

claimed they were going to close to foreign vessels. I believe that the great powers, including Canada, announced that they would retain their freedom of action to deal with any incident that might occur.

At the same time Canada warned interested shipping companies that if their vessels were trading in these waters they might expect attack by Chinese national forces or Chinese air forces which might try to intercept their vessels as they were moving into or out of the ports in question. A little later, I believe December 20 was the exact date, the announcement was made that these waters would be mined and warnings were sent out, certainly to United States vessels, that such action was taking place.

A Canadian ship, the *Lake Canim* which I have mentioned, owned and operated by the Western Canada Steamship Company of Vancouver under the command of Captain J. Wright, was in Far Eastern waters. She had been to Japan and then had been ordered to proceed to Hong Kong. According to a statement by the president of the company, Mr. J. Racine, she was instructed to take on a cargo in Hong Kong and to proceed to Shanghai, one of the ports designated by the Chinese national government as being closed. I believe that the crew of the ship took objection to embarking on the voyage, but the voyage was carried out, the so-called blockade was run successfully, the cargo was delivered at Shanghai and the *Lake Canim* returned to Hong Kong.

She then took on a second cargo and again was instructed to proceed to Shanghai. When she came near to the entrance of the river leading up to Shanghai she ran into trouble. She was shelled by a Chinese gunboat, according to press dispatches. She ran aground and only just managed to get off before the Chinese war vessel came. After a third attempt she had to abandon her efforts to reach Shanghai. She was chased away by a Chinese gunboat and had to land her cargo some 400 miles to the north of Shanghai at Tsingtao, after which she proceeded to Hong Kong where she went into drydock.

On January 27 of this year a letter was published in the *Victoria Daily Colonist* written by Mr. H. Mobsby, the engineer on that vessel. He describes some of the experiences undergone by this ship in attempting to run the blockade at Shanghai. I shall read this letter because it contains a graphic description of this vessel's experiences. He says:

So far we have tried to run for it twice. The first time it was seven a.m. with a heavy rain and mist. We were about two and a half to three miles past the gunboat—apparently we caught them asleep at the radar apparatus—when the weather cleared and he saw us.

*The Address—Mr. Pearkes*

He (the gunboat) straddled us with a couple of shells, so we had to stop and return to anchor outside the three-mile limit.

His placing of the shells was perfect and the next one, I am sure, would have popped us.

On our next attempt, it was 3 a.m. with heavy fog, we went into the darkness with all lights blacked out, even the running lights.

This time we went aground four miles up the channel. He—

That is the Chinese gunboat.

—must have spotted us, for his searchlight began working as we were making a frantic effort to get free of the mud bank . . .

Then a little later, describing the third attempt, he said:

. . . we have real opposition, a destroyer, roughly 35 knots and armed to the teeth . . . blocking the narrow channel. Besides this he has the usual naval large-screen radar, so it would be foolish to attempt it.

It was then that the *Lake Canim* turned around and delivered her cargo at another port. This cargo, I understand, was of considerable value, consisting mainly of chemicals. Apparently there were no Lloyd's surveyors at Hong Kong at the time; therefore Lloyd's did not pass on either the nature or the storage of that cargo. With respect to the reaction of the crew Mr. Mobsby writes:

Then when . . . the news came through, destination for cargo was Shanghai, everyone exploded and asked to be paid off and sent home. However, same was refused . . . We were politely informed that our agreement was for one year, and to break it at this time would mean three to six months in jail. Consequently, here we are at the mouth of the Yangtze.

I have been shown letters from other members of the crew of this vessel which also indicate that the crew very much disliked the idea of going into what they described as a war zone, where they would have to run abnormal risks, in order to deliver their cargo at a port which the Chinese nationalist government had declared closed and as to which the Canadian government had advised all concerned that if they entered those waters they were liable to be intercepted by hostile air and naval craft, and also that mines had been laid.

We have all kinds of regulations to protect the man working in a factory, but here were men who had signed on for a sea cruise for a year. They were prepared to run all the normal marine risks which might be described as acts of God, such as hurricanes and tempests, in the course of their normal duties. Suddenly, without being asked to volunteer and without their consent, they were told they must enter a zone in which they would experience exceptional dangers because of the hostile attitude of the nationalist government. It does seem to me these seafaring men, who are required to sign on for a year and who may be punished with