

THE PRELIMINARY REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

(despatched from Mukden to the Council of the League on April 29th, 1932)

1.

The Commission of Inquiry, appointed in conformity with Paragraph 5 of the Council Resolution of December 10th, arrived in Mukden on April 21st, and is now occupied with its investigations on the spot. Since its arrival in the Far East the Commission has investigated the general conditions prevailing in Japan and China in so far as these may affect its work. It visited Tokyo, Osaka, Shanghai, Nanking, Hankow, Tientsin and Peiping, conferred with members of both Governments and interviewed representatives of many interested groups and classes in both countries. In Peiping it met representatives of the authorities who had been in charge of the Three North-Eastern Provinces prior to September 19th. Since arriving in Mukden the Commission has interviewed, amongst others, the Acting Consul-General of Japan and General Honjo, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese forces in Manchuria.

The declaration of the President of the Council with reference to the Resolution of December 10th, directed the Commission to submit to the Council as soon as possible after its arrival on the spot a Preliminary Report on the existing situation in so far as this affects the fulfilment or otherwise by the Governments of China and Japan of certain undertakings embodied in the Resolution of September 30th, and reiterated in

the Resolution of December 10th. These undertakings are:

(a) that the Japanese Government "will continue as rapidly as possible the withdrawal of its troops into the Railway Zone in proportion as the safety of the lives and property of Japanese nationals is effectively assured."

(b) that the Chinese Government "will assume responsibility for the safety of the lives and property of Japanese nationals outside that zone as the withdrawal of the Japanese troops continues and the Chinese local authorities and police are re-established."

(c) that both Governments "will take all necessary steps to prevent any extension of the scope of the incident or any aggravation of the situation."

The Commission is not yet in a position to submit full information on these three points. It must reserve for a later report the consideration of the undertaking of both parties "to prevent any extension of the scope of the incident or any aggravation of the situation," but as the Council is awaiting an early report on the existing situation in so far as it bears on the undertakings of Japan and China referred to above under (a) and (b), the following information is now transmitted.

2.

Actual situation in Manchuria.

Information regarding the military situation in the Three North-Eastern Provinces has been provided by the Japanese military authorities. It is given under 5 heads, the first three relating to the Japanese troops and other forces co-operating with them, the last two relating to forces opposed to them. Information

with regard to 4) has also been obtained from a Chinese source.

It will be noted that in the classification adopted a new feature appears which was not contemplated by the Council in September last. In the course of the events which are the subject of the present enquiry the local administration was transformed. "Committees for the Preservation of Peace and Order" were first established with Japanese help in the last month of 1931. These were subsequently superseded by an authority which was established on March 9, 1932, as the "Manchoukuo Government". This explanation is necessary in order to account for the use of the expression "Manchoukuo Army" by the Japanese military authorities.

1) Japanese Regular Forces.

On September 18th the number of Japanese troops in the South Manchuria Railway Zone is stated to have been 10,590.

The numbers given for the first part of December are: 4,000 inside and 8,900 outside the South Manchuria Railway Zone, making a total of 12,900.

For the latter part of April the numbers are given as 6,600 inside and 15,800 outside the South Manchuria Railway Zone in the regions of Tsitsihar, the Taonan-Liaoyuan Railway, the Mukden-Shanhaikwan Railway, the Chinese Eastern Railway east of Harbin, and the northern section of the Kirin-Tunhua railway, making a total of 22,400.

2) "Manchoukuo Army"

The troops designated by the Japanese military authorities as the "Manchoukuo Army" are said to have been formed partly of Chinese regular troops stationed in Manchuria before September 19th and subsequently reorganised, and partly of freshly recruited

soldiers. This force has been created with the help of the Japanese military authorities. Many Japanese officers, either retired or still belonging to the Japanese Army, have been engaged as military advisers and their number is increasing. Contracts with some of these officers have been made for one year. A Japanese staff officer has been appointed adviser to the "Department of Defence of the Manchoukuo Government" at Changchun.

These troops are stationed or operating chiefly in the regions of Mukden, Changchun, Taonan, Tsitsihar, Tunhua, and along the Chinese Eastern Railway, particularly on the eastern branch, where they are engaged against forces not recognizing the authority of the "Manchoukuo Government". The total number of the "Manchoukuo Army" is stated to have been 85,000 men at the end of March.

The above number is not reliable owing to the uncertainty of the information regarding these troops at the present time.

3) Local police force.

The number of this force is given as about 119,000 of whom 60,000 are local guards. This police force is stated to be in the main a continuation of that existing before September 18th. Its reorganization is taking place with the help of Japanese officials.

4) Forces opposed to the Japanese troops and the "Manchoukuo Army".

The Commission was informed in Peiping by Marshal Chang Hsiuehliang that his forces outside the Great Wall on September 18, including the non-fighting element numbered 50,000 for Fengtien Province, 80,000 for Kirin Province, and 50,000 for Heilungkiang, making a total of 190,000, of which about 50,000

from Fengtien Province were subsequently withdrawn inside the wall. This would leave 140,000 outside the wall.

The Japanese military authorities give the number of troops now remaining outside the wall as 110,000 of which they state that 60,000 joined the "Manchoukuo Army", 30,000 remained in the north-east of Kirin in opposition to the Japanese troops and to the "Manchoukuo Army" and about 20,000 may have joined the so-called Volunteer Corps. The situation is described by them as the following;

(a) Portions of the former Chinese Army not recognizing the authority of the "Manchoukuo Government";

(1) A force north-east of Harbin, estimated at 30,000 (stated officially by the Chinese to be composed of the Kirin Self-Defence Army under the command of General Li Tu and of the Chinese Eastern Railway guards under the command of General Ting Chiao);

(2) A force under General Li Hai-cheng in the region north-west of Mukden, estimated at 10,000;

(3) Remnants of the 9th Cavalry Brigade (on the north-eastern frontier of Jenol), estimated at 5,000;

(b) Volunteers;

(1) The so-called North-Eastern Army of anti-Japanese volunteers in the western parts of Fengtien Province, mainly south of Chinchow, estimated at between 15,000 and 25,000 men.

(2) The so-called National Volunteer Army of the North-East, under the command of Wu Cha-nsin, mainly operating around Mukden. The present strength of this force, which has had several encounters with the Japanese troops, is unknown.

(3) The Volunteer Army of Jehol.

This comparatively well-disciplined body of some 5,000 men of under the command of Tang Yu-lin, which comprises remnants of the cavalry of Chang Hsuenliang's 1st and 2nd Army, is reported to be active on the border of Jehol and Fengtien provinces;

(4) Several minor Volunteer Corps operating partly in the Shanhaikwan region, partly between Tsinan and Tientsin, where they are in touch with regular forces hostile to the "Manchoukuo Government".

The total strength of these irregular forces under Paragraphs (1) to (4) is said to be about 40,000 men.

5) Bandits.

The bandits, who are not organized primarily for political purposes, appear to have increased in number, due to the disturbed conditions. They are reported by the Japanese to be scattered throughout Manchuria, especially in the part south of the Chinese Eastern Railway. The Japanese estimate their total number as 40,000. In addition to these, a special bandit force of 12,000 north and east of the town of Kirin is said to be co-operating with the Chinese forces north-east of Harbin mentioned under 4) (a) (1).

Armed conflicts between these various forces are frequent. There are bandit raids; attempts of the Japanese soldiers and of the "Manchoukuo" troops to suppress these, and fighting between the various military forces attempting to maintain the new regime and those opposed to it. The result is loss of life, destruction

of property, and general sense of insecurity.

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The Commission purposely refrains from commenting at this stage on the facts and figures above recorded. The Japanese Authorities maintain that they can not at present withdraw their troops without endangering "the safety of the lives and property of their nationals" outside the railway zone. They appear to consider that this withdrawal must depend on the progress of the reorganisation of the troops described as the "Manchoukuo Army". The Chinese Government does not now exercise authority in any parts of Manchuria, and as events have developed recently the practical question of the fulfilment of its responsibility has not arisen. The possible and equitable measures which may restore peace and security and create a reasonable measure of goodwill throughout Manchuria will be considered by the Commission in its final report.

The Commission will visit Changchun next week, and will continue its investigation in other parts of Manchuria.

C E R T I F I C A T E

Statement of Source and Authenticity

I, HAYASHI, Kaoru, Chief of Archives Section, Japanese Foreign Office, hereby certify that the document hereto attached in English consisting of 7 pages and entitled "THE PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS" is an exact and true copy of an official document of the Japanese Foreign Office.

Certified at Tokyo 26 November, 1946.

K. HAYASHI
Signature of Official

Witness: Nagaharu ODO