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Japan Adopting Western Ideas

By Henry George, Jr.

Japan has revealed a capacity for organization, for management, for concentration, for anticipating needs, for striving only for essentials, for working out ramifying details, not alone in the military hut in the commissary and medical departments, which vied with the development of the leading progressive nations and excelled most.

The outside world gazed in astonishment. If Japan had made this amazing progress in the art of war: if she had put aside reliance in her Samurai long and short swords and in her eggshell junks to rival the first nations in the use of breech-loading great and small rifles, of torpedoes, mines and steel-clad battleships, was it not probable that she was making just as surprising advances in the arts of peace? Was she not opening up to development like a new country?

This attracted the attention of those princes of finance and captains of industry in Europe and America who are ever looking for "good things." such as railroad concessions, water rights, telegraph, telephone and electric light franchises, coal, copper, salt and other natural opportunities, ship subsidies, commercial bounties. tariff "protection" and other privileges.

Western civilization, with its new standards and new needs, had brought these privileges into existence. But with them it had brought a keen Japanese appreciation of their value. They were not to be left for foreign exploitation.

Japanese individuals quickly saw and quickly availed themselves of these advantages, and later the government, imperial and local,

took over many of the privileges like steam railroads and water, the telegraph and telephone from the beginning being in government hands.

Little chance was left for the foreign privilege-hunter, except as an investor in the privileges owned and managed or exploited by Japanese individuals or corporations. But even in that respect the profits were larger than could be found for much investment money in other parts of the world, so that Japanese imperial bonds were bought, and, in consequence, went much higher in price than they otherwise would have gone.

Large quantities of money in other ways went into Japan. The general outside world was not as yet awake to these conditions in Japan, but the speculators and far-sighted investors were, and Japanese credit abroad entered upon a new and auspicious era.

This extension of outside credit was one reason why a depression did not follow the war. The other reason was an extraordinary internal awakening.—Henry George, Jr.'s Letter in *The New York World*.