

What Japan's Policy with Russia should  
be.

To protect Japan against any possible further encroachments on the part of Russia, I would advise the earliest possible opening of the Corea.<sup>(a)</sup> By opening that country herself and gradually perfecting its interior organization on a plan similar to her own, Japan will obtain with her an influence that it would be difficult for any power to shake; and the country may eventually fall under her immediate control, as the Lo Choo Islands have done two years ago. Unless

(a). Japan has already effected two great results that have compelled the attention of the world, namely, the extinction of the Coolie trade, and contributing to secure the safety of the Formosa coast, and she might accomplish a third by effecting the opening of the Corea.





Japan does this, and does it quickly, some other power will take her place. Japan must not be deceived by the favorable reports that came from Corea while Mr. Okubo was in Peking and her armies occupied Formosa, for, at the very time she was making these assurances, she was sending an embassy to Peking to find out the true state of affairs between Japan and China. No one can foretell the result of these inquiries, nor how the Korean ambassador may be deceived by the intrigues or misrepresentations of the Chinese.

In my opinion, Japan should lose no time in profiting by the favorable impression which the successes of General Saigo in Formosa and Mr. Okubo in Peking have created in the Korean mind, and by the prestige

which these successes have given her there, and, immediately upon the return of General Saigo, organize an embassy with the General at its head, and send it to Corea, placing upon the staff of the ambassador a number of officers who would be fully competent to aid him in his task. No doubt a treaty could be signed, and, immediately after it had been framed, the Japanese government should proceed to aid the Koreans in the organization of the different services for the development of the country.

Another move which would also much strengthen the position of Japan against all possible moves against her by Russia, would be the proper colonization of Yesso in a way that would not only protect her from an



invasion of that island, but would also afford her ample returns for the sacrifices which she would have to make in order to accomplish it. Considering the difficulties which such a scheme would entail a few remarks on the subject may not be unadvisable.

There can be no doubt as to the existence of vast resources of wealth on that island. Among those which could be made most readily productive are the coal fields and the forests. The former are of great extent and value, and need only to be properly opened and worked to prove highly remunerative. They exist at Iwani on the west coast and on the Sorachi and Horomoi Rivers in the great Ishikari valley and at other places in the island. The mines at Iwani have been worked but,

from the lack of a good harbor, have not been very successful. Those on the Sorachi and Horomoi are very extensive, but have never been worked. A recent analysis of coal from these places shows its quality to be equal to, or even perhaps better than, that of the Takasima coal of the south.

The valley of the Ishikari is also a vast store house of wealth in the shape of timber. From thence, the entire East could be supplied with lumber without in the slightest degree injuring the forests. The trees that have matured could be cut, while the young trees should be left for future use. In this way the supply would not be exhausted and the forests would even be improved, since the trees that have



attained full maturity will no longer improve, but, on the contrary, be lost entirely if not utilized; whereas if they are cut down and sold, room will be given to the young forests to grow, and be themselves cut down and replaced by others in their turn.

The valleys of the island, especially those of the Ichikami and in the interior, generally possess a good, fertile soil, and could be made exceedingly productive, could people be induced to establish themselves there for the purpose of cultivating the land. The problem of developing Hok'kaido then, reduces itself to this: How many colonists be induced to establish themselves there, and, by improving these wild lands, make them valuable?

Many answers might be advanced to this; but the plan that could be most readily be put into execution would, I think, be in general outline something as follows: Let military colonies be established at various points on the island, as near as possible to the places where the most resources are found, to serve as nuclei around which rich and permanent settlements will be gathered. In connection with this, let some well matured scheme of public improvement be undertaken, one which readily suggests itself, would be the establishment of a naval depot at some suitable place, in connection with which should be a small arms and ammunition manufactory. Beyond a doubt, the best place



for an establishment of this kind would be at Shin-Mororan (sometimes called Tokaramoi) on the northern side of Volcano Bay. This place is perhaps the finest harbor in the whole island, where the entire navy of Japan could anchor in safety. It is, for many reasons, vastly superior to Hakodate. It is naturally, in a military point of view, much stronger than that place, and could be fortified at much smaller cost. It is also easy of entrance in bad weather and well protected. In these respects Hakodate is very bad. In order to reach it, ships must pass through the ugly straits of Tengar, in which places, the currents are so strong as to make the passage dangerous for steamers in bad weather, and with head winds,

sailing vessels sometimes cannot enter at all for weeks. At Shin-Mororan, on the contrary, no such difficulty is found. Volcano Bay, with an entrance twenty miles wide opening on the Pacific Ocean, can always be entered in any weather, and from these ships have smooth water and no current in entering the harbor, the entrance to which is so narrow that it can be readily fortified so as to be inaccessible to wooden ships, and with torpedoes and obstructions, would not be easily taken even by iron clad men of war. This harbor could be made the outlet of the produce of the interior by simply building a cheap railroad from thence to the coal regions along the Ishikari. The country along the line that such a road must follow is very favorable.



to the construction of such a road; and, with one, the greatest difficulty yet met with in developing Hok'kaido would be removed. At present, there can be no agricultural improvement from the fact that there is no outlet for what is produced, and in no country can people be induced to remain where their meagre raise enough for their own consumption if, by going elsewhere as is the case in Japan, they can do better. But a railroad would remedy this, and we would soon see the country along the line of such a road sustaining a large population and exporting a profitable surplus. No doubt persons would be found who would ridicule the idea of a railroad in Hok'kaido, and ask: "What is the use of a railroad in such a wilderness?" Let us

consider for a moment this question. Railroads are built to secure one of two objects, viz., to give means of transportation between different points in a populous and wealthy country, as, for instance, in England, in which case they are constructed in the most durable manner and at great expense - here civilization takes the lead of railroads - or, where a country possessing undeveloped resources, is made accessible by means of railroads, as, for example, in the United States, where the Great Pacific Rail Road, crossing the continent, was carried into the wilderness; and through its agency, we have seen a vast amount of territory that before had been unproductive, converted into fine states and building up an empire of wealth where a few years ago



scarcely a white man was to be seen. In this latter case, the rail road goes in advance of civilization, and this is what must be done in Tokai Kaido. The building of such a road as has been mentioned would attract thither a great many people, and, having a means of sending their produce to the market, they would be encouraged to improve and cultivate the land; the coal mines could be worked, steam mills would convert the now useless forests into lumber, and, in five years, an immense trade of this kind would be developed, and Tokai Kaido, instead of being an expense to the government, would yield a handsome revenue. In considering the plan of building such a road, the question of coal must have a great influence.

But the cost of roads already in Japan should not be taken as a standard. Such a road as would be required, could easily be built for \$30,000 per mile; <sup>(a)</sup> and one hundred miles of such a railroad would give the key to wealth which, in five years, would repay the investment. Should a naval depot be established at Shin-Moraran, coal would be necessary there, as would also be lumber; and this road would supply both.

To return to the military colonization of the island, the points at which these could be established with

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(a).- The average cost of the Pacific Rail Road was only \$10,000 per mile; in the Eastern States it is less; in Scotland still less; and in India very much less, in some places being only \$5,000. The estimates given here have been furnished by Mr. Wasson, to whom I am also indebted for the information I give concerning Gesso. He states that his estimates of the cost of the railroad spoken of here are founded upon a careful examination of the country it is intended to run through.



advantage would be at places to be selected along the Ishikari River in the vicinity of Satsuro, at Iwami, at Muro-  
beten on Volcano Bay and at Shim-Mororan.  
A colony, or more than one, could also be placed on the Eastern Coast, and made to aid in the better development of the fisheries, which at present are the most profitable industry on the island, and are nearly so productive as they could be made. The land in the vicinity of these colonies should be regularly surveyed and laid out on some well prepared system. Perhaps the best and simplest model that could be found is that applied to the public lands of the United States. In order to defray the expenses of establishing these colonies, a part of these lands could be sold or leased to the Chinese, who are excellent pioneers

and would soon make headway against the wilderness. There would be no objection to these people, as they would be entirely subject to Japanese laws. Whole families of them from the north of China might be induced to proceed there, if suitable grants of land and means of subsistence for say two years, which would be quite long enough for them to improve their lands and make them productive, together with the privilege of becoming naturalized in Japan, were offered to them. Many Chinese who have been to the United States and become expert in mining and railroad work, would, with the above inducements, have no hesitation in going there to settle. The well known industry of the Chinese, combined with their facility to adapt



themselves to the circumstances of any country, renders them especially desirable to the government of His Imperial Majesty as eminently preferable to any other class of emigrants. By improving their own lands they would increase the value of those retained for the government, so that they would find a ready market at some future date. The survey necessary for laying out these lands should in no way be allowed to interfere with the important survey of the island now in progress. The work proposed would be of quite a different character, and would consist in merely dividing the land up into sections so that it could be sold.

In a paper so brief as this must be, it is impossible to give more

than an outline of a plan of a work of such magnitude. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the government will take the subject into consideration, in order that a system to render productive an island that comprises almost a third of the Japanese empire may be devised. When this has been done, the plan adopted carried into effect and the country placed under cultivation and protected against attacks of all kinds, the ambitious designs of Russia, if she really has such designs, will be easily baffled, and the Imperial authority will be as firmly established there as in any other part of the Empire.



Causes of Weakness in the  
Government of Japan.

I have said above that Japan needs to strengthen her government;<sup>(a)</sup> but I have failed to indicate all the genus of weakness which it contains. One of the most to be regretted is its want of unity. As it is now, there are, on one side, the Emperor, the Sa In which is a sort of connecting link between the sovereign and the people, and the Great Council or Daijo Kwan, and on the other, the various Departments, whose heads are also members of the great council, with their delegates in

(a).- See page 50.



the provinces. The first may be said to constitute the legislative element of the government, from which all the laws emanate, and the second the executive element, which puts these laws in force. Theoretically, this mechanism is perfect. Its supreme power, the source of all benevolence and goodness, is absolute and therefore thoroughly effective. Everything is done at his dictation. He enjoins the legislative branch to make laws, and the laws are made, and to the executive branch he entrusts their execution, and they are accordingly put into force. In actual practice, however, it shows many defects. The task of the sovereign, under such an arrangement, is so heavy that to fully accomplish it would require a strength such as is beyond human

power to attain. Hence the necessity of dividing the burden, and, with it, the requisite authority, among many; and the portion of authority thus delegated is, within the sphere in which it is expected to operate, like the source from which it flows, necessarily absolute. It is originally divided into two great heads. The first is retained by the Emperor's high coadjutors, the Prime Ministers and the Daijokwan, and the Sa In as advisers, who, as the mouthpiece of the Emperor, say what shall be done, while the second rests with the chiefs of the various departments who, aided by their numerous assistants, specify, the one independently of the other, the manner of doing it. To enable them to perform this task, the wealth of the Empire is divided among them, and



each one spends his share as he chooses. There is no control over their acts, unless it be after their acts are consummated. And what control can that be, and how can it reach or check, if it cannot touch the chief of the state, to whom alone the ministers are responsible. Now without control, or what is the same thing, without any check or effective resistance, the government has no base, but is weakened by the very enormity of the responsibility that crushes it in advance. The righteousness of this political law has long been acknowledged; and in nothing is it more apparent than in questions of finance. A nation, in modern times, is nothing except through labor and wealth; labor and wealth depend upon the public credit; and the public credit cannot exist

outside of good order, regularity and publicity in the administration of the affairs of the nation, which are incompatible with absolute power. A government that is absolute in theory is powerless in practice. It is wanting in the resources which a regular system of control affords to a government which is amenable to the nation. Look at England, France, Germany, Austria, Russia, the United States, China, Turkey and others, and you will see that the power of the sovereign, like the wealth of the people, are in direct ratio with the control under which the acts of the government are kept - both being greater in proportion to the limited sphere of action allowed the chief of the state.

I do not wish to intimate here



that I would like to see Japan with a government like that of England or Germany, the circumstances of the former being too widely different from those of the latter to admit of a similar political organization. What I would wish is the same system and same mechanism that now exists with but one additional gear attached, the object of which would be that no act of one member of the government could be perfected or carried into effect without the sanction having been first obtained of the sovereign and his councillors, who should be placed in a position to so direct these acts that they would not conflict with each other, and would thereby be better calculated to secure the greatest possible amount of good to the

nation. In European countries and the United States, this is accomplished by means of a legislative assembly; but the people of Japan, having but just emerged from the irresponsibility of feudalism, are not yet in the proper condition to have such an assembly in the sense which is attached to it in Western countries. The Sa In, who represent not only the most enlightened portions of the community, but also that portion which is most in contact with the people, well know their requirements, not in general, but in detail, and are expected to make them known to the sovereign, constitutes, in my opinion, all the representation that Japan will need for many years to come. But as it is intended simply to enlighten the sovereign as



to what ought to be done, and not as to how it should be done, its recommendations are incomplete, and the government has to decide on the most important matters without sufficient light before them. Therefore, I would propose to fill up the gap by the creation of a Consultation Board, to which all the wishes of the Sa In as made known to, and considered by, the Emperor and the Daijokwan, should be submitted previously to their being given effect to by force of law. All great government schemes, all regulations, all important measures which would emanate from any source whatever, would be submitted to it. In fact, the Consultation Board would be to Japan something like what the Conseil d'Etat is to France. It would be composed of

high officers, ranking immediately below the chiefs of departments, delegated from the various branches of the service. Inasmuch as its functions would be in the main advisory and initiative, and not in any sense executive, there could be no objection to the enrolment of foreigners among its members, supposing that additional value, force or quickness in its councils could thus be secured, or that the advantages of foreign experience could be effectively added to its judgments. In the organization of important movements, so much frequently depends upon promptness that the time expended in indirect and outside consultations with foreign advisers in the various departments would be a serious public loss, and the benefit of the immediate



availability of counsel and suggestion would be very great. But if foreigners should be thus employed, they ought to be few in number and selected with the utmost caution that the government could exercise. Their fidelity and devotion to the interests of the state should be far above the faintest shadow of doubt or suspicion. They should be admitted only upon thorough and approved conviction that the trust reposed in them would never be betrayed.

All matters brought before the Consultation Board would be carefully studied, elaborated and considered, not only in connection with the particular department which they would more immediately concern, but with all the others. In this manner, errors or accidents of detail might be

avoided by the concentration of the united attention of the whole body upon a particular subject. Unfortunate oversights like one which I will take the liberty of remarking upon, although I believe it has thus far escaped the notice of the British minister, would not be likely to occur. In the tariff convention of June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1866, it was provided (Art. II.) that, two years after that date, any of the contracting parties might claim a certain re-adjustment of the duties on tea and silk, which had been fixed at a low specific rate. In 1868, this right was temporarily waived by the Japanese government, upon condition that the governments of England, France, the United States and Holland would defer pressing the demand for the Simonsaeki Indemnity.



But it remained in abeyance, and, in 1874, when the balance of the indemnity was paid, Japan should have been free to raise the duties on these two articles. It was the opinion of many that she could at once do so, but meanwhile she had executed treaties with other powers in which she pledged herself to the specified duties, without any reservation of the right to change them. By the most favored nation clauses, all the original treaty powers may now claim the same rights, and thus, by an unlucky inadvertence, the present government has thrown away one of the few advantages which the old administration had the forethought to endeavor to secure. It is hardly possible that this omission would have passed unnoticed if the combined consideration of the whole

governing body had been bestowed upon the subject. In the adjustment of all public affairs, being perfectly familiar to all the details of the services they represent and always working in common, the members of the Consultation Board could compare notes, enlighten each other, and see that nothing done in detail would interfere with the regular working of the whole governmental machine.<sup>(a)</sup>

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(a) Iyeyas, or Fongentama, expresses in the following few lines how important it is to circumscribe every man within the limits of the duties he is fitted for by the specialty of his knowledge. He says: "An ordinary man is like a manufactured article. He is not composed of many bodies. Every manufactured article has its own separate use, and a hammer will not answer the purpose of a chisel, nor can a gimlet be used for the purposes of a saw."

"In precisely the same manner, every individual man has a special use. Make use of a wise man's wisdom; of a brave man's courage; of a strong man's strength; of a weak man's weakness; of each, in short, according to his individual capability; - for just as a gimlet will not answer the purposes of a saw, neither will an ignorant or weak man answer the purposes of a strong man, and should therefore not be employed in his stead." [See Legacy of Iyeyas. Cap. LXXVI.]



If, for instance, anything should be proposed for the navy which, although good and even necessary in itself, could easily be delayed to some future day, they would accordingly advise the postponement of its adoption and prefer something else sent in by the Interior Department, for example, the execution of which could not be delayed without compromising the general welfare of the state. As most of the Councillors would be men of theory, they could, in difficult cases, call upon requisition men engaged in private pursuits. For instance, in questions of finance or trade, they could call for the advice of bankers, merchants and manufacturers, either separately or, better still, met together as commissions to express their joint opinion or furnish information. The reports of these commissions would be annexed to the recommendations or

projects of the Consultation Board, intended to be submitted to the Daijokwan for final adjudication and to the several ministers of state for execution. Should these recommendations not be listened to, or the projects not be approved of by the Daijokwan, the reasons for such a course should be given, and the whole record of their labors, unless highly objectionable, published for the information of the public. Now, men of such high position and standing as the ministers and members of the Daijokwan, who, by a single false step, would risk their reputation in the eyes of the whole nation, would be very careful not to inconsiderately reject good propositions; and in this way, the publicity given to their acts, as compared with the advice given them by the Consultation Board



and Sa In, would constitute a wholesome check to their acts, which, considering the present circumstances of Japan, could not fail to be more efficacious than all the legislative assemblies that could be instituted. <sup>(a)</sup>

In this way, the work of administration of public affairs would cease to devolve, in bulk, upon the heads of the various departments, but would go to them subdivided into its different branches and into well-defined limits. Each minister of state, instead of being allowed a lump sum with which to conduct his department as he pleased,

(a). I give here my view of a national representation in Japan for what they are worth. I would not have touched upon this delicate subject had I not been compelled to do so. I could not speak of the government without making mention of the Sa In. But whether the Sa In remains what it is - that is, an advisory assembly - or whether it receives more extensive powers, the necessity of a Consultation Board still exists and both its organization and duties would remain unchanged.

would have a credit opened to him which could not be expended otherwise than in the way specified. A sum applied to the maintenance of one service could not be arbitrarily transferred to another without the permission of the Daijokwan. If the requirements of one service or department should fall short of the sum allowed to it in the budget, then the balance would remain unexpended in the public treasury; but if the credit opened to it should prove insufficient, then provision would be made for such an issue by a requisition for a further supply upon the Daijokwan, who would either grant it or deny it as would seem most expedient to them, after a reference to the Consultation Board. As to the financial operations required to keep the monetary resources of the state upon a level



with the demands made in this way upon the government, they should continue to be conducted by the Finance Department upon its own individual responsibility.

I will give an instance to show the working of this system. Suppose a credit of \$10,000,000 has been opened to the War Office for the pay and maintenance of the troops, and a further credit of \$2,000,000 to buy forage. There is no fear of a war, and the government multiplies the leaves of absence, giving back to industry and agriculture a number of hands, so that the maintenance of the troops requires but \$8,000,000; then the payment of the \$2,000,000 left in excess is suspended. But suppose the year has been rainy and the price of the forage required is \$500,000 in excess of the credit allowed under that

head; then a supplementary credit of \$500,000 is allowed. Finally, suppose that a typhoon has destroyed a portion of the forts at Nagasaki and Kobe; then a supplementary credit of \$1,500,000 is granted to the Public Works Department to repair those unforeseen disasters. Nothing has been changed in the general budget of the state. The additional \$2,000,000 have been furnished by drawing from the treasury the \$2,000,000 of credit suspended. The Finance Department has not been troubled with the task of finding new means of supplying money, and yet it has admirably met all wants. But this would not have been possible under the present system; for what would have been saved under one head at the War Department would have been spent under another in



the same department, if not wantonly, at least in things for which there might not have been any immediate necessity; and thus the state would have been compelled to meet the indispensable requirements of the Public Works Department by spending \$2,000,000 more than it would otherwise have done.

If I have thus extended over a matter which is apparently foreign to the subject I had under consideration, it is because of the connection it bears to the question of the development of the interior resources of Japan. Unless these resources are developed under a strong and systematic hand, all the efforts made in that direction can only result in a decline of the public wealth. Commerce and Industry, which are the

Sources from which nations derive their wealth, will suffer in proportion, until, being sorely exhausted by fruitless exertions, Japan will realize, too late, that none of the results aimed at in this paper can ever be attained.

Perfectfully Submitted

Chu. I. I. I. I.

Tedo, 23 December, 1874

M. E. Okuma Shigenobu

Minister of Finance,

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