

of the provisions of the bill, they declare, are of a far-reaching nature and are in complete contravention of the Japanese constitution. The passage of the bill, it is said, would deprive the Japanese nation of every vestige of the pseudo-constitutional government which has existed in the country during the last fifty years. The bitter criticisms which the bill has met every time it has come up for discussion and the desperate efforts which are now being made to block its passage seem to indicate that the Japanese people are by no means anxious to forfeit their personal rights and to submit their lives and liberty to the whims of the Army and Navy. Another argument submitted in opposition to the measure is that, in attempting to force the people to entrust to the Government their lives, property and everything else that may be used for the defence of the nation, patriotism and the national spirit are completely disregarded while an attempt is being made to invalidate the Imperial prerogatives. The fear of control by the Army is also evidenced in the words of one of the interpellators in the Lower House, who declared, "While we would not hesitate to entrust the enforcement of the act to the Konoye cabinet, nobody can tell whether a bad cabinet will never appear." Such a government, he said, "will harass the people with the far-reaching provisions of the Mobilization Act." The Cabinet had given the nation to understand that the "China Incident" was not to be regarded as a war, and that, therefore, there was no likelihood of the bill being put into force during the present hostilities, but that it was merely a preparatory measure that would enable the complete mobilization of the nation's resources in the case of a war. "As the general outlines of the powers which the Government will have to wield in the event of a war of this kind can be predicted on the whole," declared Prince Konoye in explaining the necessity for the Government's policy, "they are to be decided beforehand with the approval of the Diet, leaving necessary emergency measures to be taken in accordance with developments of the war from moment to moment within the scope of the

law enacted by the Diet". According to the latest reports, however, the opinion is said to be gaining ground in Japan that, contrary to the Government's promises, the National Mobilization Bill will be invoked as soon as it is passed. The anxiety of the civilian leaders is, therefore, not surprising. The danger of the Army and Navy cliques seizing complete control and establishing a totalitarian state which will be subservient to the wishes of the two services is all too apparent. Whether or not the Seiyukai and Minseito will be able to block the passage of the National Mobilization Bill is a question. According to informed quarters in Tokyo, although further strong criticism and stormy scenes are expected in connection with the passage of the bill, the pressure of the prevailing situation, arising out of the complexities of the China Incident, is so great that the Lower House will not be able to reject it. It is feared that the political parties have lost their power to influence the fate of the bill and that it will be passed about March 20, with some modifications, and then sent to the House of Peers, which is also expected to be strongly critical, but eventually to approve of it. This seems to be borne out by the fact that individual members of the Cabinet are reported to have been undeterred by the opposition displayed in the Diet in connection with the National Mobilization Bill and to have proposed to the major political parties the creation of a single national party. It is understood that if the undertaking succeeds, the Premier, Prince Konoye, will be asked to become President of the Party. Should, however, by any chance, the political parties be able to defeat the bill, there may be serious repercussions, as there is the possibility that the Army, which has been accustomed to having things very much its own way, may take the law into its own hands and put through its wishes by force. Whatever the outcome, Japan seems due for great political changes—changes that may completely alter her entire national structure. There seems little doubt that the outcome of the next few weeks will have far-reaching effects on the history of East Asia.

China Lacks Propaganda Abroad

IN no spirit of wilful criticism, but intended only as a stimulant to constructive discussion of a vital topic seemingly long neglected, we wish to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to the question of China's efforts in securing a "good press" abroad during the current Sino-Japanese hostilities.

Two events of recent occurrence have prompted the writing of this article. First has been the discovery in American and British papers and news magazines, to hand by the latest mail, of news and views not in conformity with the true situation and therefore derogatory to China's cause. The second was the new appointment, as reported by Kuo Min News Agency, of Hollington Tong to the post of Deputy Director of the Central Publicity Department.

It is understood on good authority that the express duties of Mr. Tong, a veteran newspaperman formerly of

Shanghai, are to handle all matters exclusively connected with international publicity, whereas previously the functions of dealing with this delicately technical phase of propaganda were invested in diverse hands with neither well-drafted programs nor close coordination.

China's inactivity, even after the outbreak of hostilities in North China last July, in developing an international news network has been based largely on the self-satisfied assumption that China, being morally unimpeachable in the undeclared war, need not worry about unfavorable foreign reactions. To a certain extent, such reasoning is unquestionable. Conversely, it is on the same moral ground that the *Christian Science Monitor*, writing on Japan's "Poor Press", says: "In short, it is not so much the technical defects of Japan's propaganda as the moral defects of Japan's policy that account for

the predominantly critical reaction in America and Great Britain."

But that is not a conclusive point. What matters more to neutrals abroad is not so much the question of right or wrong, but one of whether the victim nation of aggression deserves what is meted out to her, once war has been started. Human sympathy, being a funny thing, sometimes, for example, goes to the court that snatches a child away from its mother and places it in the care of an institution, on the materialistic ground of the unfitness of the mother to bring her child up.

So, coming back to China's case, indeed damaging were reports in some of the recently received American and British newspapers, to the effect that before the Chinese troops withdrew from Tsingtao and Tsinan they had looted and then burned down practically every Japanese home in the two cities. Another story made the sweeping generalization that the confusion, which reigned in every Chinese town in the rear had in nine cases out of ten been caused not so much by the direct attacks of advancing Japanese troops as by the extensive looting indulged in by the defending Chinese soldiers themselves.

Both stories were, needless to say, ridiculously incorrect. We still remember both foreign and Japanese reports emanating from Tsingtao and Tsinan following Japanese occupation which said that practically every Japanese home had, quite contrary to expectations, been left intact and untouched. As to the story about looting by Chinese troops, it must have been based on Japanese sources or written by newly arrived correspondents who, making their headquarters in Shanghai, recalled the wild stories circulated about the undisciplined soldiery during the period of Chinese civil wars. Jack Belden of the United Press, who is the only foreign newspaperman to have followed consistently the Chinese troops in the North for several months, for example, has not noticed one single case of looting by Chinese troops. There might have been isolated cases of looting elsewhere, which is unavoidable in times of war, but the sweeping generalizations made in the report we mentioned savor of sensationalism.

That the adverse effect of such misleading reports on the foreign public mind must have been considerable is without doubt. Small wonder that a poll conducted by the American Newspaper Institute of Public Opinion some time in February showed that a larger percentage of the readers had waived their sympathy for China in the war.

Besides, following the fall of Nanking, interest in the Sino-Japanese War has, so far as newspaper front page headlines abroad are concerned, practically dwindled to zero. The majority of the foreign war correspondents covering the hostilities during the initial stages, except those originally permanently stationed in China, have gone home or shifted their headquarters elsewhere.

The international publicity situation, from China's own standpoint at least, has become such that foreign correspondents in China are not the only ones to be depended upon for news dissemination abroad and that it is all the more necessary for the Chinese themselves to exert greater efforts in presenting China's case. If any such efforts have been made, we have, with regret, not heard of them.

Up to now this phase of work has been largely left in the hands of China's diplomatic establishments in foreign lands, but even then, though proposals to that effect had been made as long ago as 1936, we have not known of any press attachés having been appointed to Chinese embassies and legations nor the designation of definite members of their staffs to handle the work.

It is true that several groups of "goodwill envoys" have been sent abroad, but their specific mission lies elsewhere. If they have paid any attention to international press problems, it has been done as a sideline.

We hope it would not be construed as too critical of the government if we were to mention that even up to the present there is no organized effort being made abroad for this purpose. China has not sent her own correspondents to the capitals of the leading Powers. Neither has she, with the absence of newspapermen in their midst, organized from among the personnel of the embassies and legations a Press Information Committee. So far, what little propaganda that has appeared in print abroad has been the haphazard work of Chinese students there.

Not many weeks ago, a proposal was made by the International Peace Promotion Federation that the Chinese Government immediately send efficient personnel abroad to organize information bureaux to keep the foreign public informed of events in China. Whether this proposal has been acted upon by the Chinese authorities is not known.

We do know, however, that while hostilities were still in progress in the Shanghai area the highest Chinese authorities had approved plans submitted by a semi-official news agency to send a number of correspondents abroad. But it is beyond comprehension why the plan has not yet been carried out.

What Col. Norman G. Thwaites, the renowned British war correspondent, says to the effect that "propaganda is as important as ammunition in times of war" may be over-emphasizing the efficacy of this new weapon of the 20th Century. But that it occupies a significant place in the war machinery, there is no doubt.

It is hoped, therefore, that the new appointee in charge of international publicity for China will give due consideration to these problems and will with his proven qualifications and experience, work out in time a program that may make up for lost ground.