

TARVIA GIVES CHINA'S FORBIDDEN CITY ITS FIRST MODERN HIGHWAY.

By WILLIAM F. MANNIX.

Speaking generally, China, in the Western sense, is without roads. The nation that could find time to put up the Great Wall, the most stupendous mechanical work of all history and compared to which the Pyramids are but mere toys, and to gird some six hundred cities with walls averaging fifteen miles each, a total of nine thousand miles, has apparently never found time nor possessed the earnest inclination to build highways. Enough labor has been wasted to bind the lands with good roads and with lock-canal which would be floodless.

For the larger part the "roads" of this ancient empire are only wide enough for a wheelbarrow, on which the load is generally about five hundred pounds, though in North China some barrows carry one thousand pounds. Outside the treaty-ports the highways are generally mere paths, too narrow even for the passenger-rickshaws, and so the wheelbarrow is the passenger-equipment; and it is not an infrequent sight for a small-footed woman to be balanced by a live pig securely strapped to the other half of the vehicle. A sail is raised, the shafts are lifted, and down the path between the quiet rice or maize fields the comical freightage races, for the sooner the journey is over the better for the one to whose shoulders the shafts are tied.

If you are a guest departing from a Chinese home your host does not say good-by, but "ho-hang" ("go slow"), which is a little commentary on the condition of their roads!

However, there is one venerable exception to the generality of inland highways. And where there is an exception in China it is on a gigantic scale. This one dates from the third century A.D., and is the road extending from Peking to Ching Too, the capital of Szechuan, a distance of one thousand five hundred miles through the most populous plain of China. It is fifteen feet wide, and is paved with large blocks of stone, some being five feet square. It is, of course, in wretched condition—a veritable "cheval de frise!"—most of the way. The ancient cedars stand sentinel, pointing piteously to a return to the public works of yore by tao-tais, mandarins, and vice-roys. The scenery, where this road crosses the Sin Ling range, is on a most stupendous scale. Alpine in its beauty. The engineers cut the road at eight thousand feet, and the snowy peaks towers three thousand feet still higher. If one may judge the religion of the Chinese Buddhists by the condition of this and other roads it must be at a low ebb, for one of the most neglected of the Ten Charities is: "He who makes a piece of good road cuts off one thousand dots on the debtor side of his record with Buddha."

But evidently a new day is dawning for China in the matter of roads, for a new man is at the head of national affairs and, unlike any statesman who has come to the wielding of individual power since the days of Li Hung Chang, the present chief executive of the Republic is not only versed in the science of every-day matters, but is an expert in at least two of the most difficult of the technical sciences, engineering and chemistry.

The writer then describes an interview with the President of China who had some experience in road building when he was Vice-President, after which he was taken to see the famous "Avenue of Peace," which now has "Tarvia" as its top coating.

The Avenue of Sublime Peace is a truly delightful piece of roadway, as President Li had said. Though it is less than three-fifths of a mile in length, and only eighteen feet wide, its curves are the acme of grace and beauty. That the man who is President of China and its leading engineer had carefully supervised the work was very evident from the road itself. So smooth the surface and so even in tone the texture it might at first glance be taken for a winding highway of beautiful concrete or pulverized slate.

"It is the finest road in all China!" the writer offered.

"It is, indeed," agreed President Li, "even though there are some excellent highways in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Macao treated with Tarvia. I got my own idea ten years ago from Hong Kong."

ARREARS OF TAXES AND THEIR COLLECTION.

J. M. PERRIE.

While there is still a difference of opinion as to the method of collecting arrears of taxes which gives the best results, the situation is being courageously fared in most cases, and the problem will no doubt be solved ere long. While there is a variety of ideas as to what form of tax enforcement proceedings brings the best results, it would appear on the whole that the main source of success in dealing with this problem is the making of provision so that tax enforcement proceedings, whatever the nature of these proceedings, must be taken every year. If care is taken to see that prompt action is taken each year to enforce payment of outstanding taxes, arrears of taxes will soon cease to be a factor in connection with the business of the municipality. The allowing of taxes to become in arrears is to a great extent largely a habit; and if action is taken each year, the taxpayer will soon form the habit of paying his taxes promptly as they become due. It might also be pointed out in this connection that the allowing of taxes to become in arrears is no kindness to the taxpayer as he has to pay the penalties that accrue, and, in the end, is usually much worse off than if he had paid his taxes when due. We have some agreeable examples of what has been the result of consistent taking of tax enforcement proceedings year following year. The result in a number of cases has been that the source of trouble has practically been eliminated, and, with this accomplished, it is easily understood what freedom is given the municipality in carrying on its work. The striving to raise sufficient money to meet municipal indebtedness is too often such a worry to municipal officials that it impairs the power of the municipal organization to carry on what might be called the real work of the municipality.

ADVERTISING PAYS.

When times are good, when commodities sell with ease, or when there is such a situation that a company or an industry has no competitors to fear there is a tendency to belittle the need of advertising. Therein lies the danger for the contented. Many old established industries that have not believed in advertising have been undermined by infant, yet well advertised, industries.

To be effective advertising must be kept up, whether the company advertising has anything to sell or not. A case in point is that when the recent sugar shortage was most acute the largest distributor of refined sugar launched a big advertising campaign. It had no sugar to sell, but it wanted to keep its prestige. There is an even better reason, however, for heavy advertising in times when orders are more plentiful than goods to fill them. Suppose a lumber company not advertising at present is able to get two inquiries for every car of lumber it can ship, but that by advertising it can get six or eight inquiries for each car it produces. The increased number of inquiries developed as a result of this advertising makes it possible for the company to select the very best orders at the best prices and largely increases its gross business and its net income. Instead of two orders and possibly two ranges of price to select from the company may have six or eight orders and an equal number of price ranges to select from. Is that not worth advertising for? Milk is good — but cream is much better.—American Lumberman.

Honorable G. C. Robertson, Labor Representative, in the Government, stated in the Senate that an arrangement had been completed by the United States Department of Labor and the Canadian Department of Immigration and Colonization for the interchange of farm laborers. Several thousand have already entered the Canadian West under this arrangement.

After viewing the Swan Lake drive (from which as charming a prospect as any in the world is presented), the Engineer-President took the writer to the northern court of the immense Presidential Palace—the "White House" of China—and showed him similar improvements in progress there. Chinese mechanics and laborers were applying a second coat of "Tarvia-B" to an age-worn surface of gray brick, such as was used so largely in the construction of the fancier portions of the Great Wall. This particular piece of work is being done at the expense of President Li; that is, he is supplying the Tarvia gratis and the National Board of Works is applying it.