

## WAR SCARE OF 1885 BRITAIN AND RUSSIA

The war scare of 1885, to which we have already made reference, had its beginning in April and persisted right through that month. How Australia prepared for its own defence in the event of hostilities breaking out may be judged from the following extracts from our cable and telegraphic columns in the week ended April 25:

London, April 18—"Admiral Tryon has been directed to visit the various Australian forts and confer with the respective governments on the question of defence."

Brisbane, April 18—"A supply of rifles, ammunition, and other war stores was shipped on Saturday for the various northern ports. The necessity for a despatch boat at Thursday Island having been urged, the Government has abandoned its intention of having a steamer built to replace the Musgrave and purchased the steamer Advance in Melbourne at a cost of £12,000. The Advance will be at once sent to Thursday Island to keep a lookout for suspicious-looking vessels. The Government has also decided to purchase a large supply of coal and store it in hulks at Thursday Island and other places for the use of the vessels of the Imperial Navy."

Brisbane, April 19—"Applications are being received by the Commander from all parts of the colony for permission to form and assist in forming rifle corps and rifle clubs. One of these arrived from Rockhampton, and in our hearing Colonel French suggested that the two weak companies at that place should first be filled up to their proper strength. As stated in previous wires, the most prompt measures have been taken for protecting Brisbane and since Thursday no vessels have been allowed to enter the river after dark nor any during the daytime until they have been boarded by a naval officer, the papers have been examined, and a pass has been given. By today a boom of torpedoes should be laid across the entrance to the river and at night this will be closed. The forts are being strengthened and camped near them are about 100 men of the defence force. In camp the strictest discipline is being observed and men are learning military life in earnest."

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Sydney, April 18—"The P. and O. Steamship Company's Marsilia, which was built in accordance with the requirements of the Admiralty so that she may be used either as a cruiser or a troopship, has been chartered by the Imperial Government. She is specially adapted to the latter purpose as to completeness of equipment and strength. The Admiralty will fit her for use as a cruiser and she will be fitted out and armed under the supervision and by the direction of Admiral Tryon. The work will be commenced immediately."

Sydney, April 23—"The Marsilia has been taken over by the naval authorities here and her cargo is being quickly discharged. Alterations are also being made by workmen from Mort's Dock and Engineering Company. The same workmen are also preparing a platform for the guns which will be placed on board. Her armament will probably consist of nine guns, some of which will be 68-pounders and some 40-pounders, and it is likely that a complement of 125 men will be placed on board. It is anticipated that the operations will occupy ten days, and when they are completed she will be taken out to sea on trial."

Melbourne, April 18—"A large meeting of German colonists was held last night to consider the advisableness of forming a German corps for the defence of the colony. A resolution was unanimously passed in favour of the establishment of such a corps and a committee was appointed to take the steps necessary to give effect to it."