

JAPAN WOULD WELCOME FLEET

Viscount Hayashi Says Japanese
Have Absolute Confidence in
American People.

Prince Ito Says its Quite Within United States' Rights to Dispatch Battleships to Pacific

Leading Statesmen All Express Them-
selves Friendly and See no
Menace in Voyage.

Tokio, Dec. 19.—The following inter-
views have been granted exclusively to
the Associated Press:

Japan will heartily welcome the
American fleet of battleships to the
Pacific and to the ports of this coun-
try, if it be decided to extend the
visit in this direction. The fact that the
fleet is sailing towards the Pacific
creates no excitement here, and as
have said before to the Associated
Press, Japan views in the friendliest
manner any action America may, with

in the scope of its wisdom, the fit to take in the disposition of its naval force, because the Japanese people have absolute confidence in the friendship of the United States and the vast mass of the American people. We hope that the fleet may have a successful and safe voyage, and Americans everywhere may rest assured that should the fleet decide to visit the far east, at any place it will receive a heartier welcome than in Japan.

Foreign Minister Viscount Hayashi in giving the above statement to the Associated Press representative this morning voiced the sentiment of the whole Japanese people. The news that the fleet would visit Japan and the port of Kobe was greeted with the most

A special dispatch carried an interview with the Russian Admiral Battenberg.

Admiral Count Togo said:
"I am very glad the fleet has started for the Pacific. If I am correctly informed it is expected on this side April or May next. If it should ult-

imately touch on our shores we will greet them cheerfully and give them the warmest reception. We entertain nothing but the kindest feelings towards American sailors."

ADMIRAL SAITO.

The minister of the navy, Admiral Saito said:

"The American fleet will be heartily welcomed should have visit Japan. I know, Admiral Evans well. He is a delightful gentleman, and a splendid sailor, and I sincerely hope that I will bring his ships on this side, and glad that they should show your appreciation of his good qualities."

PRINCE ITO.

Prince Ito, resident general of Korea said:

"America has always been a helpful friend to Japan, and the Japanese are staunch admirers of President Roosevelt. I am sure that I have no other idea, than that it was quite with in the rights of America to dispatch a fleet where it was desired and it will be especially welcome should it come to Japan. I have always maintained that talk of war between Japan and

America is unspenkable, unthinkable and the attitude of the Japanese people towards the fleet will ultimately prove the sincerity of our words which have been consistently friendly."

VISCOUNT KANEKO.

Privy Counselor Viscount Kaneko said:

"The dispatch of the fleet, I regard only as the natural outcome in the course of things, such as exist in the United States. Early in 1892, when I saw ex-President Cleveland at Gros-

gables, ventured to point out to him what is now occurring. I then said that the Atlantic side of the United States had realized such conditions of development, that left little for further exploration, while the Pacific was extending an immense field for com-

"Let me call your attention to the fact that the United States has been drawn simply in consideration of American development on the Pacific side. Commercial interest once developed the United States naturally would follow the commercial trail of the shipping lines and the tariff barriers. Americans are already largely interested on the Pacific, who therefore should be protected. The dominant role is protected, moreover, the center of diplomacy having shifted to Asia. It is of predominant importance that the United States should be well guarded and insured. As things now stand such a guardian should be the United States and Japan and as it is to increase the trans-Pacific trade, it is to mean a considerable addition to the insurance of tranquillity—at least in this portion of the world. It is not too much to say that the United States has much to say in the maintenance of maintaining peace on the Pacific."

"I know Rear Admiral Evans personally," said the speaker, "and had the pleasure of inviting him and his wife to

to a hunting expedition. We hope he will extend his cruise to these shores and give us an opportunity to renew the acquaintance."

Count Okuma, the leader of the Progressive party of Japan, said:

"I sincerely hope the American fleet will arrive in Japan. I will gladly send it my greetings when it arrives on the Pacific. The coming of a American fleet will tend to forward the civilization of the world, and increase the friendship between the two nations. The influence of America and Japan in the far east would be enormous and permanent. Surely this voyage of the American fleet and the attitude of the Japanese people will be a great boon to the world."

Admiral Evans decides to visit Japan will stop the ridiculous talk of war or unfriendliness upon the part of the Japanese people."

Admiral Evans decides to visit Japan will stop the ridiculous talk of war or unfriendliness upon the part of the Japanese people."