

The Problem of China's Language

The New Republic Now Wants a Unified Tongue and Simpler Writing.

By PROF. JEREMIAH W. JENKS.

A CABLE despatch from Peking tells us that the President of the Chinese Republic, with the assistance of China's Board of Education, is taking steps to unify the spoken language of China. China's written language, while it baffles most occidentals, is in many respects the most wonderful that man has known.

Based absolutely upon ideography, and absolute as the radicals are in most instances, yet it is not arbitrary, and I am told by friends of mine who have devoted years to its study that its forcefulness in mind gripping metaphor is so marvellous as to reduce even the most cultured occidental translator to despair. So it has come that a great deal of confusion has arisen through translations from some of the great Chinese classics not always perfectly accomplished, sometimes because of lack of capacity to appreciate the subtlety of the ancient Oriental philosophers, and sometimes because of poverty in power of interpretation after the meaning had been mentally visualized.

But the Chinese written language is one thing, the spoken languages of China another. It is not merely the survival of the vernacular speech of the Min-tze and other aborigines of what was the Middle Kingdom, of what is till the Chinese southland, and the ruder tongue of the children of those septa which sprang into power through the activity of Nur-hachu and his banner-men, not to speak of the tongues of the Tartars and those of the Gokos and the men of the Tibetan plateau, who were kin at one time, possibly, to Pathian and Afghan. China, a vast land, naturally became the repository of diverse tongues, and that they have remained preserved through many centuries is indeed a tribute to the forbearance of the five races, while unquestionably it has had much to do with what is commonly called the "backwardness" of China.

Yuan Shih-k'ai's determination to give the hundreds of millions composing the Chinese people a uniform spoken language is a very important indication of the new national spirit which is now breathing over Cathay. And it should be taken in conjunction with other important steps toward the complete unification and nationalization of the Chinese people.

First, Yuan unified the national government—not without protest, not without arousing enmity and suspicion. It will be recalled how, in the summer of 1913, a howl went up from the camps of Yuan's enemies and into the field went an armed force bent on punishing him for what was characterized as "an act of usurpation." Yuan, who combines in his character many of the traits of our own Andrew Jackson, promptly put his foot down on these malcontents. So that to-day the rebellious element, so called, is restricted to a very few irreconcilables who sulk within tents of exile while the real Chinese patriots are laying the foundations of a stable government at home.

Yuan found China a conglomeration of eighteen rival, disunited provinces, not to speak of vast regions over which the Manchus had exercised more or less nominal control. Yuan, as Resident General in Corea, as Governor first and later as Viceroy ruling Shantung and Chihli, and the visible right hand of the empire in China, had learned the necessity for cooperation and consolidation in effective administration. To his credit it must be said that if his intention has been to give the Chinese people a solid framework upon which they can build up a genuinely national democracy he could not have taken more discreet, more necessary steps than those which have marked his tenure of office as first actual President of the Chinese Republic.

A year ago a howl went up from Yunnan to Heilungkiang because Yuan decreed the abolition of the old provincial boards with their craft, their chicane, their petty tyrannies, their unwillingness to reform. In a most characteristic mandate he told the Chinese people that the alternative lay before them of going forward as one body in support of their own government or of abolishing, piece by piece, its discordant elements. His victory over what might be called the Chinese "state's right" party on that occasion marked the turning point in his career as President.

With one stroke he had broken down the barriers which for centuries kept the people in the Chinese provinces absolutely apart from the Government in Peking. Mandarin extortion and oppression, the swarms of drones which clung to the skirts of succeeding viceroys and lesser officials in the provincial capitals, were stamped as so many great walls, effectually alienating sympathy and support while they were technically supposed to be the very pillars of empire in China.

After the abolition of the provincial boards and barriers came the unification of finance, justice, education. The passing of the provincial educational funds into the hands of the central Government was regarded in several provinces as a very serious grievance.

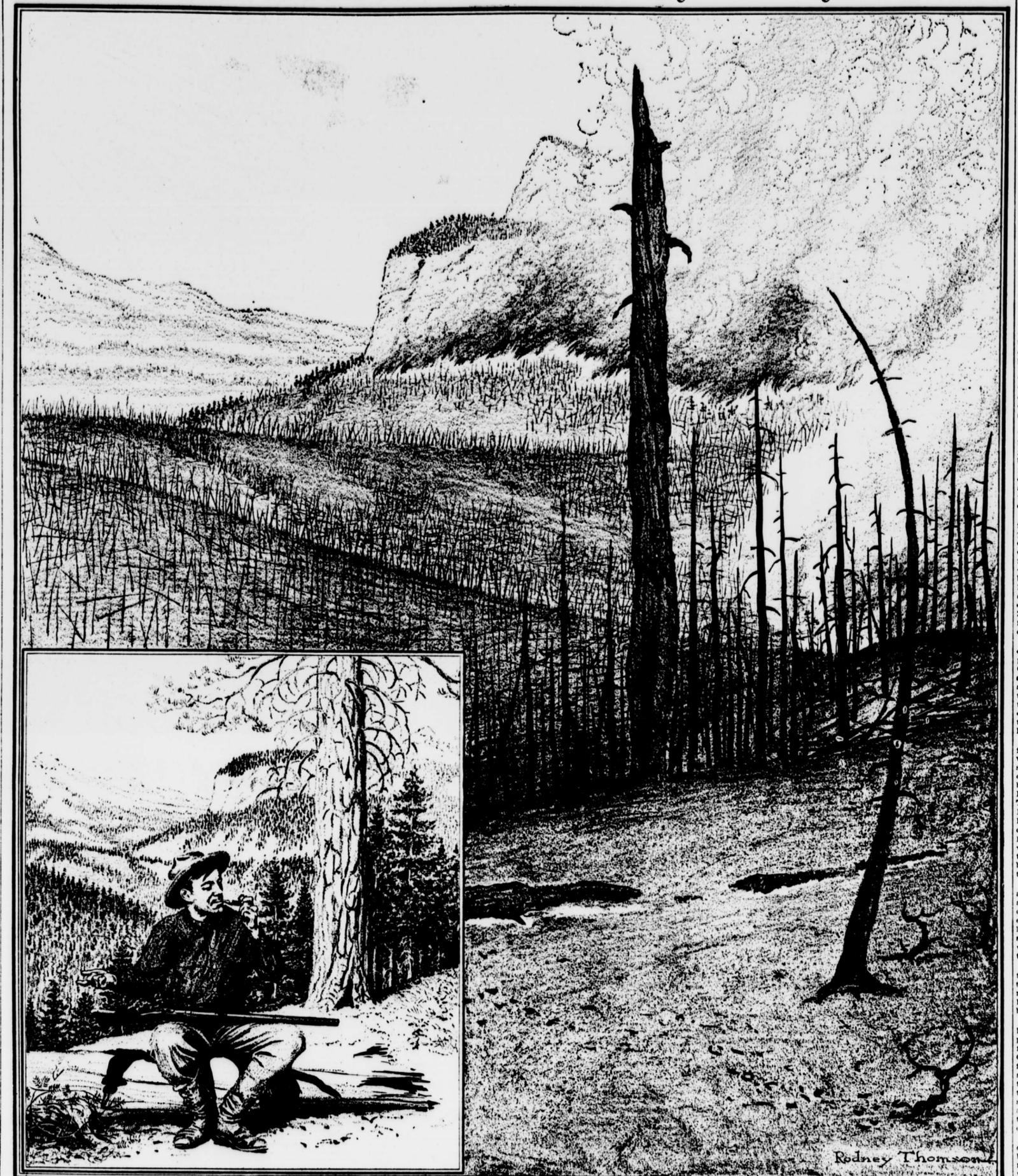
No doubt there were instances of much hardship in the actual operation of Yuan's far reaching decree. This was bound to be so. "You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs" and you cannot make a nation without breaking hearts. Yuan had to smash precedents right and left in the elaboration of his plans for the nationalization of China, and few people who are not Chinese can appreciate what it means to fly in the face of precedent in China.

Often he had to turn some of his old Hanlin companions and dis out from the archives of the past precedents to suit certain occasions and to pacify certain very sincere, although somewhat ultra-conservative, friends. How far he has been supported by his old associates of the Corea, Shantung and Chihli days is a story which yet remains to be told

CONSERVATION - - - Drawn by Rodney Thomson

Huge War in Air Planned by England

Continued from Fifth Page.



As nature made the forests and as man has left them

by those who have been by his side throughout the last two decades.

It is only a few days since a Peking despatch told of the unification of China's army and its armament. This is another point forward in the nationalization of China. Let it not be thought that Yuan or the officials who compose the present Government in China harbor thoughts of war. I am quite sure that they do not. But who can read the record of what recently took place in the diplomatic discussions between Tokio and Peking and not come to the conclusion that an adequate, properly armed and disciplined army is absolutely essential to China?

This fall there will meet in Peking for the first time in the history of the wonderful land of Aladdin a Chinese parliament, national in every sense. Elections are now going on in China preparatory to the assembling of this parliament. And this will represent the first fruits in the political unification and nationalization of China.

Important, however, as this parliament will be as a force for progress in the Far East, as a safeguard to the Chinese people in the preservation of those rights won by their generous sacrifices before and after the Wu-chang rebellion, it cannot be more important in a national sense than the step now promised in this Peking despatch which tells us that China's spoken language is to be made uniform. Language is the key to the thoughts of a people, and a uniform language must be, when all is said

and done, the keystone of unity and nationality among people seeking social, economic, political evolution along lines of republican democracy.

MANY RUSSIAN AMAZONS.

MADAME KOKOVITSEVA, colonel commanding the Sixth Ural Cossack Regiment of the Russian army, has just returned to her regiment at the front. Colonel Kokovitseva has been twice wounded while fighting in East Prussia and received the Cross of St. George and a pension as a reward for her bravery. Madame Kokovitseva's husband served in the Sixth Ural Cossacks during the Russian-Japanese war, and when this present war began she managed to get in the regiment with him.

She is by no means the only woman serving in the Russian army. All told, there are said to be no fewer than five hundred. The majority of them are serving in the Siberian regiments. Alexandra Ephimovna Lagareva was recently rewarded for her bravery. She and six men of a Don Cossack regiment were captured by the Germans and locked up in a church. Alexandra is reported to have led the men in breaking the windows. She killed the sentry with a stone, and not only managed by her strategy to recapture the horses of her little band, but to capture the patrol of eighteen Uhlans and take from them important papers. These documents were delivered by Alexandra to the Russian General in command.

Yet another woman whose bravery has made her conspicuous is "Yellow Martha," so called by her comrades because of her mass of golden hair. During the fighting at Sokatchew the banner bearer was shot down. "Yellow Martha" saw the flag fall and, rushing in, seized it and started back with it. Two Germans pursued her as she ran to regain her regiment and she shot both dead. Through the remainder of the fight she carried the flag.

LOBSTER AND CHICKEN.

OBVIOUSLY the young man who led a girl much younger to a table in an uptown restaurant a few evenings ago was a commuter. Both seemed just a little self-conscious, and apparently very much pleased with each other's society. He was more than ordinarily solicitous to see that she was comfortably located, too, and his attentions were, while gentlemanly in the extreme, marked enough to be noticeable.

Both scanned the menu carefully, and finally the young girl made her selection. He seemed, while the waiter stood at attention, to be trying to persuade her to change her order, but she appeared to insist that her choice should stand. He decided for himself very quickly and gave the order to the attentive waiter, who by this time had become rather restless, as though such a modest order did not hold out

much hope for any considerable tip. They are thus engaged to sit almost anywhere they please. Thousands of these canvas seated chairs are sold every spring.

"For a time I was puzzled to know why it was that some of the park visitors seemed to prefer rubber cushions to the camp stools. They carried them into the park very sedately, some letting them hang on their arms the same as if they were life preservers. Arriving at a favorite spot they dropped the cushion unceremoniously and then dropped on it.

"Finally my curiosity compelled me to ask an air cushion man why he didn't use a camp stool instead, as it was undoubtedly more comfortable.

"It may be more comfortable," answered he, "but it doesn't go so far. All you can do with a camp stool is to bring it into the park. On the other hand, when you have an air cushion, you not only can use it in the park, but you can use it after a rain, when you face wet seats in the open air movies. It's a double role affair."

SITTERS BOOM TRADE.

I ALWAYS notice a boom in the sale of camp stools and rubber cushions as soon as the weather invites a visit to Central Park," said the policeman at the 110th street and Seventh avenue entrance. "You'd think the city would furnish benches enough to seat the taxpayers who frequent the park, but there are far from being enough. In consequence men and women of the vicinity who make daily trips into the green spot carry their sitting down accessories with them.

"It is a common sight to see people carrying their camp stools on their arms. They penetrate to the glades where the park is prettiest and where,

strange to say, the benches are fewest. They are thus engaged to sit almost anywhere they please. Thousands of these canvas seated chairs are sold every spring.

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A POWERFUL WOMAN OFFICIAL.

MISS BERNICE M'COY is said to have the widest official powers of any woman in this country. Miss M'COY has just been elected State Superintendent of Instruction of Idaho and a member of the State Board of Education. This latter position gives the State superintendent a greater power

than that held by any similar officeholder in any other State.

By reason of this Miss M'COY practically controls nearly two million acres of land, school property. When Idaho was admitted to the Union the national Government gave certain sections of land amounting to more than two millions of acres for school endowment purposes. This land is being sold at the rate of \$5,000 acres a year at a minimum of \$10 an acre. The money from the sales goes into the irreducible school endowment fund, only the interest being used. The management of this great sum of money is Miss M'COY's hands. At present it is said to amount to nearly five millions.

This position of State Superintendent of Schools has been held by women ever since Idaho passed the equal suffrage bill in 1896. Only once has a man tried to get the office. He was so badly beaten that nobody now recalls his name. During the fifteen years that the women have held this office they have made irrigation contracts that amounted to three hundred million dollars. They have leased and released these school lands to the amount of five million dollars and never lost a dollar.

Before her election Miss M'COY was the assistant of Miss Grace Shepherd, her immediate predecessor in the office of State Superintendent of Instruction. Miss M'COY is a native of Idaho, a graduate from and later a teacher in the State Normal School at Lewistown.

these airships—Zeppelins and other types—and she has been exceedingly busy adding to their number during the past nine months. Several are known to have been destroyed or seriously damaged, but how many have been constructed to repair the loss or what number of airships Germany has at the present time, is not known.

The latest type of Zeppelin is over six hundred feet in length, it can maintain an average speed of fifty miles an hour, and is capable of voyages exceeding 1,000 miles. It carries a crew of twenty-four with quick firing guns and a ton of explosives.

It is not unusual for Zeppelins to be referred to as gasbags, and there is a wide impression that if a Zeppelin is punctured by a number of steel darts such as an airman carry, or if an incendiary bomb is dropped on it, the result will be a mass of ruins. But in the later type many of these dangers are guarded against.

It is known that Germany has hit upon a substance that is even lighter than aluminum and which is as flexible as steel. In addition this substance offers considerable resistance to bullets. Moreover, a non-inflammable gas in liquid form has been discovered. This gas is generated by permitting the ordinary atmosphere to come in contact with the liquid. Disastrous explosions are obviated and the airship can be filled while aloft.

There is a report that the Germans have invented a fog bomb, which on being released gives rise to a dense fog. This prevents the airship from being located by those below. But it necessarily follows that the airship crew are at the same time deprived of a view of their various objectives, and thus this method of defence has its drawbacks as well as its advantages.

The weakness of the airship is that it can be outdistanced by the aeroplane, and moreover the latter can climb above it. In order to keep on a range of anti-aircraft guns it is necessary to rise to a height of at least 4,000 feet, but at this altitude objects below are very indistinct and the pilots have usually found it necessary to descend to an altitude of 2,000 feet in order to accomplish their purpose. Zeppelins and other big airships will find their greatest menace in the shape of fast aeroplanes up above them.

That these huge airships are not so easily destroyed as is imagined was proved by a recent tussle in the air. One of them paid a visit to England and though attacked and driven off by six aeroplanes it managed to return to its base. The Admiralty reported that it had been damaged, but the extent of the damage was not ascertained, and in any case it succeeded in keeping aloft.

Germany has five important bases for these huge dirigible aircraft, and with Teutonic thoroughness they are situated at strategic points. The headquarters are at Berlin, while other bases are situated at Straßburg, Frankfurt, Posen and Wilhelmshafen. Thus two face the French and one the Russians. The station at Wilhelmshafen has particular interest as being on the property where Count Zeppelin has conducted most of his experiments with his novelty craft. In addition there is a base at Heligoland which has been specially developed as a menace to England.

The airships when they do make an attack will be attended by a fleet of aeroplanes in much the same way as dreadnoughts are attended by destroyers. To these aeroplanes will be allotted the task of covering the airships and engaging hostile aircraft which the allied forces will send out to meet them.

Every precaution has been taken by the British Admiralty and War Office to deal with an attack in force, and it may be taken for granted that they have a few trump cards which have been kept carefully out of sight.

Recent raids by Zeppelins over England were probably designed for the purpose of theatrical effect, or to frighten England. It is queer that the Germans with their ancestral aptitude for philosophy and their profound study of the human mind should continue to labor under the delusion that their airship raids cause pain or suffering to the British people, and so are likely to shake the country's confidence and compel a popular clamor for peace.

If a hundred Zeppelins, capable of discharging 5,000 explosive shells, besides incendiary bombs, were to strike simultaneously over London they would probably massacre at least as many unarmed and peaceful people as were sunk with the Lusitania. And they might possibly burn a good many rows of houses, causing much inconvenience to the inhabitants and storekeepers, besides heavy loss to insurance companies.

Though nobody outside of Germany has been invited to invade, would bring the forces of the Kaiser one single degree nearer to final victory, it might be a terrible thing for the English. But raids carried out by one or two of these expensive and rather risky machines—what purpose would the Germans imagine them to serve?

Much of the success of the Royal Naval Air Service is the result of the foresight and enthusiasm of Winston Churchill, who, from the very day that he took up his portfolio as First Lord of the Admiralty, has been policy requested his extension and his youthful eagerness to refrain from risking his life by making flights in aeroplanes.

Mr. Churchill had been making a practice to run down to the base at Sheerness for the purpose of taking a ride on the airship. His extension to the estuary of the Thames. At one time it was rumored that Mr. Churchill had been taking lessons in the handling of aeroplanes. The rumor was also a very familiar one, and never known to refuse an offer to be taken aloft.