

Mr Manners, with these two gentlemen and three Franciscan fathers, Gabriel, Hugues and another.

*May 10th.* The work of reform has been proceeding here about as long as at Lanchow, but the results are more perceptible in some spheres. It seems as if Si-an-fu, thanks to its ancient and close connection with the coast, were riper for some reforms, especially in regard to schools, and had better opportunities of securing suitable people owing to these connections. In other spheres, however, it seemed that less energetic work was being done than at Lanchow. This is particularly the case as regards utilising the local resources of the province. But on the whole there is a good deal of resemblance between the two provinces and in neither can the results achieved be regarded as anything but a first step in the scheme of reforms drawn up in Peiping for all the provinces. In Kan Su the Belgians are playing an important part in this work of reconstruction, here the same is being done more or less by Japanese.

Communications, or rather railway construction, are the first item in the programme and here, at all events, the most urgent problem. It has, however, been reduced to a very small matter. The authorities are only engaged in constructing the railway as far as Tung Kwang at the bend of the Yellow River. The line has been surveyed by the Japanese, and is to go over Sanyuan. The distance is said to be about 300 li and the cost is estimated at 10,000 taels per li or 3 million taels for the whole distance. To raise this amount, all land in this area was subjected last year to a special tax per mou. This burden, a heavy one according to local ideas and augmented by the greed of the mandarins, provoked protests and disturbances. Orders were given in Peiping to abolish the new tax, and soon afterwards the Fantai was removed owing to this and other abuses. It is reported, however, that both he and many of his charming colleagues had managed to secure a decent income out of the transaction.

Merchants and mandarins are now being urged to become shareholders. Members of the local «intelligentsia», students and teachers have been instructed to educate public opinion by means of lectures and personal discussions. A preliminary subscription list, however, yielded an unsatisfactory result. The merchants are reluctant and do not hide their very natural distrust of a business concern sponsored by the authorities. Under severe pressure from the higher mandarins and after the minimum subscription had been fixed at 2 taels and a dividend had been promised within four years, another preliminary subscription list was started a short time ago. This time 600,000 taels were subscribed. In view of such a result it seems probable that the remaining funds will be obtained either by further subscriptions or by the provincial treasury shouldering part of the expenditure, or in some other way, and that the scheme will be carried out.

It is stated here that Tung Kwang is to be connected on the other side by a railway with Tai-yuan. This line is to be constructed by a French company (presumably the same that built the railway to Tai-yuan). This question, however, is only discussed very superficially here. At Lanchow I was told that the Chen-chow — Honan-fu line was to be prolonged over Tung Kwang to Si-an-fu, but here the country is considered to present too great obstacles and