

trade was in the hands of British merchants, and the only Russian we ever heard of was an escaped convict from Siberia. The Russians were then very reasonably in some dread of the Chinese, and especially of a combination of Chinese land-power with British sea-power; for the only line of communication the Russians had lay along the actual frontier, and was exposed to attack for hundreds of miles, while the railway was at that time thousands of miles distant. The Russians for years had had the right to navigate the Sungari River, but had never exercised it, chiefly through fear of the Chinese. Their commercial interests in Manchuria were absolutely *nil*, and their thoughts at that time were chiefly centred in endeavouring to secure the strip of sea-coast, including Vladivostok, which they had already filched from China.

Now all is changed. They have engineers in every part of Manchuria. They have hundreds of soldiers as escort to those engineers. They are constructing railways through the land. And they have organised a fleet for the navigation of the inland waters. To all this we have no possible need to raise objection.