

and paid regularly, whilst Wu himself, judging from the accounts of the fighting at I-chang on the Yangtze some two years ago, appears to be possessed of personal courage. Against him as a soldier is his inexplicable neglect to crush Chang Tso-lin early last year in the neighbourhood of Shan-hai-kuan. The reason for this fear to push on, when success lay open before him, has never been explained. It may have been due to his realising his own incapacity to take over the burden of government, but this hardly seems likely in view of his present extensive activities, extending to Szechwan in the west and Kwangtung in the south. Possibly there may have been some secret reason, such as fear of clashing with the Japanese if he took over Manchuria. Whatever the cause of his inaction on that occasion, he appears to have been unable to handle the political situation after success.

It is of course a risky undertaking backing one faction against the rest, and could only be done with the unanimous consent of all the Powers, but in the present chaotic state of the Republic it is only a choice of the lesser evil. The only candidate appears to be Tuan Chi-jui, who some sixteen or seventeen years ago enjoyed the reputation of honesty when commanding one of the old Lu-chun divisions. I do not know whether he still enjoyed this reputation when, as the head of the An-fu party, he ruled the country. He was a protégé of the Japanese and his nomination would be acceptable to them, but for this reason he would probably not be popular in the country, and he has not a trained army behind him.