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Footloose in China

By MR. GORDON SINCLAIR
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MR. SINCLAIR:—Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the Canadian Club, it is very flattering indeed to see so many of you here on such a vicious day but very lucky for me because I was asked about six weeks before leaving China to bring to you the greetings of the Canadian Club of China. It is possible, you do not know there is such a thing but it is very active indeed. Located in Hong Kong, it has 166 members, everyone of whom was born in Canada. Everyone of these people are Chinese, and full-blooded Chinese and proud of it. Next month, one of its members, Maple Tuan, is coming to Toronto to try her examinations as an associate of the Conservatory of Music. She is attractive and if you have women speakers here, I would recommend her. "Sugar" Lee is the President of the Club in China. It has headquarters at the Canadian Steamships in Hong Kong. Lee is a go-getter and is proud of being a Canadian. He was born in Victoria. Most of them have been born in China. It will surprise you that so many intellectual Chinese have gone back to China and doing better there than they could here. The club formerly had its best meeting on July 1, but that was stopped in protest of some of the older men who objected soundly to the edict which keeps Orientals out of China. These older men had made money and gone back and now cannot come back here. The younger fellows can come back.

I suppose we are all interested in the war and what is going to come out of it, and who is going to win. I do not know who is going to win the war. I have not the faintest idea. I am convinced it will go on for at least all of this year and possibly all next year and that the winners will be those

who have the most durability. We all know the Chinese have taken it, certainly they have taken it. The Japanese have not had to take it but are now beginning to take it because they are being frightened by the Chinese guerillas. They have the north part of China sewn up: Everything north of the Yangste. That is where the war started and where the least damage has been done. Tsin-Tsin is hardly damaged. Peking is not damaged at all and similarly the cities of the far north, producers of wool and lace were seized easily but since these guerillas have come back to harass the Japanese in a serious way. They are also having trouble with their attempts at currency control. I am not an economist but it is interesting to point out. The Japanese currency is the Yen, worth 27c. in Japan or Canada. In China it is worth 16c. In China the Chinese have been able to knock down the Japanese money. That indicates peace. In the north they have made strong efforts to put their currency at top value. They have issued what they call federal reserve notes. Chinese notes. They are controlled by Puppets—and the arbitrary value put on them by the Chinese is 27c. But the bootlegging on these notes is appalling. You can buy them in any back alley for 15c. There is no coinage of any kind left in north China. One cent will be issued in paper. One cent divided by six will give you the value in Canadian money. But they are doing the best they can with currency. The white man's burden is heavy up there, he has to get permission to import or export anything. He is hampered by all types of restrictions among them that his goods have to be in Japanese steamships. People say that the Japanese hope of winning is with the guerillas. I personally doubt that because I am afraid the guerillas will turn on their own people. Now there is evidence they have done that in many places. The guerillas are a strange people. They seem to go in war for the sake of having a good time. That is in the south. In the north they are very evil and wicked men. They are former bandits and probably future bandits. But they are mischievous like boys on Hallowe'en. The idea is to blow up a munition dump and run away. Don't fight, cause the Japanese to lose their money, cause them to be frightened and in all these they are doing a magnificent piece of work.

They like to interrupt the Japanese communication and at this they are marvellous. The Japanese will speak to each other between one army and another by portable radio. The Chinese are not particularly interested in intercepting their messages, they are interested in damaging the messages so that the Japanese cannot read their own stuff. They will put some kind of a dance program to smother the Japanese messages. The Japanese will change their wave-length and Chinese in five minutes will be on the air on that wave-length with some weird story. The guerillas would rather lose 10 men for a laugh than lose no men and have no laugh. The Japanese take everything seriously and the Chinese take very little seriously. They seem to realize the same flow of life there will go on and on through the centuries no matter what invader comes. In these days we are all supposed to be enemies of the henchmen of Hitler. Potentially we are but you cannot prove that in Shanghai. The British and the Germans in China get along very well. In fact, the British get along better with the Germans than any other people except possibly the Americans or the British themselves. The Japanese do not get along with the Germans and they distrust each other and say so. In the clubs you will find the Germans and the British cursing the Japanese and not quite diplomatically. They think those Japanese should be driven out of the country and hope they are driven out very soon.

Another thing is the fraternity between Russians and Japanese on the Manchoukuo border. Russia is supposed to fight Japan. Maybe they will fight. They had a fishery dispute when I was on the border and I will bet 10 to 1 there will certainly be no war in the Manchoukuo Siberian districts until the major Chinese war is finished. The Japanese are not very good chaps at swallowing insults but this time they must swallow insults. There is no Japanese army in Manchoukuo. The loyalty of the mercenaries to the Mikado is as strong as a damp paper bag. So do not let them alarm you about the prospect of war on the Manchoukuo border. There are 25,000 Russians in the employ of the Japanese government. This puzzled me. Many of them are spies. Many of them are agents of a different type but really spies also. Many of them are railway oper-

ators, chefs in dining cars, etc. All are Russians. We were told long ago that these fellows were loyalists, white Russians, enemies of Stalin. In February the Manchou government thought it would find out by the direct method of taking a census. Ninety per cent of them said they were opposed to Stalin. Ten per cent said they were in favour of Stalin. And most of us thought this 10 per cent would be sent to jail but nothing happened at all. The greatest weakness as far as I can see of each side is a very different weakness. The Japanese are so anxious to win that they are pressing and they suspect everybody including themselves. The Chinese apparently are not even anxious to win. But that seems absurd but to visit the streets of Shanghai and visit the gambling dens of night clubs is to have it forced on you that these people do not care. I hate to say this but it is deplorable. This is apparently because of the definite campaign to demoralize the people. Gambling houses open in Shanghai at the rate of 2 per week, for the last month. They provide almost anything—heroin, opium, cocaine. These things are supplied to Chinese gamblers, it is a campaign to make them addicts. A man can spend as low as 32c. in Canadian money and can have all the dope he wants. The size of these houses is amazing. One called the Hollywood has no less than 700 employees. It is the largest in the world. All of these are Chinese and the proceeds if there are any, go to the Japanese. These districts are called the extra settlement. It does not come under the control of the international settlement. That is the great weakness of the Chinese people. I certainly hope they will get over it. It is not only in Shanghai but other cities. Possibly the greatest resistance they are meeting is in Canton. The weakness of the Japanese is their distrust for everybody including themselves. If we went there we would pretty surely be pushed around. Even if we went to buy goods. In the north the Japanese army does not trust the navy and vice versa. You can prove that by getting a pass from the Navy when you are looked upon with suspicion by the army, more so than if you had no pass at all. A Japanese civilian can have all the passes in the world and he is still no good in the opinion of the army and the navy. You and I would have to submit to search. We

might object and maybe get away with it. But we would not be called upon to kowtow. The Chinese would or the Japs would. There is no difference. If he is challenged by a common soldier, he must lift his hat and bow, no matter where he is or under what circumstances. He says, if you question him, he is pleased to do this. He will say this young man deserves respect, he is acting in defence of his empire; that is how he gets out of it; it would be some lad who might be an office boy; I don't know.

I have "shortage of women" in my notes. Manchoukuo was and still is a rich country. The Japanese seized Manchoukuo in 1932 and it is a magnificent country. It is rich and it looks rich. It has rich soil, wheat, timber, coal and steel. They are developing this country on a vast basis and doing it well. Railways, good railways and well run. Steel mills, good mills and well run. The people who work in these mills have exceptionally good homes. They have central heating. They are more Soviets than the Soviets, they hope to crush. It is really amazing. It is working. But the Chinese will not go for them. The original Manchus have been backed up like the Indians did in America. They are farmers and trappers and resolved to remain so. The result is the tremendous labour shortage. This labour shortage is largely men. But many of the men refuse to go and work unless they can have women and there are not enough women to go around. So Japan is agitated to get 30,000 brides for the men who are trying to fashion this country. The Japanese women do not want to go to Manchoukuo. They do not want to live in 40 below zero. They say they are being regimented. They have engaged police women to go through the Japanese towns and line up the women and bring them over. Thirty thousand is the requirement this year—on the five year plan, I suppose.

Chinese and Japanese both give deliberately false information to the newspapers. Why I do not know. They will lie deliberately to your face. They will lie in writing and give you false announcements and you are entitled to question it and if you do you get nowhere. Shanghai is held less securely than since it was captured. The Japs admit the guerillas are within 22 miles. During a week when I was more or less loafing around, about 3 in the

morning there was a sound of heavy shooting from the western district of Shanghai. Some of the men on duty went up to see what happened. Next day the morning papers came out with a story that the guerillas had attacked and about 200 of them on each side had been killed. The afternoon papers amended this and said about 300 had been killed altogether; so that evening we were eager to question the Japanese spokesman. He ridiculed the whole thing. There had been some minor skirmish and 3 people on the Japanese side had been killed. This is one over par. They generally admit 2. I had an appointment to see James Stoddart, Superintendent for Health of Shanghai, he said, "I can find out how many men were killed last night. I know where they are going to burn them and I have a right to be there." So I went with him and we found 119 Japanese being burned, so divide 119 into 3 and you will find how correct the press conferences are. We tried to get them to admit there were 119 killed but never got any place. Previously the Japanese had taken their dead home in small urns. Then they have a parade in some city and each live soldier carries in his arms the ashes of a dead soldier. Now they use small cotton bags to put the ashes in because they have other uses for the urns. The Chinese are no better when it comes to giving out news, they too will claim famous victories when victories do not exist. Sometimes they will claim victories when there has not even been a battle. This is especially true of air battles. The Japanese are in control of the air. I am convinced there was a good deal of graft in the management and operation of the Chinese air force and I am afraid there was also some graft in the Chinese Red Cross service. However, I cannot prove these things and it is perhaps not right for me to say them. People intimated that to me. There were also some strange things in the Japanese administration. I walked into the office of the Japanese Chief and I was accompanied by the General, himself. He had been in Canada and knew a good deal about this country. I noticed on his desk a copy of a magazine called *Ken* saying that the Japanese killed their badly wounded. Not long before I had met an American missionary doctor who had appealed to his consul because from his hospital had been seized large amounts of chloro-

form. He knew this chloroform, he said, was being used by the Japanese doctors to kill their own wounded. He was a very bellicose man. He was going to lick the Russians. He thought the Japanese should immediately walk in and take over the Shanghai settlement. But I am delighted to say he was very outspoken. He knew what I was there for, in fact he had 16 spies check me up. Well, he didn't deny that. He didn't exactly admit it either; he said men who were badly wounded had to be put out of their trouble. He said they had appealed themselves and asked the nurses or the doctors to put them out of business. He said also the appearance of men in Japan with arms and legs off had a demoralizing effect on the people at home. Well, maybe that is an admission and maybe it is not.

Another thing is the growth of slavery in China. Slavery is worse today than it has been in a good number of years and possibly worse than at any time within 25 years. With millions of refugees it is no wonder that the buyers can go and pay small sums for children. You and I can go in the districts outside of Shanghai and buy girls of 10 years of age for about \$6.00 in Canadian money cash. That is deplorable but it is admitted by the League of Nations committee; they practically admitted there was nothing they could do about it. There had been several prosecutions brought against persons who had acted as brokers in the buying and selling of slaves but each had failed. This is not so true in Hong Kong, yet even in Hong Kong, a British colony, you can, under some conditions, buy or sell a child, male or female. They seldom sell a boy but girls today can be bought for as low as six Canadian dollars for each child, and if you go to that country, it is possible you can buy a girl of ten, good, full-bodied, strong, for one dollar, Canadian or less. It is hard to believe these things are going on but they do go on. It is hard to believe they fall for this business of taking dope but they do.

Where is the salvation of China to come from? Well, it is gradually awakening. The pushing of the intellectuals into the south-west will unquestionably be a good thing for the south-west. Just what is happening down there we do not know. Certainly, what is happening is not bad from the standpoint of the Chinese. They are slowly getting

spirit. They are putting the feeling of patriotism into the people. The Chinese have always been clansmen not patriots. The family was the unit to which they gave their loyalty. Now they are slowly becoming a nation. General Shek is unquestionably stronger than ever he was. There is absolutely no thought of surrender. The few attempts made to set up so called puppets under the influence of Japan failed very miserably. And as you have read in the cables, those Chinese who had linked with the Puppet Government have been assassinated or at least go in fear of assassination. I think there have been 55 assassinations of more or less important people in the Puppet Government. These assassinations will continue. I remember being on ship, in or very near the harbour of Takoa in north China and we were kept there for thirty hours. Nobody came. We could not get off in small boats and go ashore because of the ice. And then the doctor, well-known to the commander, did come. He came with an armed guard of six Japanese and was very frightened and jittery. He cleared us very rapidly. The captain was the only Jew I ever met in command of a British steamship. He said, there is a good story. He said that doctor has been delayed because his assistant has been caught by the guerillas and has had both arms and legs cut off. That is what happens when these fellows link in with the conquerors. I do not think they will ever overcome the south part. Many of the things the Japanese have done and are doing are very good indeed. In a sanitary way they have done wonders. They have cut down cholera. They vaccinate the people free and in a humane and kindly way. They go among the Chinese and vaccinate. Insofar as they are capable of doing it, they give free medical attention. They have a culture squad made up of young fellows who speak Chinese and go among the refugees or sick and wounded Chinese and do what they can to mend their wounds and fix them up and give them food. They give entertainment. They set up a screen and show Mickey Mouse. They have run off records saying what fine people the Japanese are. We are here to take care of everything. No longer will you be troubled by the tax-gatherers. Propaganda is done in a very neat way. I saw a Japanese soldier jump into the river to save a baby from drowning. One

baby, more or less, in the millions in China could not have meant very much to him but he did it. The same day, a young girl in charge of a sampan was shot because she did not hear a sentry. The Japanese are very evil little men in some ways but intensely loyal and patriotic. And they don't whine. If you have seen any appeal on the part of the Japanese to the world for help, I will eat your shirt here in public. If the flag of Japan goes down, it will go down without whimpering. You must occasionally say some good things on their behalf. Some economists predict that Japan must soon collapse, economically. This I emphatically do not believe. They are geared down to a hard struggle. They will not blow up internally. They say, you fellows have been saying that ever since the war started. When we default interest on any one bond, you can start squealing. There is no spirit of weakening but I am satisfied the Chinese will eventually drive the Japanese out of south China up to the Yangtsi but whether they will drive them out north of that I do not know. From the standpoint of military operations I would say no. From the standpoint of economic pressure and guerilla warfare they will be able to drive them out. I am at least one newspaperman who went to the Orient and came back not knowing who was going to win.