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GEORGE F. HENSHALLMANAGER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1908

NO MORE DELAY IS TOLERABLE.

The trouble with the sluicing plan for the Nuuanu dam is its uncertainty, which is not tolerable. Honolulu wants her water supply improved,—at once. And it is not at all sure that the sluicing plan is reasonably practicable after all. It is true that as far as rainfall records go this year has been an exceptional one, but most of the recording measures are far below where rain is needed to make sluicing at the dam practicable, and it may be doubted whether rain enough to complete the work in reasonable time may be properly expected on these higher levels. The Advertiser thinks that an attempt to alter the contract now might cause legislative opposition which would defeat the whole scheme, but this is inconceivable. No sane legislator could vote to abandon a practicable plan into which so much public money has already been put. The question now is simply one of how best to finish the job. One great consideration is that Honolulu, as soon as possible, shall have the splendid water supply the proposed reservoir is intended to give. The plan of waiting for heavy rains to enable the contractors to sluice dirt into the filling is shown to be unreliable. Therefore the question now to be considered is whether some method insuring results should not be adopted. Considering the contour of the country, it would seem that a gravity railroad system to bring dirt to the filling place should not be very expensive. The matter is one for engineers to consider. But there can be no doubt that the people of Honolulu do not want any more dry seasons with a shortage of water for household and garden purposes.

AMENDING THE ORGANIC ACT.

The Star's Washington correspondent today gives details of many proposed amendments to the Organic Act, as offered in bills introduced in Congress by Delegate Kalaniana'ole. These definite details serve to clear up some mysteries due perhaps to an apparently ineradicable tendency among Hawaii public officials to see that the public know as little as possible about public business. The Star more than a week ago called attention to the strangeness of the method of procedure, in connection with executive failure to even allow the people here to see the text of amendments of the land laws being drafted and proposed. We don't know exactly why there should be this reluctance. As stated before, it implies militates against the measures themselves, no matter how good they are. To illustrate again by the Mahuka site matter, the way to make Honolulu unanimous against any proposition is to try to run it through secretly in Washington. Resentment against the method blinds many people here to the merits of the scheme, whatever it may be. So it is to be hoped that government officials will gradually grow to understand a bit better than the public cannot be brought to regard officials as arbiters of the destiny of public lands, or any other public affairs.

The weather joined in and tried as best this latitude can try, to make it seem like Christmas. People were actually heard to make the statement that it was cold yesterday morning.

There are those who think that the large sum which generous visitors spent on a Christmas tree for children, in the Bishop lot in front of the Young Hotel, might better have been used in more practical charity. But this view does not prevail among those who had a chance to see what a fine time the youngsters had at the tree.

DOES IT AMOUNT TO AN ALLIANCE?

The whole world seems to regard the exchange of notes between United States and Japanese diplomatic representatives as settling conditions of peace for a long time. It is difficult to see on the one hand how it amounts to anything, or on the other if it does and is binding it can escape the fate of discussion as a treaty in the United States Senate, but the press of Europe takes it as a settled agreement amounting to an alliance. As a matter of fact, doesn't it? Could either the United States or Japan pursue a policy contrary to that set forth in the notes exchanged by the Japanese ambassador and the American Secretary of State without standing before the world guilty of bad faith? If they could, the notes amount to nothing. If they could not, the notes amount to a treaty,—an alliance. However, no matter how the American Senate may view the matter, the European press, as shown by translations of comments for the Literary Digest thinks that there is an alliance, or an agreement just as effective.

In treating of this matter in a long article the Preussische Zeitung (Berlin) speaks as follows with regard to the Pacific problem:

"In America the view was at one time entertained that a decisive struggle was imminent between the United States and Japan to decide the problem of hegemony in the Pacific. It was in the first instance supposed that Japan might have depended upon the support of Russia. From today there can be no more mention of such an idea."

The London Daily Post also believes that the new agreement "postpones indefinitely the once much-talked-of struggle for the mastery of the Pacific." Reckoning it as one of the great compacts such as those between Japan and Great Britain or France and Russia, The Daily News (London) says that "apart from technicalities it might just as well be called an alliance." It is a "fresh guaranty of peace in the Far East," especially between the United States and Japan. These two countries will henceforth "repudiate the idea of rivalry in those regions," declares the Paris Temps; and the Journal (Paris) thinks that the signing of the compact at Washington pours a flood of glory upon the closing days of President Roosevelt's official term, adding:

"France, as the friend of both nations is like them, deeply interested in the maintenance of the status quo in the Far East, and is gratified by this new ledge of peace."

This idea that the Agreement insures the solution of the Pacific problem and the maintenance of peace between the nations on its Eastern and Western shores is emphatically dwelt upon by the Journal des Debats (Paris) which praises Japan's unselfish conduct in the matter. Thus we read:

"Japan has now given to Europe full proof of her disinterestedness. And America will feel themselves compelled to come to some commercial agreement with Japan, especially as the opening of the Panama Canal is destined to change, to the advantage of the latter, the various

routes of trade."

The fate of China is also secured by the agreement or treaty between Washington and Tokyo says the London Times, and it delicately expresses a hope that henceforth justice will be done to those portions of the Chinese Empire which have been in the occupation of Japan, by the establishment there of a system of real commercial equality among the nations. This is particularly desirable, thinks the Action (Paris), because China, at this present moment, is the object of the commercial aspirations of them all, especially of Germany, hints the Liberte (Paris). Germany will be mightily irritated, thinks this journal, by the last clause of the agreement which provides for a mutual consultation, before taking individual action in case of any emergency which threatens the status quo.

The Figaro (Paris) dwells upon the matter from a completely commercial standpoint, and concludes that in matters of trade Japan in spite of her proximity, has no more rights in China than America has:

"The interests of Japan in China are identical with those of America... and consist very largely in guaranteeing an open market throughout the length and breadth of the great Middle Kingdom. We are now assured that the American Government will not establish any relations with China detrimental to the legitimate interests and aspirations of Japan, and that Japan will welcome the activity of American enterprise in that country."

A NEW JAPANESE WAR STORY.

The publication of the understanding with Japan has brought out many stories of secret negotiations. The latest is one in the Hearst papers to the effect that President Roosevelt's intervention, which brought about peace with Russia, was at the request of Japan:

In connection with the formation of this new treaty, some astonishing facts in connection with the Russo-Japanese war arbitration have cropped out. For instance, there is authoritative report behind the statement now given forth for the first time, that it was Japan and not Russia, which first sought the mediation of the United States through President Roosevelt in order to end the conflict.

Hitherto the people of America, as well as those of Japan, have been taught to believe that Russia, desperate and beyond succor after the succession of disastrous defeats to her arms, made overtures to Roosevelt that brought about the Portsmouth conference.

But it now appears that Japan was in far more desperate straits than her apparently conquered enemy, and that she sent an embassy to Washington to frankly ask President Roosevelt to intervene while there was yet chance of gaining a fair share of the honors of war.

According to the information now at hand, the President agreed to intervene, assuring the Japanese envoy, however, that there was no possible chance of his country obtaining a war indemnity or a cession of Russian territory. Japan agreed willingly to this condition of mediation. The treaty conference followed, but until now the Japanese people have been allowed to believe that they were robbed of the fruits of their victory by their envoys, with the aid of the United States Government.

Count Zeppelin is building a balloon to make the trip to the North Pole. It will make Emperor William sad to say goodby to "the greatest German of the twentieth century," as he has called the Count.

Any Hawaiian should be able to give that mainland author the information he wants about poi. At least they all have the substance of it at their finger's ends.

SOME PROMISE OF RECLAMATION

When Governor Frear left this city he stated that he would attempt to have a ruling made that the appropriations made for this work should be available in this Territory. He appeared doubtful though hopeful that it could be done, but from the fact that interest enough has been taken in the matter to arrange for the sending of the chief of the bureau to Hawaii, it seems certain that his hopes have been more than realized.

The subject of water conservation will be the work taken in hand, and it may be definitely stated that this action on the part of the government is due in a very large part to the result in a conference held between him—Secretary Garfield and the heads of the hydrographic and geographic surveys. It was decided that the chief Federal funds in reclaiming the arid of the hydrographic bureau should areas of this Territory along the lines come to Hawaii to look into the conditions as soon as possible.

(Continued on Page 8.)

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