

(April 17th, 1916.)

The Chinese Situation.

BY MR. T. T. WONG.*

AT a regular luncheon of the Club held on the 17th April, Mr. Wong said:

Gentlemen,—I am deeply appreciative of the courtesy so graciously extended to us by your Government, and I feel greatly honored this afternoon in addressing this distinguished audience. I notice that I am put down for an address on "The Present Situation in China." I hope you will excuse me if I speak on something else. (Laughter.) Not that I have not the courage, but you may know that the subject was selected for me before my arrival in Toronto and being in the Government service, we are more or less handicapped. And then as regards the situation in China, every day there are changes, and I have been away from China now three weeks, and I am so far behind—! (Laughter.) If I had to speak at all on it, I should speak without any degree of certainty, and I am sure you don't want anything that is not certain. (Laughter.) So with your permission I will speak on another subject, and in the course of this address I may make a few statements based on facts and past experience. Of course I may refer to the situation of China commercially.

During the past year, trade has been very brisk. When visiting China after four years' stay in America, I was very much impressed with the growth of trade along the coast and even in the interior of China. There was a great demand for iron, even scrap iron; the iron merchants of China are making fortunes. There is a great demand for dye-stuffs; about ten or fifteen merchants in Shanghai are making millions out of dye-stuffs. There is a great demand for Chinese tea; the consumption of tea has greatly increased, and it cannot be adequately met by other countries. Strange to say, there is a good demand for silk even in this time of war. America is buying Chinese silk, as she is not getting much silk from

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Europe. If this situation continues, not only the Chinese merchants will be massing wealth, but the foreign merchants, those who have not gone to the front, have a very bright outlook commercially.

I am very glad that your company, the Canadian Pacific, has at last made arrangements to put back that splendid ship into service, the Empress of Russia; also her sister ship, the Empress of Asia. I can't help telling you that a ship like that is a delight to all the passengers. I had no idea of coming to Canada until only about two weeks before we sailed. We saw your agent in Shanghai; he was very courteous, and made arrangements for us to come on that splendid ship of 32,000 tons gross tonnage, with beautiful cabins, dining room, an up-to-date gymnasium with electric apparatus for practising riding and rowing, and although we were on board ship, we thought we were practising in a gymnasium on land. We enjoyed also the excellent service and cuisine. I am sure, if I go back again, it will not take me any time to decide, but I will go back on the same ship or her sister ship the Empress of Asia.

I was everywhere impressed with the wonderful activity and enterprise of your company. I am sure your business will grow, as we understand each other better and there will be more and more Chinese travelers. Your company made it possible for Chinese travelers to go from one end of the country to the other, by bonding for them; and instead of difficulty, we have met courtesy everywhere we go. Only two months ago our Minister went back on the Empress of Japan, with his family and two or three students.

I shall speak this afternoon on the Chinese Educational Commission to the United States, touching on the possibilities of the Chinese students as regards trade between America and China, and also the relation between America and China, which has been made more cordial through the medium of our representatives abroad who were once students in America and England.

In the sixties a Chinese graduate of Yale University went back to China and he conceived the idea of sending Chinese students to America. In those old days, a suggestion of this sort met with strong opposition. He went back and tried to convince the Government of the advantages of this great step for acquiring Western education. He worked on, but so long as the Government opposed it, his efforts were futile. Year after year he tried, and then after the Taiping rebellion, just after the American civil war, the Government re-

alized the importance of educating young men abroad. He was sent for by the Government in Peking and was authorized to bring to America one hundred and twenty Chinese boys of the average of thirteen years of age, in four batches, one batch of thirty each year for four years, bringing the total number to a hundred and twenty Chinese boys.

Mr. Yung Wing was the graduate referred to and he was appointed the first Commissioner in charge of these students in America. He had his headquarters at Hartford, Connecticut. These boys lived in New England, two in each family, with the object of acquiring New England culture. They were placed in grammar schools, from the grammar schools to the high schools, and from the high schools to the universities.

In the course of ten years, however, conservative forces were at work in Peking; some one probably suggested to the Government that if these students stayed too long in America, it might have a tendency to denationalize them; they had been here ten years, and if they stayed much longer they would come back Americanized, and would not be able to do anything for China. So the Government issued an order for the immediate recall of these students. Quite a number were in their senior year at Yale and Harvard, but the Imperial order had to be obeyed, and they went home, with the exception of a few who stayed at their own expense. On their return, these young men were shut up in examination halls for a month. Imagine, after ten years in America, to be shut up in a musty hall studying Chinese! Some of them were sent to naval academies, some to the telegraph offices to be operators, some to the new medical school to study medicine; all were scattered.

For twenty years, from 1882 to 1902, there was a long interval during which no Government students were sent to America; only a few private students came to America. I had the good fortune to be one of them. I was all by myself in the south, and two girl students were studying in the University of Michigan. They were graduated in medicine, and are doing good work in the interior of China, having charge of very large hospitals.

Then the Boxer trouble came. The Government again realized the importance of sending young men abroad, and at one time there were about fifteen thousand Chinese Government students in Japan, one hundred and fifty Chinese students in Great Britain, and altogether about two hundred Chinese Government students in Europe, while in America there are at present fourteen hundred students. Out of that

number five hundred are Government students, students supported by Government funds, and nine hundred private students. Out of these private students about three hundred came from good families in China, and about six hundred are native-born children of Chinese residents in America. So altogether in America there are fourteen hundred Chinese students, studying in different universities, with a few studying in high schools.

I want to tell you something about the results of this work. I repeat that the work began in the 60's, when a young graduate conceived the idea of sending Chinese students to America. They were sent and recalled and for a long interval of twenty years there were none sent by the Government; then thousands of Chinese students were sent abroad to study. What has been the result? At the time of recall, through the weeding process, there were only about seventy who were ready for service and they were almost forgotten after they went back. But by their merit and the force of circumstances they gradually attained prominence in business, in Government service, and in other enterprises in China.

One of the most prominent was the Governor of a Province in Manchuria under the old Monarchy; the same student became Premier under the Republic. One was Minister of Foreign Affairs. One is now Minister of the Board of Communications. One was Minister at the Court of St. James, London. One was our Minister in Washington. One was the leading engineer in China, and is now Director-General of a railway in Central China. One is Managing Director of the railroad from Hankow to Canton, Dr. Teh-ching Yen, brother of our Minister in Berlin. When the former was in charge of construction of the important section of the railroad connecting Peking with Mongolia, he ordered most of the materials and rolling stock from America, because, he said, he did not know the works in other countries. One is in charge of a college in Peking, preparing students for advanced studies in American and in that institution there are twenty-one American teachers. There are others holding responsible positions in railway service. There are about half a dozen who were Mayors of cities along the coast of China. I have been referring to old returned students. Among the younger generation of returned students, one was Vice-Minister in the Senate of our Parliament. One was Minister of Finance under the Republic. And one was Minister of Foreign Affairs under the new Government. Our Minister in Berlin, Dr. Yen, is one of the returned students of the younger generation. Our

Minister at the Court of St. James, Dr. Alfred Sze, now our Minister in Washington, is a returned student who went back after 1900. I suppose you have heard of Dr. Wellington Koo, who went back after the revolution, a graduate of Columbia University. Others are very prominent in business, such as Mr. Z. T. Woo, Manager of the Iron and Steel Works at Hanyang. I must mention these to give you some idea of the possibilities. These are facts, and I think the time has come when we are reaping results. The Government has spent so much time, and so much money. The American Government returned a portion of the indemnity, which our Government, in appreciation and recognition of this very friendly act, decided to spend in the education of young men in America.

I need not mention anything else; we can get some idea of the splendid opportunities and very bright prospects before these young men, who hold high positions in the Government service. I hope that your Government will also have a share in the new educational movement in China. (Applause.) The result may not be immediate, but you can just draw your own conclusion. If your Government and all the well-wishers of China work together, and arrange for some of our students to come to Canada to study, what will the result be? It will mean a new bond of friendship between the two countries. We don't understand each other. Your company, the best representative of your enterprises, i. e., the Canadian Pacific, have agents in China and if they had a few Chinese friends whose lasting friendship was formed in their school days, they would meet with greater success in business; as it is, they have to fight their own battles among strangers. The same may be said of other enterprises in the interests of material progress or otherwise. We don't know you, you don't know us. You have seen our people, but these are not representatives of the best people in China. There are not only hardships and immense difficulties in the way, just as there are advantages; I don't want to dwell on this, but with an audience like this a few words are enough. I do hope that you will see your way clear to take part in this educational movement in China, so that in future a new arrangement may be made, which will make the relations between Canada and China more cordial, and promote the growth of trade between the two countries. I thank you for your kind attention. (Applause.)