

## RUMOURS IN THE PRESS

On March 24th »The Peking Leader» had on its front page a news item stating that »the local scientific organizations had telegraphed to the governor of Sui-yüan, General SHANG CHEN and to the authorities in Sinkiang and Kansu, urging them to block the party on the grounds that it is infringing on China's sovereignty». The same item was also printed in all Chinese newspapers. This was a new move in the campaign against my expedition.

I telephoned to Professor LIU FU. He replied that he would come to see me at dinner-time. I showed him the article in the daily paper and asked him straight out if it were true that the opposition had charged the provincial governors to arrest the expedition. LIU FU assured me that the Union stood neither behind this news item nor any telegrams that might have been sent to the governors. In order to prove the Union's innocence he would insert a categorical denial in the next day's papers. He explained that the opposition comprised not only the Union, but also other societies, and he thought that some of these were responsible for the action in the provinces. I expressed my astonishment that such a base attack could be made in a country with such a venerable culture as China. »You treat me like a criminal, who must be removed with violence,» I said; »and yet you wish to be regarded as a civilized people!»

»No, the position that has arisen is due to the fact that you, who have been in Peking since the end of November, have not attempted to get into touch with the Chinese scientific world.»

To this I replied that together with Professor ANDERSSON I had, immediately after my arrival, visited Dr WONG and Dr TING and with the former drawn up a complete plan both for the actual journey and for the distribution of the collections between China and Sweden. For twelve years I had journeyed among the barbarous peoples of innermost Asia and always been well received by them. But here in Peking, a cultural centre from which this civilized people was officially governed, I was treated as a suspicious individual. What would Western scientific circles think of such methods, and what would be thought of the standpoint of Chinese scientists?

LIU assured me that I had misunderstood their intentions. Their only aim had been to find a formula under which we could co-operate to our mutual advantage.

I: »Since March 6th I have not noticed any attempts to arrive at a friendly understanding.»

LIU FU: »Our meetings are convened precisely for the purpose of finding an issue.»

I: »The only thing you have so far aimed at in your meetings has been to slander me and vilify me until people want to arrest me in the provinces. If the union of scholars in Peking continues with these hostile tactics I shall recall the expedition from Pao-t'ou and go home.»