

(April 6th, 1936)

Current Affairs in China

BY RIGHT REV. WM. C. WHITE, D.D., BISHOP OF HONAN.

PRESIDENT BISHOP:—Distinguished guests and gentlemen of the Canadian Club and all those who may be listening in by radio. It is our privilege today to entertain as our guest of honor Right Rev. William C. White, until 1934 Bishop of Honan in Upper China, a diocese comprising some thirty-five million Chinese people. Dr. White came to Canada from England at the age of seven and adopted it thoroughly as his country. He went through the ordinary course of education and graduated from Wycliffe and was ordained in 1897. He decided to carry the mission of the Church of England in Canada abroad and went to the province of Fuhkien, then under the Church Missionary Society. From 1897 to 1911 he labored hard until the Church of England in Canada was requested by the Chinese to establish the diocese to be particularly under the Church of England in Canada, and the province of Honan was selected and Dr. White was inducted as Bishop. After twenty-five years as Bishop of Honan, it became necessary, for family reasons, for him to give up his work, and so he returned to Canada. He is now Associate Professor of Archæology at the University of Toronto as well as keeper of the Oriental Collection at the Royal Ontario Museum. In the space of thirty-eight years he has seen China emerge from the monarchial system under the Manchus to the present status of alleged Republic. You may remember earlier in the year we had a most delightful address from Dr. Koo, who not only spoke the most perfect Oxford-English and found his way through a perfect maze of English idioms, but also delighted us with three selections on his flute. I would like to pay this

tribute to Dr. Taylor of Wycliffe, who is here today. Until Dr. Koo had been here we had not realized he had been one of his pupils when he was in China and I offer him an apology on behalf of the Canadian Club. But to return to Dr. White, thirty-eight years is a long time and there have been many changes. His chief work was education, famine relief, through which he came in contact with the greatest men in China from the monarchy to the republic. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I introduce the Right Rev. Bishop White, late Bishop of Honan.

BISHOP WHITE:—Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, the subject I am to speak upon at this time is that of Current Affairs in China. As you will understand it is a subject that might very well confuse because of the complexity of the situation there. But I will try to make it as clear as I can and will gather what I have to say around certain heads. First I want to state three fundamental facts which are necessary for us to bear in mind if we are properly to understand the situation as we have it out on the continent of Asia; and then, following after, I want to tell you what I have seen myself and what I know of some of the things that are going on today in China, gathered around the headings of the educational side, the social life, the economic life; and then (I will put it last, because it is a subject we might ramble on for a long time and we do not want to do that), to deal with political affairs in China.

The three things that it seems to me we should bear in mind when we consider that situation are: first, that China contains nearly one-quarter of the human race. I wonder if we realize what that means? That is that in population she is the largest racial unit in the world. Now the population of China, I know, has been given all sorts of interpretations simply because they have had no reliable census taken, as far as I know, to the present. But lately they have become exceedingly anxious to know how many people they have in their country and so there have been estimates through official organizations, particularly the Maritime Customs, and also the postal service. Apart from that there is the famine relief work which has necessitated local

census in various localities and that has given us a basis to work upon for an approximation of the population of China. In 1910 you will remember that the population of China was generally accepted as 400,000,000. In 1923, that of course was some time after the republic came into being and that was the time we were doing work in connection with the great famine of North China, the population was given as 440,000,000. Then in 1927, the postal service, through the facilities they had, gave an approximation of a census and stated there must be something over 485,000,000 in China. Last year Dr. Shearer Hsia, who represents the Chinese government in connection with the lecture program in this country, was making the astonishing statement that the government had accepted the figure of twenty-one million a year for increase in population. It was only Saturday I picked up a newspaper here and saw a report of a luncheon address given at the Canadian Club in Vancouver, when Mr. Robert Cromie, the publisher of the *Vancouver Sun*, who just returned from a visit to Japan and China, addressed that club, and he said of the population of Asia: "The swarming population of Asia must be seen to be apprehended. Every day in China 50,000 new babies are born, but if there was an effort to feed them they would probably make it 100,000, because Chinese history shows that the production of people has always been a little ahead of the production of food." Now if you estimate 365 days at 50,000, you get over 18,000,000 a year, so it pretty closely approximates that which the Chinese government have accepted as their annual increase of population.

Now there are factors which go into the situation with regard to the very rapid increase in that great population which must be borne in mind. I shall in a few moments talk about some of the changes taking place, that have to do with the affairs of the people. Take health conditions. They have a ministry of health in the Nanking government, and federated groups that deal with the health of other provinces. The health of the community in general in China is being taken care of in a way we never dreamed could have been done a few years ago. And that, of course, would make for the betterment of the people. And with

regard to the death rate, that is now considerably changed from what it was. So here is a factor that is going to increase the rapidity of the increase in population.

Then there are these other things. You take the famines we have had in China, due to many causes—civil war, banditry and drought and floods. All these things have had their heavy toll of millions of people in the years I have been out there. Now the China International Famine Relief Commission began the work in a very well organized way of saving the people from the results of famine; and I cannot begin to tell you what is being done today in the matter of, for instance, water conservation and opening highways, so produce can be moved; and in many ways these all are factors which have to do with the increase in population. That is one thing to be borne in mind: that racially China has a good start, and the more we look at it the more we are astounded.

Another fundamental factor we must bear in mind is: China has the oldest continuous civilization that has carried down through about four thousand years without a break. There have been conquests of parts of China and on two occasions the whole of China, but in every case the Chinese civilization, the people, have carried on, and their customs and everything that has to do with China, as we know it, have continued without a great break. That was one of the most interesting things that came to light in connection with the Chinese exposition in London recently. As was pointed out, in newspapers and magazines, when I was over there in December and January, emphasis was laid on the fact that the exposition showed unbroken continuance of the civilization of China. And that is, I think, very important. It shows how strong that civilization is, that there are elements of strength and elements of permanence there, that mean a great deal and prophesy much with regard to the stability of the people for the future. In connection with that, their high moral standard, their deep aesthetic sense is striking. I know simple people think the Chinese are so practical they haven't any sense of refinement. So utilitarian. That is not so. You only have to look at Chinese painting and art and literature, poetry

particularly, and you find the spirit of China that lies beyond that utilitarian characteristic. They have political genius for instance. They always pop up no matter what they are up against; and we have seen in the last twenty-five and thirty years upheavals of all kinds that any other people would simply have collapsed under. They have always come up and always will, I feel, because of these strong points. They keep a unity among themselves even though they have their differences.

And then the third thing I want to bring before you here, as a fundamental factor of great importance in this situation, is that this great China with its immense population and unbroken civilization, its social institutions and its roots very deep down in history and in their lives, that this China is now undergoing tremendous changes and that is cause for the chaos, as we have had it out there in the last twenty or thirty years. China under the pressure of the times, and the direct compulsion of the west, is now attempting to alter the form and spirit of her civilization and rebuild the society which rests upon it. That is a great thing to do. It is a great thing if the population were much smaller, a great thing if it were a comparatively new country with new institutions, but here, where you have the magnitude we have in regard to population and the tenacity of these institutions that have their roots away back thousands of years, to uproot those institutions and carry out those reforms and modernize China, I think the task is something really beyond comprehension. Those are the three things we should keep in our mind.

Mr. Cromie told the Canadian Club in Vancouver that "history will show the great events of our time not to be the great war or the great depression; it will be the modernizing of Asia. Europe is the only world that Atlantic people know, but Europe's day is dimming. Asia's big day is just beginning. Asia is our world." He is speaking, of course, for the Pacific coast.

Bearing those three factors in mind, I want to tell you what I have seen in regard to affairs in China grouped around these heads. Education—The old system of educa-

tion was a system that was based entirely on classics. In fact the Chinese never went outside of the classics for their regular education, that is, education that was required for those who were aiming to take an official post. All appointments of mandarins in those early days were based on the results of the examinations. Outside the appointments for civil office the mandarins were not a class. These examinations were open to the poorest boy in the land, except certain reserved classes not allowed to take examinations, such as the children of barbers and certain few groups. But the poorest farmer boy, if he showed talent, the neighbors would help, so he might have a chance to take examinations and in time he could become a mandarin. In my work in the south, more so than in the north, oftentimes we would come to places where in front of a small farm house there were two great pillars that signified a scholar had been produced in that house. And so that was the old form of appointment. They were based on examinations, entirely on the classics. They learned them by heart. They do not understand them for many years. In fact it was not until a man got past his 'teens that interpretation was given. In those days it was my business to examine the schools—all in Chinese, we did not teach English. When the boys would come up one by one and place their book in front of you—there would be little red spots marking the paragraph showing how much the boy had read. He would face the other way—that is called backing the book—and I would give him his first few words of the passage and he would go on saying it by rote. And I have examined boys who could recite the whole of the N.T., even the genealogical tables, and were prepared to do it. There was a group of reformers headed by Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chi-chao. Both of these men I have had in my house. They were reformers of 1897 and 1898. They got the ear of the Emperor, and impressed him so with the need of educational reform that he was bringing in drastic reforms, until the Empress Dowager put a stop to it; and from December, 1898, the Emperor was kept in confinement. Then came the Boxer trouble in 1900. And in 1905 came the edict from the Empress Dowager by which the whole educational

system should be changed. Western education was the basis of it and, strange to say, amongst the items, in the curriculum that was prescribed, the Bible was inserted. The Confucianist scholars of those days were required to study the Bible and write on it, if necessary, at the examinations.

What have we today? Since the republic came into being naturally those young eager, earnest and hot-headed revolutionists were anxious to bring their educational system up to the standard, such as is found in other countries. And they set about it, by removing entirely the old system. Confucianism was done away with, after a few years of the republic. But they paid attention to schools. Missions in their educational work had done a great deal. In fact they were pioneers in the new system of education. The Chinese government was very anxious that the educational system should come under their own control and that is something we can respect. Now, unfortunately they did not co-operate with the missions and try to bring them in. They set up their own educational system and there was for some years antagonism which has not yet passed away. Now in 1912, which was the beginning of this republican era in China, the great population of China recorded only three million scholars; in 1932 they had risen to something like twelve million. There were in 1912 only four government universities in China. I am not speaking of mission institutions—and the cost of upkeep mounted to \$755,000 local dollars. In 1932 there were eighty-two universities and twenty-nine special colleges, such as the engineering colleges and special ones of that kind, and the upkeep was \$35,000,000 in local currency. Then there is the mass education movement that has been spreading over China like wildfire. Take the new programs that have been evolved in the educational department in Nanking, by which they are trying to raise the literacy in China and use primary schools for adults as well as for the children. This is what China is doing this year: at Shantung they have arranged for 1588 term-free schools; so at the present time in those schools there are 118,607 pupils. Just now in one province, Canton, they have arranged a four-year program for their educational work; and that contemplates 40,149 schools, to be going concerns at the end of this four-year period.

Two or three weeks ago I met a young Chinese in this city who has been sent over by the Board of Education of the Chinese government and he was sent to the North American continent to look into the matter of schools and colleges all over the United States and Canada. He came to the conclusion that, here in Ontario, was the best educational system that he knew of, and he told that to his government and he was instructed to settle himself here in Toronto for a period of two or three years and to give a very detailed statement or report, regarding the educational system of Ontario. He is here in this city at the present time, doing this work. He told me himself that going over these different parts of North America, he said, here in Ontario he found a system of education, which he thought was ideal for his own China. And he said he had instructions to look into it and report to Nanking. I think he is registered in the College of Education here in this city.

Going to the second point, the question of economics, I would like to go into it somewhat fully, but I cannot. The industrial situation in China. We hear a great deal about that. They have started great things in an industrial way. In Japan the whole thing is organized for industry, but in China you find that, only in the treaty ports along the coast. But in the interior of China you don't find anything approaching industrial organization. I do know of attempts that have been made in the matter of flour mills and match factories and such as that. They don't seem to succeed. They are not ready for it. So the industrial situation in China has hardly begun. What we have seen along the coast in the treaty ports is a very small beginning when you consider the great number of people that ultimately will be brought in, I suppose, when China becomes industrialized.

The merchandising situation is practically the same with one slight change. The old guilds are still functioning; Chambers of Commerce are going along in the same way. Through the different provinces and towns they are all organized into the national Chamber. But the comprador, the middle man between the western and Chinese merchant, has practically gone out of business. Western firms are finding great difficulty in dealing with Chinese merchants

in exchange of merchandise without these old time compradors. That brings a very important point to our minds and that is the need for representatives of Western firms in business in China knowing the Chinese language that they may be able to deal directly with these Chinese merchants. The Japanese are doing a great deal of that. The Germans are going in very strongly and have a very good hold on the market in China and they are functioning through men who have learned more or less the Chinese language, but on the whole most of the Western merchants are handicapped with the passing of the old comprador, since they have very little means to deal directly with these Chinese merchants.

Artisans, carpenters and masons, all of these others, are functioning in the same way. They don't seem to take to our tools and methods. They carry on as they have for hundreds of years. Health operations are carried on by the ministry at Nanking and through its health departments. Agriculture is very important because the people, or 75 to 80% of them, are dependent on the land almost entirely. They have been up against it, through these famines I mentioned, but with irrigation and water conservation, highways and improved methods there is improvement. But the Chinese farmer has found the new methods do not meet his needs, to take western-made harvesting implements, for instance. That is interesting because for a time they wanted everything western. And the better class farmers used to think if they had western tools they would do better. They found it didn't bring results. They do follow some of our methods of seed selection. But there is one thing taking hold and that is rural co-operative societies. They began in connection with the China International Famine Relief Commission, with which I have been connected from the beginning. They began about ten years ago to establish these rural co-operative societies and during these ten years they have brought in some thirteen thousand men to learn methods of co-operation, so these men might teach the farmers about organizing for mutual help.

In connection with purchasing and marketing, that is co-operative marketing, the Government of China has ap-

pointed a commission. They are working in co-operation with the Famine Relief Commission and have appointed a government commission to go into the whole thing of rural co-operation. In 1931 there were only some five thousand or more of these co-operative societies operating in Hopeh and the north part of Honan. Each year they have increased until now there are something like 20,000 of these societies functioning. According to C. F. Strickland, in his report to the Universities' China Mission in London, a report of some nine months investigation into this matter, he states that, at this rate, in about ten year's time there will be something like 100,000 of these rural co-operative societies. That is a great number, but when you think of the number of people involved that would explain it. Strickland mentions the honesty and common sense of the Chinese farmer; it is measured by their repayment to the existing credit societies, and exceeds the standard of any European areas he knows and equals those of the best European peasantry.

Communism has been definitely rejected by China and co-operation is making its strong appeal to the Chinese, as an alternative to Communism, on the one hand, and uncontrolled capitalism, on the other. We hear of Communism here and there in China, but a good deal of it has lost its force. Communism is almost driven out of existence.

I cannot take up social life. I would like to have told you about the new life movement really started by Chiang Kai-Shek. That is taking hold in a way that will probably bring about some sort of social regeneration of all classes.

Just a word about political affairs. I would like to tell you about the unification of China. Some people think China is all broken up. That is not true. There have been divisive forces but now there is a steady move towards unity. But South Canton and that group are now in harmony to a great extent with the Central Government at Nanking. In the west they are in such close touch with Nanking that Chiang Kai-Shek goes to and fro in an aeroplane. The Chinese are getting aeroplanes. I have travelled into the centre of China by air and they are taking to the air a great deal.

The student body had been more or less opposed to the

government; they had never got together. A group was formed more or less opposed to the government. Probably they had read the writer who wrote "My Country and its people." He said that "China does not need more morals but needs more prisons for politicians." Now they are coming together, and on the 15th of January they had a great conference in Nanking, and there they had 300 university presidents and heads of colleges and representatives of student bodies to meet with the authorities of the government. One thing they had to face was: what to do with Japan, and the government authorities gave the students and heads of these colleges their word, that they would never agree to anything that would sacrifice the sovereign rights of China. There is a wonderful work done particularly under the advisers of the League of Nations. I could tell you of the experts that the League has sent, that we apparently have been kept in the dark about. Unification and reconstruction are the keynotes of the situation in China. I want you to bear in mind that when they speak of outer Mongolia, there seems to be more or less a feeling that Japan is to control it, but it would seem that the Japanese grip of authority in China, military grip, has gone too far. From what I hear there is not too stable a financial foundation in Japan and with this continual drain on their financial resources and what they are doing in North China, and now contemplate, it must bring a break, or at least an upheaval in Japan, so that she may have to retire from that entirely. I took a map of Mongolia and Manchuria and tried to work out the length of boundary line between Siberia, Mongolia and Manchuria. As far as I can make out it is at least 3,700 miles.

Taking the same latitude of thirty-five degrees and taking a straight line across from the far east to the far west, it is the same length as from Boston right across the continent to Portland, Oregon. How can any nation keep that boundary line against Russia? There are many factors which show it is absolutely impossible for Japan to hold that situation.

COL. BISHOP:—I find it very difficult, sir, to express to you adequately our appreciation for presenting in the forty

minutes the multitudinous experiences, the lessons gained, in thirty-eight years spent as you have spent them in China. When I say to you, it has been most fascinating, I repeat again, it is a most inadequate expression for what we have really heard. Your contribution to the Canadian Club volume of our proceedings for the year, you may feel sure will be re-read by many of our members who are here and those who are not here. I wish to express to you the club's very keen sense of appreciation for your being with us today.