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The British and American flags were hoisted on buildings belonging to Britishers and Americans in Niuchwang. The Russians apologised for having hauled them down. Russia intimates that after the Japanese proceedings in Korea she is unable to regard Korean ports as neutral. The Standard's Shanghai correspondent states that private advices from Japan notify that the Mikado proceeds shortly to Korea with the military. April 1. The Chinese and Japanese authorities are satisfied that the Mandjur's disarmament is complete. The Japanese cruiser which was watching her is withdrawn. April 2. The Daily Express reports that Admiral Togo had requisitioned 28 useless steamers to be stripped, except of their navigating machinery. They will be sent in batches of six to block Port Arthur.

Admiral Makarov telegraphs to his Kronstadt friends that he sleeps without undressing, in readiness for any emergency. Admiral Yamamoto's statement in the Japanese Diet that Admiral Togo's plan of battle against Port Arthur was far from realised is interpreted in St. Petersburg as a desire to catch the Russians napping. Russia intends to arm her volunteer fleet now at Odessa. The fleet will then be taken outside the Dardanelles and used for the conveyance of reinforcements for the Far East, and later converted into commerce destroyers. It is reported in Liverpool that an English firm are shipping 100,000 tons of coal ostensibly for a Chinese port, but really for Japan. The Russians propose raising 50,000 Mongol troops to patrol the railway. Learning that the Japanese were about to occupy and entrench a position between Kang-ge and Un-san, the Russians have been ordered to forestall them and to entrench and fortify several positions thereabouts.

Admiral Togo revisited Port Arthur and found as a result of Sunday's operations on the neck of the narrowest channel that the entrance is impracticable to the larger Russian ships. Ten thousand Russians, with 60 cannon, are at Niuchwang. They are mining the river, and intend closing the port shortly. The war correspondents leave Japan for the front on the 6th inst. The Japanese at Chong-ju advanced to Zeng-chou (halfway to Wiju) and skirmished and drove the Russians northwards. The cruiser Aurora, at Ferrol, is proceeding to Cherbourg. The Dmitri Donskoi coaled at Cartagena. The Telegraph's Wei-hai-wei correspondent states that a Japanese torpedoer torpedoed the Japanese steamer Sanei Maru while towing a junk with provisions from Chefoo to Port Arthur. Twenty-five persons perished. April 3.

The German liner Fuerst Bismarck has been indirectly sold to Russia for £200,000. Two thousand Cossacks and infantry are entrenched at the south gate of Wiju. Prince Khilkoff, the Russian Minister of Roads, Canals, and Railways, superintended the passage of 420 locomotives and 2400 waggons over the ice railway across Lake Baikal. He has informed the military authorities, in reference to the further transport of troops, that he felt disappointed that the railway around Lake Baikal, which had been designed to obviate the necessity of transhipments across the water, will not be finished until August.

Hundreds of thousands of grey khaki suits have been ordered for summer wear for the Russian troops, white being regarded as too conspicuous.

An attempt by Tartars to wreck trains filled with Russian troops for the Far East at Snya, near Ekaterinburg failed. The Russian accounts of the skirmish with the Japanese troops outside the walls of Chong-ju described the engagement as a brilliant victory for the Russians. It is stated in these that the losses of the enemy were tenfold those of the Russians. Le Temps (Paris) states that General Kouropatkin, who commands the Russians, has arrived in Manchuria. He will have a million soldiers under his command by the end of May. Prince Alexieff is at Port Arthur. He has presented the captains of the cruisers Bayan, Novik, and Askold each with a gold sword of honour. The Russian cruiser Boyarin, damaged in a storm at Talienvan, has been towed to Dalny for repairs.

The Japanese have permitted the long-detained American concession bullion pack train to proceed north to Anju. April 4. The Japanese, having occupied Syoushion, 18 miles west of Chong-ju, without opposition, are pushing on, hoping to expel the Russians from Wiju before the Yalu floods the surrounding territory. The ice is now well broken. The Russian cruiser Jemtechug, when completing her equipment in a Baltic shipyard, suddenly began sinking, and it was discovered that the pipes in the engine-room were leaking and the furnaces left open. Treachery is suspected.

The Times' correspondent, after visiting one of the Japanese bases reports that Commander Kuroski's army has secured strategic positions, enabling it to force the passage of the Yalu at will, but Commandant Kuroki is waiting developments of the second mobilisation, which is now proceeding, before striking decisively. Meanwhile the outposts are constantly in touch along the line. At the Chengcheng River several sharp conflicts have occurred, in which the honours were equally divided. The weather in the Far East is improving rapidly, though communication is extremely difficult. The Japanese have reached Chelsan, 30 miles south of Wiju. Japan is exhibiting irritation at China's inability to enforce neutrality, Russia's intimidatory methods still being effectual at Peking. Five more transports disembarked Japanese troops at Chemulpo. They are marching to Seoul. SYDNEY, March 31. The Japanese Consul has received the following cable:—"On the 28th part of our cavalry and infantry had an engagement with the Russians outside the south gate of Chong-ju. After having dispersed them our forces occupied the city. The enemy, calculated at about 600, retired in the direction of Wiju. In the cavalry Lieutenant Kano and four men were killed and Lieutenant Kuro-pawa and 11 others wounded. No casualties occurred in the infantry. Besides two Russian corpses on the field, seven or eight were found in the city. The Russians did well in conveying their dead away. Blood-stained bandages found in many places show that the enemy suffered casualties to at least the same degree as our forces." Admiral Togo's report of the attempt to bottle Port Arthur received by the Japanese Consul here is similar to that already cabled. It mentions that the vessels were old merchantmen. The Koneyama Maru, after passing between the two other sunken vessels, collided with the stern of a Russian destroyer. A

torpedo then struck her, and the force of the explosion carried her on to the beach. April 2. The Japanese Consul has received a cable from the Minister of Foreign Affairs stating that the extraordinary session of the Diet carried the war Budget without dissent, also a bill granting the Government authority to raise loans to the extent of 280,000,000 yen (£28,000,000) for the prosecution of the war. The increased taxation was cheerfully assented to, though it represents 62,000,000 yen (£6,200,000) annually.

The Diet also unanimously, amidst intense enthusiasm, carried the following resolution:—"That in the opinion of this House the Imperial declaration of war is just and honourable, and solely prompted by his Imperial Majesty's desire for the peace of the Orient." The exert himself to the utmost in the was no subject of his Majesty but would exert himself to the utmost in the nation's cause. The Diet, in accordance with the nation's sincere sense of patriotism, has provided the necessary means of obtaining revenue so that there may be no deficiency in the war fund. "Notwithstanding the great amount of success already achieved by the navy, we realise that the war is but in its infancy, and the time seems still far distant when complete victory shall permanently restore the peace of the Orient. This resolution is passed as a definite and clear expression of the national willingness to assist the Government, and the House desires to urge Ministers of State firmly to uphold the Imperial policy and to take timely measures to meet any contingencies that may arise."

CASUALTIES.

Robert Flynn, corporation labourer, aged 62 years, died suddenly at Wellington on the 29th during the evening meal, being choked dead, being choked by a piece of meat. Deceased was a widower, and leaves a grown-up family.

Emily Marsden, nurse, was found unconscious in her bedroom at Wellington on the 28th. The room was full of gas. She was taken to the hospital, where she died last evening. The cause of death is gas poisoning, but how the gas came to be left turned on in the room is not known.

Mrs E. Knox, wife of Robert Knox, a Swanson storekeeper, died at Auckland Hospital on the 22nd through taking poison self-administered. Deceased had been unwell for some time, and came to Auckland last week to consult Dr Bull. She did not improve, and after returning to Swanson complained of toothache. During the afternoon a servant told Mr Knox that his wife was in the shop, and he found her drinking something which looked like ginger ale. Mrs Knox's condition afterwards became worse, and her husband found that she had drunk the contents of a bottle of oil of tar, mixed with carbolic acid, and an emetic was at once given. The hospital medical staff is opinion that death was due to carbolic acid poisoning. At the inquest, the medical evidence was to the effect that death was due to poison, but so far as the evidence went deceased appears to have taken nothing of a more dangerous character than oil of tar, which she got for toothache. The inquest was adjourned for an analysis of the oil of tar and the contents of the stomach. On resuming, the medical evidence given showed that the oil of tar which deceased drank contained poison, and the jury expressed regret that the Poisons Act did not compel it being labelled "Poison" before being sold. A verdict of "Suicide while temporarily insane" was returned.

James Nicol, a coal merchant at the Kai-karai Valley, met with a rather severe accident while driving coal to Roslyn on the 29th. He had a big load of coal on the dray, and got up to shift some of the bags, when his foot slipped, and the left leg went in between the spokes of the wheel, with the result that both bones of the leg below the knee were broken. He was conveyed to the Hospital, where he received every attention.

A misadventure, attended with fatal consequences, occurred in Princes street on Wednesday, about 1 o'clock, to a young man named Hans Joseph Hansen, a journeyman sailmaker employed by Mr J. McGrath, of Princes street south. Hansen, who lives in Leith street, was returning to his work on a bicycle after dinner, and was riding along on the east side of the tram rails towards Mr McGrath's shop, on nearing which he turned to cross the lines towards the shop, not apparently noticing an electric car overtaking him. The car was upon him in a moment, and he was knocked down and pushed along the asphalt track for some distance before the brakes, which were immediately applied, brought the car to a standstill. Hansen was lifted and taken into Messrs Ellis and Smyth's shop at the foot of Walker street, and Dr Macpherson was in attendance without loss of time. It was found that the unfortunate young man was very badly knocked about the head, and as he was unconscious and in a state of collapse, the doctor deemed it advisable, after rendering what assistance he could, to send Hansen with all speed to the Hospital, to which he was conveyed in the ambulance. The doctor considered that his condition was due in all probability to concussion of the brain, but with only a superficial examination could form no definite opinion as to whether the young man's condition was critical. The name of the motorman on the car is Thomson, who is regarded as a very careful man. The conductor's name is Alexander, who would probably be on the rear platform at the time the unfortunate affair occurred. It is stated that the motorman, as he overtook Hansen, rang the bell several times with the intention of warning him of the approach of the car, but it is quite evident that Hansen did not hear the warning bell, otherwise he would never have attempted to cross the rails in front of the car. On reaching the Hospital everything possible was done for the injured man, who was found to be suffering from concussion of the brain, as predicted by Dr Macpherson. He remained unconscious up to 20 minutes past 8 o'clock in the evening, when he succumbed to his injuries. With reference to the death of Nurse

Mardon, at Wellington on Wednesday last, the gas jet in her bedroom was found turned full on, but not lighted, and evidently it had been so for some time, as the room was filled with gas. There was no ventilation, the window being closed. It will not be quite certain that death was due to gas poisoning until the post mortem. Mrs. Mardon was aged 29. At the inquest a verdict was returned of death from asphyxiation by coal gas, but there was no evidence to show how the gas came to be turned on.

At the inquest held at Kaitangata on the body of the man Wilson, who was hit on the head by a pipe when falling down a shaft in the Taratau mine, and subsequently died from the effects of the blow, the jury returned a verdict to the effect that the evidence went to show that deceased had displayed carelessness in not steadying the bucket on the way from the bottom of the shaft, also that the management had been negligent in not having the steam raised or the mid-wall brought down below the pipes.

The police have received advice from Milton to the effect that a farmer named Frank Dooley, residing at Southbridge, was accidentally killed on Wednesday evening through being crushed between his horse and the shafts of a dray which he was driving at the time.

An inquest was held at the Caledonian Hotel, Walker street, at 11.30 on Thursday morning before Mr C. C. Graham (coroner) and a jury of six, of whom Mr F. Palmer was chosen foreman, concerning the death of Oy Wah, a Chinese merchant, who died at his house in Hope street that morning. Hing Ming, who identified the body, said that he had been bookkeeper to the deceased, and had known him for over 13 years. They had lived together, and deceased, who suffered from a rupture of old standing, had always been in indifferent health. The deceased had several times consulted a doctor, and the latter wanted to perform an operation, but the deceased would not agree to that course. The medical evidence showed that death had resulted from strangulated hernia, and the jury returned a verdict in accordance with that testimony.

A lad named John Urquhart, aged 13 years, residing in Reid road, South Dunedin, was riding a bicycle down the Main South road on Friday afternoon when he fell and fractured his collarbone. He was taken to the Hospital, where his injuries were attended to, after which he was sent home. Captain A. F. Johnson died suddenly on the Mauritai, Auckland, on Friday, from the bursting of a bloodvessel.

A young man named Joseph Kirk was drowned near the mouth of the Okahu River, Rahotu, Taranaki, on Friday. The deceased, with six companions, was fishing on the beach with a net, when they were all carried away by the current. All succeeded in reaching the shore except Kirk, who was supposed to have been entangled in the net. Hugh and E. Taylor were nearly drowned while endeavouring to find Kirk, but were rescued by the Philip brothers. Kirk's body has not been found.

Samuel J. Lawson, who returned from London by the Athenic on Thursday, died at Wellington on Sunday from consumption. He has no relatives in the colony.

The Saturday afternoon train for Pieta had travelled about a mile from Blenheim when a passenger, J. W. Higgins, fell from the platform of the carriage on to the line and was terribly mutilated by the trucks. He was brought back by the same train, and died shortly after reaching the hospital. The deceased was 35 years old, and unmarried.

At the inquest on the two-year-old son of Mr J. Lanow, of Tuamara, Marlborough, who wandered away from his parents' house on Saturday, and was found in a ditch, a verdict of accidental drowning was returned.

A very sad double fatality took place at Westport on Sunday afternoon. A man named Golding and his two sons were fishing off the western breakwater staging, and one son, Fred, aged nine years, fell into the water. The father slipped down a pile, and, swimming out, caught hold of the lad, and after a severe struggle succeeded in getting back to the rocks, but was immediately washed off by the surge of the sea, and both sank. Their bodies were recovered about an hour and a-half later. The deceased leaves a widow and six children in poor circumstances.

John Cameron, aged 38 years, of Timaru, a labourer, was riding a bicycle down the steep side of a cutting near Otiao on Friday when he lost control of the machine and went over the side, breaking his neck. He was seen from a distance going down the cutting at a great pace. The coroner's jury found a verdict of accidental death.

The police have received word that an old man living alone on a small island 12 miles from Halfmoon Bay is missing. His fishing boat is also gone. It is supposed that he was caught in the heavy weather and drowned.

An elderly man, while stepping off the Clinton train on its arrival from Invercargill on Friday, fell between the last carriage and a heavy wagon, and was badly mutilated. He died before reaching the hospital. He was subsequently identified as Alfred James Denton, a resident of North Invercargill, who was returning from a visit to his married daughter.

A boy named Kenneth Bayne, aged about 15 years, was admitted to the Hospital on Saturday, having been shot very badly in the hand and about the back. The boy, who resides at North-East Harbour, was out rabbit shooting in company with his uncle, and the latter's gun appears to have been accidentally discharged. No serious results are anticipated.

Mr Frank Doolan, farmer, a very old resident in the Tokomairiro district, met with an accident which resulted in his death at Moneymore on Wednesday evening, 30th ult. At the time of the accident Mr Doolan was engaged in carting coal, and was standing between the shed and the cart, the horse of which was being backed by one of Mr Doolan's sons, to unload the coal. From some cause the horse backed the dray with such force that it jammed Mr Doolan up against the shed and killed him almost instantaneously. It is stated that when the dray was removed the unfortunate man fell over the horse and expired. At the inquest a verdict of accidental death was returned.

Mr George Holmes, of Milton, met with an accident at Milton on Wednesday morning last. He was engaged in carting rabbits when the horse started kicking and broke his right leg a little above the ankle.

A lad named Alexander Boag was drowned at Gisborne near the footbridge leading to the Taruharu Freezing Works. The accident was not seen by anyone. It is supposed he fell off the bridge. The family had only arrived the previous day from Napier.

A Maori boy on horseback fell over a cliff in the Whatatutu district, Hawke's Bay. The boy escaped with a broken arm. A drowning fatality occurred at Napier by which a little boy named Angus Ronald Cameron, the six-year-old son of Mr Kenneth Cameron, of the Harbour Board staff, lost his life. The boy's parents were fishing off the cattle wharf, with the little fellow playing about. Suddenly the mother missed the child, and, on making inquiries, found that a man named Watson had seen the boy in the water, and, not being a swimmer, had tried to bring it ashore with a fishing line, but ineffectually, and the boy was carried out to sea. Boats went out in search, but up to the present the body has not been recovered.

OTAGO PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD.

OPENING SESSION.

The Presbyterian Synod of Otago and Southland opened its proceedings on Monday night in First Church. The retiring Moderator (the Rev. A. Cameron) presided for the opening service, and preached an impressive sermon on the words from St. John's Gospel xii, 32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

After the communion of the Lord's Supper had been dispensed, the ROLL OF SYNOD was called as follows:—

DUNEDIN.—Revs. William Will (S.M.), M. Watt, D.D., A. Greig, M.A., Alex. M. Finlayson, R. R. M. Sutherland, R. Waddell, D.D., J. Christie (S.M.), D. Borrie, A. Cameron, B.A., J. M. McKerrow, B.A., J. Dunlop, D.D., Alex. Don, W. Campbell (S.M.), I. K. McIntyre, W. Hewitson, B.A., E. C. Tennent, W. Scobie, R. Fairmaid, W. M. Nicolson, D.Sc., R. Mackie, J. J. Carney, James Chisholm, D. M'Coll, L. Thompson, M.A., A. W. Kinnmont, M.A., J. Kilpatrick, J. S. Ponder.

CLUTHA.—Revs. S. W. Currie, M.A. A. M. Dalrymple, M.A., J. A. Will, J. S. Reid, F. J. Fraser, M.A., George Miller, J. F. Macfarlane, M.A., W. H. Hovess, B.A., R. S. Allan, R. H. Blair, P. Ramsay, George Budd, John Christohm, F. G. Orr, M.A.

SOUTHLAND.—Revs. Jas Baird (S.M.), Geo. Lindsay, A. Macdonald, M.A., Ewan Bissett, W. W. Brown, Robert M'Call, B.A., James Cumming, M.A., George Y. Roby, James Lyburn, C. A. Gray, M.A., J. T. Burrows, D. K. Fisher, James M. Simpson, B.A., J. F. Wilson, R. H. Catherwood, Alfred Laishly, Robert Ferguson, F. W. Dunlop, M.A., Ph.D.

OAMARU.—Revs. John Steven, P. S. Hay, M.A., William Nichol, William Wright, James Clarke, James Standring, R. J. Porter, Thomas Neave, J. R. Shore, M.A., D. M'IVOR, J. G. McLeod.

DUNSTAN.—Revs. R. Telford, J. M'Cosk Smith, M.A., B.D., J. C. Gellie, B.A., James Mackie, Thomas Tait.

MAIWA.—Revs. J. M. Davidson, M.A. (S.M.), Adam Begg, M.A., W. A. Kyd, M.A., A. D. Kirkland, A. Gray, W. F. Findlay, J. Collier, M.A., Thos. Paulin, Geo. McDonald, Henry T. Blair, W. F. Craigie.

ELDERS.—DUNEDIN.—Messrs George Holmes, John Duncair, Colin Taylor, J. T. Johnson, W. Pryor, T. Begg, F. Marshall, W. Henderson, John Reid, I. A. M'NICOLL, R. Chisholm, A. Davidson, R. Bugrie, A. Chisholm, Thomas Ross, George Reid, A. Kilgour, A. C. Begg, A. Fleming, W. Kirkland, John Blair, W. Coatsworth, W. H. Adams, D. Thomson.

CLUTHA.—Messrs Charles Daftas, James Lamond, John M'Heathie, Robert Pringle, John Edwards, Thomas Adams, John Johnston, Jas. Taylor, Simon Lewis, Hugh Russell, Robert Topp, Thomas Tait, John M'Caw.

SOUTHLAND.—Messrs John Cowie, Thomas Carswell, John M'FEBRIDGE, William Fraser, John M'Phail.

OAMARU.—Messrs George Caldwell, William Stewart, George Sutherland, James B. Taylor, Robert Jackson, James Robertson.

DUNSTAN.—Mr. James Adams, Dr Robert Church, Mr R. Glendinning, Mr A. H. Grinling.

MAIWA.—Messrs James M'Coll, Hugh Blake, Alex. Murdoch, Andrew Aitken, W. Ayson, John Edzie, John Kirk, William Wetherburn, W. Johnston, Joseph Pullar.

THE INCOMING MODERATOR.—On the motion of the retiring Moderator, the Rev. J. A. Will, of Lawrence, was unanimously elected Moderator for the ensuing twelve months, and took the chair accordingly.

After the usual formal business had been transacted, the Synod adjourned until this morning at 10 o'clock.

WELLINGTON NEWS NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

WELLINGTON, March 22.

Mr J. B. Harcourt, the well-known auctioneer, is suffering from the effects of accidental poisoning, but is out of danger. Some jam, in which arsenic had been mixed for the purpose of killing rats, was inadvertently placed upon the supper table, and Mr Harcourt and two other members of the family after eating it became ill.

A number of English visitors to the colony will undertake some deer-stalking during the present season. Captain De Bathe and his brother and Mr and Miss Pilkington leave for Martinborough during the present week to engage in the sport, and later in the month Lord Monk Bretton will arrive here with the same object in view. The visitors afterwards leave for America for the purpose of attending the St. Louis Exposition.

The warship Sparrow, which is in future to be employed as a training ship for New Zealand youths wishing to enter the navy, is to appear in New Zealand waters shortly. The crew is to be paid off at Sydney this month, and the vessel will then be handed over to the Government of this colony.

The railway revenue for the present financial year, which closes nine days hence, will, it is stated, be the largest ever known since the railway service was established in New Zealand.

It is probable that Mr Hogg, member for Wairarapa, will visit Australia shortly, and collect information while there concerning State farms and similar institutions. He is just now busy with a project to establish a farm for destitute persons, and has brought the scheme before the Wellington Benevolent Trustees, but the principal difficulty in the way is that of obtaining a suitable piece of land for such a farm, which must be near the railway and not too far from the city.

At the inquest at Wellington on Thursday last on the body of Robert Flynn, it was elicited that deceased, who was in the employ of the City Corporation as driver of a street-sweeping machine, had been working for 17 hours (with intervals for meals) prior to his death. The Coroner expressed the opinion that some inquiry should be made as to why the man had worked such long hours.