

seen working on street pavements that have been long left in a dilapidated condition. Though considerable time will be required to restore Shanghai to an appearance reminiscent of its golden days, ultimate success in this direction can be confidently expected. Thirdly, the line of communication between Nantao and the rest of Shanghai bids fair to be resumed in the very near future. A number of buses taken over from the Japanese will be made available to the public as soon as necessary adjustments are completed to bring them to a working condition. Fourthly, Shanghai's water front is also undergoing a steady process of reconstruction, and ocean liners will soon be able to enjoy docking facilities that once made Shanghai one of the leading ports of the world. Fifthly, both foreign and Chinese enterprises are being rapidly returned to the lawful owners, and they may shortly resume operation to relieve unemployment which has caused not a little concern to the Government. Finally the order for 1,500,000 piculs of rice placed by the Food Ministry for Shanghai has produced an immediate effect with the steady decline of the price of this staple food. If a reasonable supply could be maintained for the next few months, commodity prices will generally follow a downward trend, with consequent return to economic normalcy. These and other features of renewed activity will surely put Shanghai on the map again.

The Need for Educational Reform

VARIOUS aspects of China's educational problem are discussed in special articles appearing in this issue. For the moment, the attention of educational leaders and students alike is being diverted to questions of more urgent and immediate interest than that of reforms. The Shanghai student body is very much concerned with the plight of its poor members and is pushing ahead with the Student Aid Fund with the approval and support of the general public. The university students also are up in arms and are demanding the re-opening of their schools which have been suspended. However, these are but temporary manifestations resulting from the special circumstances now prevailing. The more serious and vital aspects of youth education must very soon come up for consideration and action, if national recovery is to be as rapid as it should be and the nation is to derive the maximum benefit from the inexhaustible wealth of young talent with which the country abounds. A complete overhauling and streamlining of our educational system along modern lines is imperative. In many respects, our present educational system runs counter to the accepted standards in western countries which have been tested and tried by years of experience. In the first place, in a Chinese school everything is learnt by rote. From arithmetic to history, from Chinese to chemistry, the student is asked to "learn by heart". Nobody bothers to find out whether he *understands* what he learns—it is not even considered important. His head is just crammed full of facts and figures which he is expected to recite parrot fashion. Contrast this with the practise in the west, where learning by rote, with the exception of arithmetic tables, vocabulary, verses of poetry and the like, is *strictly forbidden*. The usual assignment is "Explain in your own words the meaning of the following passage". Immediately the child is stimulated to thinking. He either under-

stands or he does not, as his explanation readily shows. An answer learnt by heart will be marked with a zero. Also, it is an accepted psychological fact that short periods of work with adequate rest periods between bring the best results, whether it be learning or factory work. In the west, there are usually 5 school-days in a week, of which one half day is devoted to sports and physical exercise. About 5 hours per day are spent in schools, including recess periods in the mornings and afternoons. In China, school hours start very early in the morning and end late in the afternoon and for six days a week. Little or no time is devoted to physical exercise. Even in primary schools, there is a long list of homework to be done each night. Is it surprising then that the children's brains are dull and confused and their health as poor as it is? There is no joy in learning—it is just a heavy, dreary grind. There is no time to play, just cramming, cramming, cramming, day after day. Schools like to boast of their so-called "high standard". For instance, a certain primary school was priding itself not long ago on teaching, besides other subjects, four languages,—Chinese, English, French and Japanese, in the first grade! Parents, who view with alarm the strain which is being put on their children, are beginning to protest. Some have even taken their children out of school and have hired a tutor for them at home with specific instructions not to overtax the young brains. They are waiting for the competent authorities to institute enlightened reforms.

A Chinese Heroine

A fitting tribute was paid to the young Chinese heroine, Miss Ho Jo-wei, last week, when Lieut.-Gen. Stratemyer, Commanding General of the Army Air Forces in China, conferred on her the Emblem for Meritorious Civilian Service—the second highest civilian decoration conferred by the War Department—in recognition of her courage in refusing to reveal the whereabouts of an American flier, despite the tortures inflicted upon her by the Japanese. In the eyes of the world, Miss Ho may be taken as a symbol of all those Chinese patriots, men and women, young and old, who suffered tortures and even gave their lives for victory, oftentimes when things looked black and victory seemed remote. Only a firm conviction, a sublime faith and a patriotic fervor could have withstood the humiliation and extreme suffering to which she was submitted. The flesh was weak—she tried to commit suicide more than once—but the will was very, very strong. Nothing the Japanese could do to her could make her talk. Lying on her sicked bed, where she is still recovering from the effects of the inhuman treatment she received at the hands of the Japanese, she is a link in the chain of friendship binding two continents—America and China. In the words of the citation accompanying her decoration, her acts of courage "stand as an outstanding example of the perfect coordination between the Chinese and American forces in the prosecution of the war against the Japanese." Millions of women throughout the world worked and suffered for victory, but few could have gone through the mill in the infamous Japanese Bridge House and come through with flying colors!