NOTES AND REVIEWS

CHINA AND OPIUM

That China is determined to stamp out the curse that has meant poverty and degradation to her people since foreigners first began the forcible importation of the drug is again evidenced by the announcement in Chinese papers recently to hand that the Shanghai Opium Combine will be granted no extension of time to dispose of their stock. On March 31 of next year their traffic must stop; and when the year ends, the contract made with England some ten years ago will also expire. China will be practically opium free.

Much has been accomplished during the past ten years by organized effort in weaning the people away from the drug. Propaganda and preaching, huge bonfires with fitting ceremonies, local restriction have all done their part in weakening the hold of the habit on the people. Five years ago, as Governor of Hupel, Li Yuan-hung, now president of China, was active in the destruction of all opium in that province; and the opium fighters are now finding him ready to cooperate with them in seeing the work through.

Anticipating the end of the opium connection with Great Britain next winter, the Chinese government recently communicated with the British minister at Peking requesting that a British envoy be deputed to China to head an investigation into the work and results of the opium suppression campaign in China. At the same time, circulars were sent to all the provinces preparing them for the impending complete extirpation of the opium traffic as follows: (1) All the opium plantations in the land shall be wiped out during a period of three months, from September to November of this year; (2) the trade in opium shall be entirely stopped in a period of four months, from December of this year to March of the next year; and (3) the smoking of opium shall be entirely done away with in a period of three months, from March to June of next year. Bonfires have been frequent since these orders went into effect, the Chihli Opium Prohibition Bureau at Kalgan making perhaps one of the most spectacular affairs. A large quantity of opium was gathered,
together with all the opium-smoking instruments the officials
could lay their hands on, invitations were issued, and a delegate
from the National Opium Prohibition Union was requested to
come as a witness. The acting president, Mr. An Ming, re-
sponded, and the ceremony proceeded in due and thorough order,
lasting from eight in the morning to one in the afternoon, with
the civil governor of Chihli, the military governor of Kalgan,
the police authorities, and citizens from all neighboring sections
an enthusiastic audience. This is typical of scenes being enacted
in many parts of China.

The Shanghai Opium Combine is the only legal surviving dis-
tributor of opium, having secured a license to carry on their
traffic until March 31, 1917, in the provinces of Kwangtung,
Kiangsu and Kiangsi. To their bribe of $16,000,000 for the
privilege of an extension, to their threat of withholding their
extra duty of $1750 per case, the Chinese government has lent a
deaf ear. The opium traffic must go, and as quickly as possible.
The threat of the Combine to stop the payment of the additional
duty, even if it is carried out—which is unlikely—would only
mean a loss to the government of something like $5,000,000.
According to trustworthy information, the Combine can sell
between now and the 31st of March, 1917, three thousand cases
at a valuation of $5,000 per case, which would give the govern-
ment a revenue of $5,000,000 a small sacrifice where the physical
and moral welfare of the country are at stake. And President
Li and his cabinet have lost no time in declaring that there shall
be no compromise.

The death of the late president, Yuan Shih-kai, after
he had formally abandoned the movement for a monarchy,
but before he had yielded to the demand of many of the
people that he resign from the presidency, has been suc-
ceeded by many serious problems of state and also by an
increasing spirit of confidence and hopefulness. The
premier, General Tuan Chi-jui, had been an old friend of
the deceased president, but had refused to join the mon-
archical movement, even with Yuan Shih-ksi as emperor.
He thus served as a most fitting medium between the
r&ime of Yuan and the new Republican régime. He had
become premier under Yuan the last few weeks, and was
practically the chief in the few days of transition. Being
a military man, he was able to hold in check any mutiny
of the troops. Being opposed to the monarchical move-
ment, he commanded the respect of the faction which wanted
a republic. Being one of the older officials, having held office
even under the Manchus, he commanded the respect of the
more conservative element in the country. The preser-
vation of order in the capital rested on Premier Tuan
Chi-jui.

Through the personal influence of the premier, united
with that of the former premier, Hsü Shih-chang, the vice-

premier, Li Yuan-hung, was induced to accept the duties
of president, in accordance with all the forms of constitu-

ation. He had held out to the end against the monarchical