

# TROUBLE BETWEEN FARMERS FIRST STEP TOWARDS WAR

N. W. Rowell, K.C., Tells Canadian Club of Present Manchurian Trouble—Fought on Water—Back of Situation Lies Hostility Over Railway Lines of Russia and Japan

"Subsequent to my return from the far east two years ago I referred to the Manchurian problem as 'the most acute, most complicated, most difficult of solution and the most menacing to the peace of Asia of any Pacific problem,'" said N. W. Rowell, K.C., in speaking to the Canadian club. "You ask what are the factors in the situation which make it so difficult and so menacing?"

"About 25,000,000 of the province are Chinese and 1,000,000 are Japanese citizens. Of the 1,000,000 Japanese citizens about 800,000 are of Korean race. The men of Japanese race have not settled upon the land, but are principally government officials, railway employees, traders, police and soldiers. In general the character of Manchuria reminds one of our western prairie provinces and it has been referred to as one of the granaries of the world."

"From the Manchurian conquest until 1907 Manchuria was governed by a Tartar general responsible to the emperor, but its government was largely independent of the rest of China. In 1907 it was declared to be an integral portion of the Chinese empire. And all the treaties under which Japan and Russia claim rights in Manchuria are based upon the government of these countries respectively. All rights, therefore, claimed by Japan and Russia in Manchuria are based upon treaties made with China."

"Japan's first political interest in Manchuria arose out of the treaty of Shimonsu, made in 1895 at the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese war. By this treaty China ceded to Japan the Liaotung peninsula, the most southerly portion of Manchuria. Before the treaty was ratified, Russia, Germany and France made such representations to Japan that Japan was induced to retrocede the peninsula to China and received in return a moderate increase in the indemnity payable by China under the treaty of peace."

**Railway Caused Trouble**

"In 1896, when Li Hung Chang visited Russia on the occasion of the coronation of the Russian emperor, the Russian government concluded a treaty in the nature of an alliance between Russia and China to protect their respective interests and rights against Japan. Manchuria projects into Siberia much as the state of Maine projects into eastern Canada, and the most direct route from Moscow to Vladivostok is through Manchuria, just as the most direct route from Montreal to St. John is through the state of Maine. Accordingly, the Russian government asked as part of the secret treaty of alliance that it should have the right in the construction of its trans-Siberian railway to build it through Manchuria. This right was reluctantly conceded by Li Hung Chang, not to Russia, but to a corporation organized and financed by the Russian government. In 1896, by a further treaty or agreement between Russia and China, Russia obtained a lease of the Liaotung peninsula for 25 years, with certain rights of renewal. She also obtained by the same treaty, the right to fortify Port Arthur and use it as a naval base and to build a line of railway from Harbin to Port Arthur. This enabled Russia to construct a connection between her naval base and Moscow. Russia constructed the railway south to Port Arthur and strongly fortified Port Arthur."

"Japan looked upon these developments in Manchuria as a threat to her national life, and this was the real cause of the Russo-Japanese war. By the treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, which brought the war to an end, Russia transferred to Japan, subject to the consent of China, the lease of the Liaotung peninsula and

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"Japan organized the South Manchurian railway to take over control of the railways thus acquired from Russia and the railway from Mukden to Antung. Since that date Japan has expended no less than \$1,000,000,000 in developing her interests in Manchuria."

"Describing the South Manchurian railway, Mr. Rowell said it was one of the most efficient and profitable in the world, under normal conditions. He outlined Japan's 1915 demands on China, which included an extension to 99 years of the Lieotung peninsula, the most southerly portion of Manchuria, and that Japanese subjects should be entitled to lease lands for business, industry and agriculture."

"This treaty was signed after Japan delivered an ultimatum."

**Japanese Contentions**

"Japan contends that she staked her national existence and poured forth blood and treasure without stint to drive Russia out of Manchuria, and that, by so doing, she saved Manchuria for China and herself; that she took over Russian rights with the consent of China, and that rights she so acquired, including further rights obtained under the treaty of 1915, she intends to maintain," Mr. Rowell said. "Japan further contends that Manchuria is her first line of defence against Russian aggression and that she is not prepared to surrender this line of defence, and that it is essential to her economic life to maintain her present position in Manchuria. She points out that, with a population increasing at the rate of approximately 1,000,000 a year, and with most countries bordering on the Pacific refusing to receive Japanese immigrants, the only way she can deal with her population problem is to induce them to immigrate to her country. To do this she needs raw materials, including food, and a market for her products. Manchuria, she says, supplies her with both."

"Japan further contends that China has violated her treaties with Japan by building lines of railway parallel to the South Manchurian railway and seriously interfering with the traffic on the route, by refusing Japanese subjects the right to lease lands in Manchuria and by failing to protect the lives and property of Japanese citizens in Manchuria."

**The Chinese Claim**

"Chinese contentions were that Manchuria is an integral part of China, with all rights of sovereignty vested in China, that it is her first line of defence against Russia and Japan, that the 1915 treaty was secured by duress and that she declines to recognize its validity, and China further charges that Japan is exercising acts of sovereignty outside the peninsula and railway zone."

Japan, Mr. Rowell points out, denies the right of any nation to repudiate a treaty on the grounds of duress.

"China does not admit that she is violating her agreements with Japan in the construction of railways within Manchuria. She contends that these railways are essential to provide transportation facilities to her citizens in Manchuria to connect Manchuria with China proper through the Mukden-Pientsin Railway, and also as a means of conveying her troops from one part of Manchuria to another should occasion arise."

"The dispute reminds one somewhat of the controversy in our western Canada over the monopoly rights of the C.P.R., although China does not admit that the treaty gives Japan any monopoly right."

"China protested against the 1915 treaty at the Paris peace conference in 1919 and the Washington conference in 1921, but the powers took no action," said Mr. Rowell. "China demanded the retrocession of the Lieotung peninsula in 1922 when the original lease expired, on the grounds that the 1915 treaty was not binding. The speaker then outlined the situation in Russia, with Russia in a 1924 treaty declaring the Chinese Eastern Railway a purely commercial enterprise, and China having the right to eventually take over the line, although in the interval a Russian was to manage it with a board composed of an equal number of Russians and Chinese. In 1929 China expelled the general manager, causing an invasion by Russian troops which brought Russia again into control."

"Russia, therefore, is still in control of the Chinese Eastern Railway, which runs east and west across Northern Manchuria, and of the railway running south from Harbin to Changchun, which connects with the South Manchurian Railway," he said. "Russia has most important trade interests in Northern Manchuria, particularly outer Mongolia."

"To sum up the situation, China possesses sovereign rights over Manchuria, but both Japan and Russia, more particularly Japan, have very large interests there."

**Farmers Start It**

A clash between Korean and Chinese farmers over water early this summer brought intervention by police and soldiers of both countries and was the commencement of serious trouble this year, the speaker pointed out. Subsequently Koreans attacked the Chinese in Korea, 100 were killed and millions of dollars damage done to Chinese property. China demanded redress and Japanese demands were boycotted.

"An event which further seriously aggravated the relations between the two countries was the shooting in Mongolia of Captain Naumov of the Japanese general staff and two companions," he said. "It is claimed that they were travelling as tourists or persons investigating the position. China, however, has the opinion of the Japanese army to know the feeling that would be aroused by this shooting."

"All these matters were under diplomatic negotiation between China and Japan, and both governments appeared to be anxious to reach an amicable settlement."

"The final act which led to the present military situation was the destruction of part of the tracks of the South Manchurian railway just south of Mukden on the evening of September 18. It is claimed by Japan that the tracks were blown up by Chinese soldiers in the Mukden army and that this was but the culmination of a series of acts of sabotage on the railway. The officers in charge of the military operations in the Japanese general staff and two companions," he said. "It is claimed that they were travelling as tourists or persons investigating the position. China, however, has the opinion of the Japanese army to know the feeling that would be aroused by this shooting."

"This was followed by the dispatch of the Chinese forces to the occupation of Changchun and Kirin. Within a few hours after the original attack the Japanese were in control of the principal cities served by the South Manchurian railway."

"China on September 19 brought the matter to the attention of the League of Nations and appeals for its intervention. Since that date Japan has extended her operations so as to occupy Taitshar, capital of the northerly province of Manchuria, and has defeated the Chinese forces stationed there on the grounds that they were menacing her railways."

"It was the crossing of the Chinese Eastern Railway by the capture of Taitshar that led to the exchange of diplomatic notes between Russia and Japan."

China or Japan, either party to the dispute would be bound not to go to war with the party which complies with the recommendations of the council. "It is Article 16 of the covenant which provides for sanctions. In this article, if any member resort to war in disregard of its covenant under Article 15, it shall be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the league. All members are then bound immediately to sever all trade, financial and personal relations with the offending member."

"All the political disputes, and there have been many, which have so far come before the league have been settled under Article 11. Every one must earnestly hope that the present dispute will not be an exception. We in Canada are friends of both Japan and China and it is the earnest desire of all Canadians to maintain that friendship."

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"A Festival of Happy Days" will be acted by pupils of Roden public school at a Christmas entertainment to be held at Danforth Technical school at 8 p.m. on Friday."

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**Drawbacks to Settlement**

Discussing the desire of Chinese people to abolish what they term unequal treaties, Mr. Rowell said China is attempting to bring about, in a few years, a complete revolution of standards. Lack of a strong central government hindered this, Japan, he said, had not developed parliamentary government to its fullest extent and the army and navy claim they are responsible only to the emperor.

"This was well illustrated by the protest made by the navy against Japan's signature to the London naval treaty, which led to prolonged controversy in Japan on the question of ratification," he said. "Public opinion in Japan was behind the government and they finally succeeded in obtaining ratification. That was a real triumph for the government."

"But the information one gets from the Japanese press lends one to conclude that the military operations in Manchuria on Sept. 18 were instituted on the initiative of the army and not at the direction of with the sanction of the minister of foreign affairs. Public opinion appears to be behind the army."

"The situation would appear to be: Japan claims that she has serious grievances against China and is seeking to defend and protect her rights and interests by military operations. China claims that she has serious grievances against Japan and, whether with official government approval or not, the Chinese people are seeking to secure redress for those grievances by an organized boycott."

"The whole situation involves an issue larger and more important than the merits of the immediate dispute."

"It is the issue as to whether nations, members of the League of Nations, having disputes between them such as exist between China and Japan, are entitled to settle them by force or boycott rather than by appeal to the league."

"Not only are China and Japan members of the league, but they have both signed the Kellogg-Briand pact and are parties to the 1265-power treaty."

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