Apart from

the technical difficulties of actual warfare between the two countries, Japan has her hands full just now with the development of her financial and industrial resources, while the administration of Korea and the opening-up of Manchuria are matters with which the Government is too fully occupied for the consideration of war, knowing by recent experience how all else has to be neglected when once hostilities are opened. During all the wild war talk few have ventured to express the belief that the American Government would precipitate war; but there seem to be some in the United States who believe, or pretend to believe, that Japan has the intention of doing so. We are sure we are correct in saying that Japan has never had any idea of making war on the United States; and even if she so desired the difficulties in the way are well-nigh insurmountable. The first and all-important matter is that of money. The money that Japan raised to assist her in defeating Russia came principally from England and the United States. In a war with the United States what country is there that would take the chance of loaning Japan such an enormous sum as would be required? As has been pointed out, no matter how much sentiment there might be in Japan's favour, sentiment has never been a failing of the great European bankers, and it would be from them in the end that money would have to come.

These considerations naturally arise on reflecting on Mr. TAFT's brief visit, and it may be hoped that the statesmanlike utterances made by him in reference to this serious yet absurd topic of war may put an end to the doings of the few scare-mongers in this country, the aim of many of whom is merely to stir up ill-feeling against foreigners generally.

Mr. TAFT's visit should be the means, also, of ending the silly talk that has become general of late concerning Japan's alleged designs on the Philippines and of the alleged willingness of the United States to dispose of the islands. "Japan," said Mr. TAFT "does not wish the Philippines. She has problems of a similar nature nearer home. But more than this, the United States could not sell the islands to another

Power without the grossest violation of its obligation to the Philippine people. It must maintain a government of law and order and the protection of life, liberty, and property itself or fit the people of the islands to do so and turn the government over to them. No other course in honour is open to it." He admitted that the task which America had undertaken with regard to the Philippines is full of difficulty and one which many Americans would be glad to be rid of, but his definite statement regarding his country's intentions in this matter may be regarded as expressive of the general view in America. It was as well that Mr. TAFT refrained from references to the trouble on the Pacific coast; there are signs that the Governments of both countries are exerting their efforts to the utmost to remedy the immigration trouble. There may be many views held by Mr. TAFT with which it is difficult to be in agreement; but this much is certain, that if he is elected President of the United States his diplomacy and sound judgement will go a long way towards strengthening the good relations existing between his country and Japan.

