

NOTES & COMMENTS.

THE BANK OF CHINA.

Special attention may be called to the excellent results disclosed by Messrs. Lowe, Bingham & Matthews' investigation of the affairs of the Bank of China. Even to those most closely connected with the bank this showing is something of a surprise. The organization on foreign lines appears particularly praiseworthy and the fact of the bank having a 100 per cent. reserve against its paper issue, besides over \$3,000,000 in cash speaks volumes for its management. Had it not been for the unhappy dislocation of business caused by revolution, the bank's affairs would be even more prosperous; and that reflection may be commended to all who would genuinely seek the welfare of China, especially at such a time as the present when it is all important for the nation to show a united front.

FRENCH & RUSSIAN RED CROSS FUND.

With deep regret it has to be admitted that to-day no new contributions to the French and Russian Red Cross Fund can be recorded. The fund was opened for fortnight ago to-day, and in that space of time it has gradually mounted up to \$1,127.73 and Tls. 1,516, no very grand showing it must be confessed. We still hold "M.A.'s" cheque for Tls. 1,000, but as yet not even one of the nine others, who must come forward with similar amounts if the fund is to benefit by that money, has presented himself. That there are many claims on the public we know well. But we cannot help thinking that for such a cause as this there must still be plenty to spare, and that forgetfulness is mainly the explanation why subscriptions have not come in more rapidly. We trust that by Monday we shall be able to reopen the list with substantial additions.

THE GUARANTEE TO BELGIUM.

Sir Edward Grey, speaking in the House of Commons on Tuesday, left no doubt as to what the Allies will insist on obtaining for Belgium before any peace is declared. Great Britain, France and Russia "will not cease hostilities until Belgium has been reinstated in her political and economical independence and largely indemnified for the wrongs she has suffered." This then, was the form of the renewal by the Allied Powers of their engagements entered into by the treaties guaranteeing the independence and neutrality of Belgium. It will be remembered that it was telegraphically reported about a month ago that the French, British and Russian Ministers at the Belgian Court called at the Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Havre, and the Russian Minister, acting as spokesman for his colleagues, handed the Belgian Foreign Minister a declaration by the three Governments. Subsequently the Italian and Japanese Ministers concurred in the declaration, although their countries were not included among the Powers guaranteeing the independence and neutrality of Belgium. German Ministers, in face of such hard facts, should by this time have ceased to trifle with the question of peace.

TRADING WITH THE ENEMY.

In the annual report of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce for 1915, special comment is made upon the question of trading with enemy firms in China. The notice, published by the Government in December 1914, to the effect that it was undesirable for British firms to trade with firms of alien enemy nationality in China was unsatisfactory, and it was, therefore, on the whole a relief to the Chamber and to Manchester traders when a positive order was issued in the Proclamation of June 25, 1915, forbidding trade with the enemy in China, Siam, Persia and Morocco. The matter, however, was somewhat complicated by the fact that on July 6 the Board of Trade wrote permitting shipment prior to July 26—provided the goods were not sent to fulfil contracts undertaken after the issue of the Proclamation of June 25, and that a later statement limited this concession by insistence on actual deliveries in China by September 29. The Manchester Chamber, therefore, entered into communication with the Board of Trade for an equitable compensation to be granted to firms who acted on the earlier statement and were not able to deliver by September 29, and at the date of the report it appeared possible that this appeal might be entertained, the Chamber being engaged in ascertaining the total extent of consequent losses suffered or likely to be suffered by their members.

A letter posted at Bordeaux on July 29, 1914, containing drafts, invoices, and bills of lading covering a shipment of wine by the str. Buelow was delivered in Shanghai a few days ago. The letter was en route a few days less than a year and eight months. This is probably the record for slow mail delivery from Europe to Shanghai.

INTERNED GERMAN SHIPS.

IMPORTANT ACTION BY PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT.

THE TONNAGE RELEASED.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Peking, March 21. The entry of Portugal into the ranks of the belligerents on the allied side may not have much direct military bearing on the war, although the assistance of Portuguese troops in settling the situation in East Africa will be of material value to the Union army operating under the command of General Smuts. In another direction, however, the accession of Portugal to the Allies will have the important result of releasing some 160,000 tons of German shipping interned in Portuguese ports.

The vessels named in the list below, many of which are well-known in the Far East, are all being taken over by the Government and their crews interned. Such of the ships as are suitable will be handed over to the British Government, some may be fitted out as cruisers, while a number are being chartered to a big shipping firm in Lisbon for ordinary trade purposes. The total tonnage, however employed, cannot but prove of material use in relieving the present shortage of shipping.

Name of vessel	Tonnage	Where interned
Nawa	163	Lisbon
Jaffa	2,047	"
Mogador	1,271	"
Algeria	1,751	"
Rotterdam	1,751	"
Achilles	943	"
Uckemarch	4,312	"
Girgenti	1,751	"
Sophie Wickmers	3,547	"
Western Walde	3,900	"
Prince Heinrich	6,536	"
Rhodes	1,751	"
Euripos	2,763	"
Picador	764	"
Galata	4,094	"
Cheruskia	3,245	"
Energie	740	"
Arcadia	1,751	"
Wurtemberg	2,763	"
Naxos	2,220	"
Enos	1,912	"
Antares	2,511	"
Taygetos	2,936	"
Casa Blanca	1,650	"
Milos	1,751	"
Mimara-Schultz	925	"
Desree (schooner)	1,655	"
Mayland	1,749	"
Buelow	3,965	"
Lubeck	1,738	"
Phenicia	3,555	"
Floto	1,408	"
Rolandseck	1,751	"
Electra	835	"
Mazagao	1,714	"
Wurzburg	2,246	"
Heinburg	2,673	"
Burgmeister	3,670	"
Santa Barbara	3,347	"
Togo	2,655	"
Bela	1,751	"
Horn	1,188	"
Theodor	186	"
Nachmann	?	"
Will	?	"
Adelaide	2,915	"
Ingrabning	2,354	"
Best	?	"
Kronprinz	3,541	"
Admiral	3,696	"
Eszen	58	"
Linda Worzielen	4,836	"
Sofien	?	"
Leitens	3,528	"
Marientfels	3,905	"
Brisbane	3,588	"
Komodore	3,849	"
Numantia	2,804	"
Woerwaers	3,723	"

MOTOR BOATS.

The following anonymous contribution has reached us. With the Easter holidays do not for off it may prove useful to intending up-country parties.

The most important tool for an amateur is a stout oar. Motor boats are like wives. You may get printed directions from the family with your wife, but that will not help you much in translating her temperament. You have to experiment for yourself.

There exist motor boats which run 30 miles an hour every day, but there are also motor boats which only run six miles an hour every other week.

How to Start a Motor Boat.

1. Remove spark plug, empty carburettor and crank the engine.
2. Sandpaper the flywheel, take off the commutator and crank the engine.

3. Kick the pump, blow cigarette smoke in the priming cocks and crank the engine.
4. Disconnect the propeller, reverse the engine, empty the fuel tank and crank the engine.

5. Repeat a verse from the Koran, tie a wet towel around the cylinders, take off the lubricators and crank the engine.

6. Take the motor entirely apart, put it together with your fingers crossed, drop a penny in the fuel tank and crank the engine.

7. Crank the engine suddenly without doing anything else. This often surprises it into a running.

8. Turn your coat inside out, oil the rudder, throw the fuel strainers overboard, stuff a cushion in the flywheel and crank the engine.

9. Repeat the names of the Prophets in Arabic, put a cough drop in the cylinders, write your candid opinion of all motor boats on the stern, roll up your cuffs, connect the batteries to your watch, take off your necktie, yell h—l into the fuel tanks and crank the engine.

ZEEBRUGGE A HUGE SCRAP-HEAP.

DESTROYERS DRIVEN OUT TO SEA.

Reuter's Special Service.

Amsterdam, March 22. A telegram from Rotterdam states that the only things in Zebrugge to escape the bombs dropped by the allied air squadron in the recent raid were two submarines, which submerged in the dock, and three torpedo-destroyers, which fled out to sea. They manoeuvred in the minefield but the allied airmen forced them further out, only to be chased by the British destroyers. Zebrugge is now a huge scrap-heap.

Numerous wounded marines have arrived in Bruges from Zebrugge. Some patrol-boats, as well as the destroyers, fled from Zebrugge to avoid the air bombardment while a German submarine was seen hugging the Dutch coast.

Later, a destroyer towed another into Zebrugge.

MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS IN MESOPOTAMIA.

INEXCUSABLE SHORTAGE OF SUPPLIES.

London, March 22. In the House of Commons to-day Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India, expressed gratitude for the tributes paid to the bravery and endurance of the Indian and British troops in Mesopotamia. He considered that the transfer of control of the operations to the Imperial Government had already proved advantageous.

He thought the inexcusable shortage of medical supplies was largely due to the enormous difficulties of the river navigation. The Government had sought everywhere for shallow-draught vessels, some had been lost at sea. Neither the Imperial Government nor the Raj were satisfied but they hoped that the measures taken had already effected an improvement.

Mr. C. E. H. Hobhouse referred to Mr. Austen Chamberlain's strong words and hoped that the responsibility for the breakdown in the medical arrangements would be placed on the proper shoulders. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, in reply, begged the House to keep an open mind on the matter until the facts were officially known regarding the breakdown and the responsibility. To-day His Majesty the King inspected 30 motor ambulances out of a total of 50 which the Cinematograph Trade Association is presenting to the Red Cross Society and to the Order of St. John for use in Mesopotamia.—Reuter.

GALLOPER LIGHTSHIP TORPEDOED.

London, March 23. Lloyd's announce that the Galloper lightship, which warns vessels from Galloper Sand, 30 miles north-east of the North Foreland, is reported to have been torpedoed and sunk.

Ymuiden, March 23. A steamer had arrived to-day which reports that it found only the mast of the Galloper Lightship above the surface of the sea.—Reuter.

Amsterdam, March 22.

It is reported that Herr Ballin has declared that Germany's policy is to prevent traffic between the United Kingdom and European countries, neutral or not.—Reuter Special.

It is announced that the departure of the Dutch liner Konigin der Nederlanden (8,235 tons) for India, which was arranged for the 25th, has been provisionally postponed.—Reuter.

SUPPORT FOR GENERAL VILLA.

REVOLT OF HERRERA.

Columbus (New Mexico), March 22.

It is reported that General Herrera has revolted against President Carranza and taken the field in western Chihuahua with 2,000 men in favour of Villa.

There is no news of the American Expedition against Villa owing to the failure of the wireless and the cutting of the telegraph lines. Two aeroplanes accompanying the expedition have not arrived and possibly have been lost in the desert.

Damage to the extent of G. 83,000,000 has been done by a mysterious fire at Paris, in northwest Texas.—Reuter.

THE SINKING OF THE TUBANTIA.

The Hague, March 22.

The official representations to be made by the Dutch Minister to Berlin concerning the sinking of the Tubantia were forestalled by the declaration made by the German Minister at The Hague.—Reuter.

GERMAN ATTACKS AT AVOCOURT.

HEAVY BOMBARDMENTS RENEWED.

Through Reuter's Agency.

Paris, March 22. The official communiqué issued this afternoon reports:—West of the Meuse there was a very lively artillery duel in the vicinity of Malancourt, Enes and Hill 304. It was particularly violent at Hancourt Hill, while east of the Meuse the bombardment was intense at Vaux and Damloup.

There has been no infantry action. The evening official communiqué states:—

"West of the Meuse, after an all day bombardment, the Germans made several attacks against our front from Avocourt Wood to the village of Malancourt. All the enemy attempts to debouch from Avocourt Wood were stopped by our artillery and infantry fire.

The enemy succeeded in gaining a footing on a small hill at Hancourt, about one kilometre south-west of Malancourt.

East of the Meuse there was an intense bombardment in the Donau-mont and Vaux regions.

The French artillery bombarded some enemy works in Belgium, north of the Aisne and in Argonne.

London, March 22.

An official communiqué issued by General Sir Douglas Haig states:—

Last night the enemy exploded two mines which caused no casualties.

There was some fighting with hand grenades in mine craters northeast of Vermelles without changing the situation.

To-day our guns and trench mortars successfully bombarded the enemy's position southwest of Wemauquart.

REDUCTION OF RESERVED OCCUPATIONS.

THE DEMAND FOR MORE MEN.

London, March 22.

During the debate on the Army Votes yesterday the position of married men was again brought before the attention of the House.

Mr. Walter Long stated that Reserved occupations have been largely reduced. It has been decided that in a variety of trades men below certain ages, varying from 25 to 35 in different trades, must be released and also that a greater demand could justly be made from agriculture. These decisions would be applicable immediately and would greatly affect the numbers of men available. The provisions of the Service Act for the avoidance of industrial compulsion were leaving too wide gaps and a remedy was under consideration.—Reuter Special.

COMPULSION FOR BENEDICTS.

London, March 22.

The Liberal War Committee has passed a resolution in favour of extending compulsory service to married men.

MESSAGES TO CANDIDATES AT HARBOROUGH.

London, March 22.

Mr. Asquith, in a message to Mr. Harris, the Coalition Candidate in the Harborough by-election, says: "I trust you will demonstrate the true unity of the nation which is our greatest strength in prosecuting the war."

Sir Edward Carson, in a letter to Gibson Bowles, who is contesting Harborough on behalf of married attested men, pays a tribute to his services in saving the country from the disastrous results of the Declaration of London. He continues: "I am a supporter of the Coalition Government and every opportunity ought to be taken to strengthen its hands by the election to the House of Commons of men whose criticisms will help to solve great international problems."

SAFEGUARDS FOR TRADE AFTER THE WAR.

APPOINTMENT OF SMALL COMMITTEES.

London, March 22.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Walter Runciman, President of the Board of Trade, said that he was appointing small committees to consider measures for safeguarding, after the war, the position of important British industries in relation to international competition.

Two have already been appointed. Iron, Steel and Engineering, with Sir Edward Hyde, a partner in S. Pearson & Son, contractors, as Chairman, and Mr. Balfour (Arthur Balfour, Managing Director of Arthur Balfour & Co., Ltd., Sheffield), as one of the members; and Shipping and Shipbuilding with Sir Charles Booth, partner in the Booth Line, as Chairman.

The Textile Trades committee will be announced shortly.—Reuter.

A RUSSIAN BLOW NEAR VILNA.

HARD FIGHTING ON THE WHOLE FRONT.

Through Reuter's Agency.

Petrograd, March 22. An official communiqué reports: Fighting has been general along the whole front.

The Russian forces have captured two woods and a village in the Jacobstadt sector and a whole line of trenches south of Dvinsk.

There is a particularly desperate engagement in progress north of Postavy, half-way between Dvinsk and Vilna. Enemy counter-attacks with the object of recapturing trenches they had lost failed.

The Russians are gaining the upper hand in a battle on the southwestern shore of Lake Maroz, northeast of Vilna, where they have forced three lines of entanglements and trenches, after a series of fierce attacks and, notwithstanding the German use of gases, capturing over 1,000 prisoners, 12 machine-guns and other material. The Russians, using gas, effectively checked attempted counter-attacks.

A fight preceded the Russian occupation of Isphahan, whose inhabitants, exhausted by the looting of the Turks and Germans, welcomed the Russians with enthusiasm. The Governor-General and other authorities had previously joined the Russians, with whom they re-entered the city.

FIGHTING IN THE RIGA SECTOR.

[FROM RUSSIAN LEGATION, PEKING.]

Petrograd, March 20.

In the Riga sector the enemy violently bombarded the Iskul bridgehead defences and further south of it. There has been a reciprocal cannonade in the northern part of the Jakobstadt sector. In the region of Vidzy our artillery shelled the German trenches. At the village of Medysiaty, to the south of Tverch, the enemy attempted to assume the offensive, but was repulsed.

The enemy opened fire on the sector of the borough of Smorgon. In the region of the Upper Strypa our scouts captured a trench. The enemy counter-attack was repulsed by our fire. In the same region an enemy attempt to approach the village of Iuzefovka was checked.

The Black Sea: Our torpedo-boats sank near the Bulgarian shores a steamer laden with benzine. They were attacked by enemy aeroplanes, which dropped eight bombs without hitting them.

The crew of the steamer was captured. The Turkish Front: During the pursuit of the Turks we captured two more field guns in the Mamahatun region.

THE REVOLT IN SOUTHWEST CHINA.

TERMS OF PEACE.

Peking, March 24.

According to Chinese reports the following are the proposed terms under which the Central Government is willing to negotiate peace:—

1.—The cancellation of the independence of Yunnan, Kweichow and Kuangsi.
2.—The withdrawal of all insurgent troops to their original localities.

3.—The disbandment of all newly enlisted rebel troops.
4.—The preservation of order in the three rebel provinces.

5.—The despatch of one or two delegates from each of the three provinces to Peking to discuss terms.—Reuter.

Chêngtu, March 23. The rebels continue stubbornly to resist the advance of the Government troops under General Tsao Kun in southern Szechuan, where they still hold Kiangmen and seven Hsien southward of that town.

It is reliably reported that the conduct of the Szechuan troops among the people is much better than that of the troops under General Tsao Kun.

Loles are causing much trouble at Ningyuanfu, otherwise there are no robber disturbances there now. The conditions at Wenkiang, Chongchingchow, Pishien, Kuanhsien and Penghsien are still unsettled.

Chêngtu itself is very quiet.—Reuter.

PLOTS IN SINKIANG.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Harbin, March 24. Kuldja telegrams of the 22nd instant state that news has been received from Urumchi that a party of Yunnan officers had organized a plot to kill the Governor of Urumchi, usurp the power and declare independence.

General Yang, learning about the conspiracy, without disclosing this fact invited these Yunnanese to an official dinner and, under various pretexts, called the officers one by one from the room, when he caused them instantly to be executed. Ten men were thus slain. No disorder followed. At Illi Governor Chen Tao-hsi is a Yunnanese.

There are rumours of troubles brewing at New Suitien but so far no disturbances.

AWAKENING OF EASTERN HONAN.

SOME RESULTS OF RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Kaifeng, March 20. Kueiteh Prefecture, forming the eastern corner of Honan, was until quite recently entirely out of the sphere of things modern. Sleepy and conservative as Honan generally is supposed to be, this part of the province was very far behind, having a language and a people who were best understood by the old-fashioned folk of this part of the country. Here we met an old gentleman who, in the third year of the Republic, had not heard of the passing of the Ching Dynasty.

It was also well known as a rendezvous of robbers, who could slip across the border into either of four provinces at the approach of the Government troops.

These latter spent their time wandering backwards and forwards, at least as long as I have been travelling in this district, in search of the mysterious disturbers of peace and property whom they never met face to face. It took five days in cart from Kaifeng to Yangcheng and three to Kueiteh in fine weather, so that one imagined the distances much greater than they really are.

The awakening has come with the new railway. Although the opposition to its coming was so great that it only touches one hien in the whole 600 li from Kaifeng to Hanchow, the travelling public is enormous. As yet but a construction train is running, but those who took care to have the line built as far as possible from their home cities are now suffering under the inconvenience of toiling to the train. One old gentleman said to me that if they had only understood what the railway meant we might have had things different.

The cost of land has gone up to unheard-of prices. At one place a mere sandy plain is now selling for twenty to twenty-five dollars a mou for peanut land. At the station of one little town where business has been dead ever since the Yellow River left its ancient bed and flowed off northward, I counted at one time 15 cars loaded with bags of peanuts. Temples are being changed into "Hongs" for want of better or bigger buildings. Carloads of eggs are being shipped so that one can scarcely buy one for breakfast.

A place that could be rented three years ago for four tiao a month is hardly obtained for 12 now. Such is the opening of this section for business.

Yuan Shih-kai is taking many of the youths to swell the ranks of his army. As I passed Kueiteh the other day some 400 of these young country lads stood waiting for the train with white labels pinned to their coats, and when the order to march was given they jumped, skipped and hopped in a most unsoldierly fashion in their joy to see something of the big world beyond the confines of the home village.

On the Monday before the feast of lanterns we had such a crowd of old women and country folk who wished to avail themselves of the privilege of burning incense at the Lung Ting temple in Kaifeng that the conductor had to keep the crowd of passengers from trying to climb on the roof of the cars.

Finally he only stopped during the latter part of the journey between the stations to put off the mail as the train had all she could possibly carry. This might be described as a religious revival brought about by the new railway, but I should be inclined to think there was as much curiosity to see the capital city as there was desire to burn incense in the "Lung Ting."

There is no doubt that the railway is opening up the country and as the Chinese in these districts see the improvements already introduced in other parts of China they will no doubt gradually be introduced here also.

The facilities in bringing the troops have also put an end to the robber bands. This will be a great boon to these peaceable farmers, who, given a chance, will gather the wealth of a fertile though populous district.

HSU SHIH-CHANG IN OFFICE.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Peking, March 21. The Mandate totally abandoning the Monarchy will be signed by Hsu Shih-chang, late Secretary of State, who thus resumes office as a consequence of the step now tardily taken by Yuan Shih-kai. Other important personages are mentioned as likely to rejoin the Government.

Anything like a rally to the Government side of the more important men who have been holding aloof on account of their opposition to the Monarchy cannot but have a beneficial effect on the situation.

At the same time the abandonment comes very late in the day, and in view of the extension of the rebellion to Kuangsi the rebel leaders may regard their cause as sufficiently prosperous to warrant perseverance in their object of securing the removal of Yuan.

The disquieting news has reached Peking that Lung Chi-kuang has gone over to the Republicans with his force. Needless to say conjecture as to the attitude of his brother, Lung Chi-kuang, is very busy.

FRUITS OF WENCHOW.

THE ORANGE SEASON AND ITS RICHES.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Wenchow, March 21. The orange season which is now approaching a close has been an exceptionally good one. Whereas last year the total export did not reach more than 10,000 cases (the crop being a comparative failure), scarcely a China Merchants' steamer has left the port since the first week in November without carrying from 2,500 to 4,000 cases and in some weeks the export has reached a total of 7,000 cases.

The oranges are for the most part re-shipped at Shanghai for Tientsin and Peking.

The Wenchow orange is peculiar and quite different from any other Chinese variety. It is large and has a thick loose skin, and with large numbers of people the liking for it is only slowly acquired, but once the taste is acquired it is preferred to any other kind. It may be pointed out that the flavour is reminiscent of the Seville orange, and it is possibly this that makes the Wenchow orange so excellent for making marmalade. Whether this could be carried out on a large scale successfully, remains to be seen.

Another of the Wenchow products that might be utilized is the ginger root which, while produced in considerable quantity, is not exported, yet preserved ginger made from the local product is quite equal to the Canton variety.

Tea and Alum.