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China Medical
Commission

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Chungking July 2, 1946

Dear Ray:

We have just arrived from Chengtu where we spent a most interesting week. Exec. Headquarters gave us a plane which from Peiping to Chengtu took only 7 hrs. The only other passenger was a Chinese general who got on by a mistake that he didn't discover till we were about 4 hours on our way; he was about 1000 miles out of his way!

We were put up by a Canadian Methodist missionary whose house was roomy and whose food excellent and company agreeable. Chengtu was Forkner's headquarters; it was where the PUMC nurses kept on through the war; it was where the Cheeloo Med. School and the National Central of Nanking crowded in on a none too solid medical school of the West China Union University. The MS had made a grant for an outpatient building there in 1937 or 38. Also in Chengtu is a former graduate of the PUMC C. C. Chen who is now a trustee and the head of Public Health in the province and I think one of the best of the younger Chinese medical men. So we had plenty to do.

Here in Chungking we shall see C. U. Lee who is another of the graduates of the PUMC worth watching as a possible director, as is the case with C. C. Chen. Chungking had three emigre schools but all have returned - Shanghai National, Kweiyang and Changsha (Yale in China). C. U. Lee was dean of Kweiyang and went back with it when that school returned. But I won't go further with the complexities of the various schools. We are getting a clear idea of the role of mission hospitals and missionary medical schools and I think we shall have some useful suggestions for the board on which Ballou serves. Indeed Canton and

Mukden will be the only missionary medical schools we could have visited which we will not have seen.

We keep well and if any friction exists in this "Commission" of three I don't know what it could be. Loucks and Burwell are both good natured, adaptable and pleasant traveling companions. This is the more important for the last quarter of the visit which is already the hottest, the dirtiest and the least certain. We shall be doing very well to get out of Chungking on time Friday, and no one could claim that at this temperature when a breeze blows at all it comes from anything more refreshing than a tank of night soil or a smoking stove - direct. Chungking grew from 250000 to 900000 during the war and the resultant confusion outstrips description.

The best word I can find for China is incessant. And the strongest impression I've had is of the rapidity of change in the past 40 years. The missionaries all agree that China has changed to a degree no one could have possibly imagined in that period. Formerly the Chinese neither cared nor knew what was going on outside China and they were perfectly content with what they had. They could think in terms of provinces - but not at all outside China. Now it is completely different and if another country has something better the Chinese want it. Even in point of administrative corruption they are probably better than they were and the province of Szechuan illustrates the measure of change in being no longer the happy hunting ground of eight or ten war lords, but a well administered province.

The Communist-Kuomintang struggle is a good deal more complicated than neat little generalities can convey or explain. We in the U.S. think the opposite of Communism is Capitalism but seems to me that

here in China Communism opposes Feudalism. And that puts American aid in combatting Chinese Communism into some odd attitudes and curious commitments. And the more so when the use of firearms and the exploitation of public office for personal gain form undeniably a part of governmental tradition in this country. If the Chinese Communists could be safely assumed to be able to survive success and the acquisition of power and still retain their devotion to the public welfare once they were in power I would think they had a good deal to commend them. But civil war offers sure losses as against questionable gains and there's the rub.

Our money troubles have been nil. For convenience we let Bowen pay for the expenses of our living at the Ying Compound and be reimbursed for these. The Army flew us at no cost to Chengtu and the Chinese Aviation Corp. (CNAC) charges are not seriously high. Money doesn't burn in our pockets but a money belt does produce equatorial temperatures.

Lin I think that the Directorship needs settling fairly promptly. I've been explicit in stating to Y. T. Tsur and C. C. Chen my conviction that J. H. Lin is not the best solution - as I did to Hu Shih. I've suggested no candidate and I think that the choice is safe enough for the Trustees to make it on their own responsibility. The political situation so directly affects the economic and that in turn so directly controls the cost of living, exchange, and in effect what U.S. dollars will buy in China, that I hope for some decisive developments in political matters here before any action is presented or recommended to the R. F. But even if no clarification of the political situation takes place before September I would still think that the RF should decide what should be given to the CMB and give the PUMC trustees at last a clear-cut basis on which

to proceed. And I am satisfied that the visit we are making furnishes a valuable basis, in reality as well as in appearances, for coming to such a decision. Obviously the situation is complicated and involved but equally certain is our considerable gain in familiarity with the problems and the values and the personalities involved.

There is one aspect of IHD work to which you could, I think, give a wisely sympathetic ear if GKS raises it. The living expenses of IHD staff in China are seriously higher than ever before. Changes in U.S. income tax legislation make a leave to the U.S. very costly indeed since full U. S. income tax is levied for the calendar year in which leave is taken. I could not recommend or even defend the present living standard of public health officers in China who are on American salaries. It has always seemed senseless to spend so much money on schools of public health to give prolonged education to men for a form of medical practice that is neither well paid nor stable. Buying men's time at the bottom of the market handicaps the status of public health and the added burden of working in an inflated country on a fixed and not rising salary creates a situation which could easily become intolerable. These impressions come in the main from seeing what Mrs. Balfour in Shanghai and Dr. Paul in Nanking were up against. I have nothing specific to recommend except the realization that with an exchange rate fixed in an inflating currency a loyal staff member will sacrifice a great deal before serving notice that he can go no further.

Since starting this letter we have been able to get tickets for Nanking - two for Sunday 1 for Monday. TBA's cable got me in touch with the UNRRA man in Shanghai - J. Franklin Ray who wired me he hoped to get transportation around July 15. If that comes off we shall be

well away for it is reported that there are 10000 civilians, emigres,
etc. waiting for passage from China to the U.S.

Good luck.

A. G.