

THE SHIPPING COMBINE.

The Navigation Syndicate is considering the erection of quays and warehouses at Molyhead in order to avoid light charges, pilotage and lighter dues at Liverpool. The British Government is seriously considering the necessity of granting subsidies. The "Standard" states the colonies would heartily support any well-devised scheme to prevent the loss of maritime supremacy.

A British syndicate is being formed to co-operate with the companies outside the Navigation Trust, or build steamers to replace those held.

It is reported that the Trust will enter into competition with the present lines trading in the Pacific Ocean, but the "Standard's" New York correspondent denies that Mr Morgan has purchased the White Star Line's Australian steamers. It is reported that Mr Pierpont Morgan is offering an additional four millions for more first-class Liverpool steamers.

Mr. Hazley, chairman of the Liverpool Steamship Association, states that since 1890 foreigners have purchased 2,096 British steamers, of a tonnage aggregating 1,836,509. He considers it imperative that the Government should increase the steamship subsidies, and remove a mass of regulations which are harassing British shipping, and recognise the fact that the mercantile marine is a cheap training school for the navy.

The New York "Post" asserts that the American railroad companies hope, as a result of the formation of the Navigation Syndicate, to control the rates from the principal points in the interior to the leading European centres.

The provisional agreements of the Navigation Syndicate have been published. They organise the corporation under the American laws with a capital of 60,000,000 dollars ordinary shares; 60 millions preferred shares at 8 per cent, and 50 millions at 5½ per cent. The trust debentures are payable in twenty years, but are redeemable by the syndicate after five years at 105. Dividends on ordinary shares are limited to 10 per cent, while debentures are outstanding. The following properties have been acquired: The White Star, its capital, and the business of Ismay and Imrie, except their interest in the Asiatic Steam Company; the Dominion Line, the American Atlantic Transport Company; and a portion of the Leyland Line. The transfer of the White Star and Dominion Lines must be sanctioned by representatives of 75 per cent. of the capital. The valuation of both lines and Ismay's business, made by Mr. Richard Mills, is testified to as based on the net profits of the year 1900 with additional cash for expenditure on ship constructing at the end of that year. A quarter of the valuation will be paid in cash, and three-quarters in preferred shares, with the addition of 37½ per cent. in ordinary shares. The American and Atlantic lines together receive 18,314,000 dollars in preferred shares, 9,157,000 dollars in ordinary shares, and 15½ per cent. cash, paying for new tonnage as required. The Leyland Line receives 11,733,000 dollars in cash.

Ismay and Imrie are pledged to Mr Morgan not to engage in the shipping business between the sea bounds of America, Canada, the West Indies, Mexico, the United Kingdom and Europe for fourteen years.

The syndicate's agreement for a decade gives the firm of Harland and Wolff all the building and repairing to the fullest capacity of the Belfast yards, provided they do not build for competitors apart from the Hamburg-American Line, but the American shipyards are not debarred.

Separate agreements exist between the syndicate and the Hamburg-American and North German Lloyds, which are not published.

The White Star East Asiatic fleet has been sold outright.

The employees are guaranteed that they will not be disturbed in their positions for a year.

Mr Morgan proposes to form a syndicate to repurchase from the vendors debentures and fifty million dollars' worth of shares.

All the ships that sail under the British colours will have their names

still registered in the British register, but the majority of the proprietors will be Americans.

The "Standard" states that a question of technical validity will arise.

The "St. James' Gazette" states that the nation regards the evolution of the syndicate with resentment and distrust. Four of the finest lines of British steamers have passed to American control. The Government ought to rectify the greatest blow ever inflicted on the British mercantile supremacy.

THE PHILIPPINES.

THE ALLEGED ATROCITIES.

A Reuter message from Manila says that Colonel Woodruff presented a remarkable defence in justification of the alleged barbarous treatment of the Filipino natives, and complained of factious hysteria on the part of the American public. The "Times" states that Senator Lodge is submitting to the American Senate numerous cases of Filipinos slowly torturing American soldiers to death.

A Reuter message states that the Hon. E. Root, the American Secretary of War, considers General Smith's methods in Samar Island and at Batangas were most humane and effective.

It is explained that Mr. Root, American Secretary of War, in saying that General Smith's methods in Samar and Batangas, Philippine Islands, were humane and effective, did not refer to General Smith's admissions, but to the measures of retaliation for acts of treachery. He declares there is no record of the orders alleged by Major Waller. General Smith's official orders were based on the general army order.

CONTINUED FIGHTING.

The Americans, with four guns and 470 rifles, assaulted the principal fort of the piratical Moros, or Mahomedan Malays, on the west side of Mindanao Island, the southernmost of the Philippines.

A sharp hand-to-hand struggle took place in the high grass.

There were found to be four lines of ditches under the fortress walls. These were carried by the American troops.

The Sultans of Valjan and Pandapatan, with a hundred followers, were killed, and 84 survivors surrendered.

The Americans sustained fifty-one casualties.

CHINA AFFAIRS

The foreign Ministers in Peking insist upon China instantly suppressing the Chingtingfu rebellion, covering a radius of 50 miles.

The rebellion is attributed to the heavy indemnities demanded for the massacres of Catholic missionaries.

A French priest has been murdered and his head carried on a pole. Another is missing.

Japan is pressing for compensation for the deaths of Japanese killed in Korea during recent years.

The "Standard's" Tientsin correspondent states that 40,000 well-armed insurgents are renewing their attacks on churches and missionaries in the Chihli Province. The troops have failed to suppress the rising. The officials seek to pacify the rebels by gifts of money.

The Chinese rebels, with modern field guns, bombarded the town of Nanning Fu, killing 350 of the inhabitants.

THE CRISIS IN RUSSIA.

Revolutionary demonstrations occurred at Ekaterinoff. The Cossacks killed 20 of the rioters and wounded 40. One hundred and fifty were arrested.

The peasants raided the State granary at Turkalinsk, near Tomsk, dispersing and killing many of the police.

A hundred peasants had died of famine before the people rose in revolt. Martial law has been proclaimed in five districts in Poltava.

The "Morning Leader" states that 500 infantry at Poltava declined to fire on a crowd, including women and girls, who were armed with reaping hooks and hay forks. The troops declared they would not shoot wo-

men. All were court-martialled. Every tenth man was shot and the remainder degraded and sentenced to penal servitude. An army order declared that the troops should be sold first and citizens afterwards, and that they must shoot straight as if they were on the battlefield.

The "Standard's" Odessa correspondent says that M. Plehve, the new Russian Minister of the Interior, has been invested with larger powers than those held by M. Sipiaguine, his predecessor, who was recently assassinated. M. Plehve favours liberal measures of internal reform.

Twelve thousand Poles demonstrated at Warsaw. The cavalry and police charged them, killing several and wounding a hundred.

Signs of grave discontent continue throughout the country, but the Government, with the aid of the military, are mercilessly putting down all demonstrations on the part of the people. Another demonstration on the part of the peasantry has occurred in the Poltava district, in South Russia, but the officials and troops most savagely suppressed it. Artillery was brought into use, and the gathering was fired on with terrible effect. Seventy-six peasants were killed and two hundred wounded. The police and Cossacks brutally knouted three hundred people. Thirty-five peasants were whipped to death.

THE BOER WAR

THE PROSPECT OF PEACE.

To-morrow is the date for the great meeting of the Boer delegates to decide whether they will surrender or continue the war.

The "Daily Telegraph" reports that an emissary from Steyn and Botha has brought despatches to Utrecht connected with the peace negotiations.

The "Daily Express" states that Lord Wolseley has returned from South Africa with pessimistic ideas as to peace, owing to the obstinacy and ignorance of the Boers on the veldt.

Mr Bennett Burleigh, the war correspondent, states in a cablegram that burghers in the refugee camps regard peace as certain, but that the military authorities are pessimistic, and are preparing for an increasingly vigorous campaign.

Information has been received in Pretoria that the delegates have been successful in securing the consent of the commandos in favour of surrender now that the opportunity is favourable.

One commando has elected Commandant Piet Uys and Field-Cornet Dangers to proceed to the conference at Vereeniging.

Commandant Beyers is expected to represent the Northern Transvaal burghers, and abide by the decision of his Government.

The chief opposition emanates from certain of De la Rey's irreconcilables. It is believed that Botha's men will follow their leader.

The larger commandos from the old Orange Free State, especially that under De la Rey, are stated to be the most irreconcilable of the forces in the field.

Lord Salisbury, addressing a meeting of the Primrose League, said in regard to the peace negotiations in South Africa that the Government had not receded from its former position. It would not allow any position to arise whereby the Boers could renew the issue.

The manner in which the colonies had warmed in their devotion to the Motherland was, he said, a phenomenon. The feeling came in so vast a volume that it added enormously to the Empire's strength and influence.

At the first conference between Lord Kitchener and the Boer delegates the latter demanded the independence of the Republic, promising to raze the forts and concede a liberal franchise to Outlanders.

The British Government refused this and also a request for the retention of arms, but offered generous assistance to build and restock the farms and raised no difficulty in reference to pardoning the banished leaders.

The delegates pleaded for leniency

for the rebels, recognising the justice of disfranchising them.

It is believed they were assured that this difficulty is not insuperable.

The Government declined to fix a date for the granting responsible government, but promised that it would be granted at the earliest possible date.

Steyn's attitude was as fanatical as ever. He persuaded the Transvaalers to make a truculent demand for independence.

De Wet at first was sullenly obstructive, but afterwards more conciliatory.

De la Rey and Botha expressed willingness to obey the Transvaal Government.

Steyn and Schalk Burger insisted on consulting the burghers.

The "Times" says that when the Boer delegates merely offered to concede all the franchise demands made on behalf of the Outlanders before the war the British Government intimated that the Middleburg Conference represented the maximum of concessions, and refused to permit consultation with European delegates, warning the delegates then conferring that they had better drop the negotiations unless they submitted serious proposals.

The delegates stated that they must consult the burghers before negotiating for the surrender of independence.

Lord Kitchener warned them that they must return with full powers. Mr Schalk Burger agreed to this proposal unreservedly, and Steyn less unreservedly.

Renter's Pretoria correspondent, writing on April 19, states that Steyn was in a serious condition, suffering from creeping paralysis and a malady of the eyes.

THE FIGHTING.

Naval reinforcements have been landed at Port Nolloth, on the Cape Colony coast, in Little Namaqualand, and have hurried inland towards Ookiep (which is about 60 miles distant) to meet Smut's Transvaalers.

General Bruce Hamilton's drive in the South Heidelberg and Standerton districts resulted in the capture of 87 Boers.

Prinsloo, Governor of Bloemfontein, who surrendered early in the war, and remained on his farm on parole, was recently captured by the Boers. He escaped and gained the British lines.

Colonel Cooper has expelled the Boers from Steinkop, the only stronghold leading to Ookiep.

General Rocheport has dispersed Commandant Hoopsal's force at Bloemhof.

Colonel Colenbrander has resumed operations against Beyers' force in the Northern Transvaal, whose numbers have been considerably reduced.

General Ian Hamilton has cleared the area west of Klerksdorp, facilitating future operations.

Lord Kitchener's weekly report is as follows:—

Killed	10
Prisoners	122
Surrendered	14

Thirteen additional prisoners have been captured in the sweep in the Orange Colony. Amongst the prisoners taken were 34 of Beyers' commando.

Lord Kitchener reports that General Elliott on Tuesday held the country from Lindley to Liebenbergvlei, Orange River Colony, and General Barker held the drifts from Liebenbergvlei to Frankfort in a continuous line. Columns left Frankfort for the Heilbron-Vredefort road line at dawn without vehicles, rapidly reaching General Elliott's line in the afternoon. Ten Boers were killed and 208 captured, constituting a portion of the most irreconcilable Free States. Many horses and cattle were also captured. The British casualties were nil.

Colonel Cooper has relieved the Ookiep garrison, in the Western Cape Colony, the enemy retiring south. The miners at Concordia surrendered provided the mines were not damaged, but the enemy had gone when the relief party reached the town.

A number of natives, whose kraals the Boers had burned, discovered and attacked a Boer laager at Schesep's Nek.