

Making Canton Independent of Hongkong

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EXTENSIVE preparations are being made by the Canton government for the undertaking of various measures calculated to make Kwangtung Province economically independent of Hongkong, and for the employment of the strikers in the attainment of that objective, according to reports which have recently reached Shanghai from Canton. It is asserted that offers of capital from American and European sources have already been received by the Canton authorities, and that the actual commencement of the project waits only upon the completion of certain preliminary arrangements.

The most essential phase of the scheme is the construction of a deepwater port below Whampoa, with facilities for handling ocean vessels and thus breaking Canton's dependence upon Hongkong as a port and depot for its import and export trade. This is a project which has frequently drawn public attention in years past, but which for various reasons has never been actually commenced. Complete engineering plans are, however, available.

In order to link Canton with the proposed Whampoa deepwater port, it is planned to construct a wide, modern motor road to be known as the "Chung Shan (Sun Yat Sen) Highway." It is in the construction of this main artery that the government apparently proposes to make the first use of the enormous number of Hongkong strikers who are now in Canton. Estimates of the number of such workmen vary from 100,000 to 200,000, with the strong likelihood—judging from a comparison with Hongkong reports upon the situation—that the lower figure is a fairly reliable calculation. In any event, there is a vast amount of idle man-power in Canton at the present time, and the government evidently proposes to invest the 30 cents per day strike pay in some thoroughly constructive enterprise.

Another feature of the general reconstruction program—all of which is under the direction of Mr. Sun Fo, the new commissioner of reconstruction—is the construction of a railway which will connect the Canton-Kowloon Railway with Swatow, and thus make the facilities of that port available for Canton.

In northern Kwangtung, the government hopes to push forward the Canton-Hankow railway from Shiukwan toward the Hunan border, in order to make the rich coal resources in that district available for Canton. Some reports also declare that the government hopes to utilize strike labor in this connection within the near future, in the hope of definitely completing the open portion of the railway at the earliest possible date.

In order to make Canton independent of Hongkong in point of communication facilities, the Southern Government has already ordered wireless equipment from Europe (from Germany, it is generally understood), and the announcement is made that a powerful station will be completed within a few months.

Criticism of the government's policy of inviting foreign capital has apparently been made in a few very radical quarters, on the ground that it is a violation of the principle of anti-imperialism. Governor Hu Han-min has, however, taken a positive stand regarding this point, and has declared that it is entirely in accord with the principles of the late Dr. Sun Yat-sen. At the same time he asserts that "we will employ foreign capital only in so far as none of the imperialist privileges are attached thereto."

The reconstruction program as described in a statement by Mr. Sun Fo in the *Canton Gazette*, is as follows:

"Canton stands today in virtual isolation from the rest of the world. This condition has been brought about by the fact that our gateway is under hostile imperialist domination. In normal times we have to depend upon Hongkong as an outlet and depot for our export and import commerce. Now we are practically under imperialist blockade because Hongkong wants to break the patriotic strike of our people against imperialist outrages perpetrated on our own soil. We do not even enjoy facilities for free telegraphic communication with the rest of the country and other parts of the world, because telegrams passing through Hongkong are subjected to censorship and detention, entirely unjustified in view of the fact that no state of war exists at present.

"This imperialist domination and control over our means of communication and transportation have reduced Canton and the greater part of South China to a position of

economic dependence. We are actually in the position of a semi-colony under Hongkong and therefore British domination. So long as we are dependent upon Hongkong for our communication and transport, we will not be able to develop our resources and commerce and industry in accordance with the potentialities of the province and the economic needs of the people.

"In view of this, the economic policy of the Kuomintang and its government is obvious. The communications and natural resources must be developed so as to render the province economically free from imperialist domination. To meet urgent needs, both present and future, two things must be done.

"First and foremost, a deepwater port must be developed. The need for such a port for Canton has been early perceived. Even before the Republic the idea had been conceived by both government officials and local leaders to build a port at Whampoa for the accommodation of ocean shipping. Such a port was also the cherished desire of our great leader, Dr. Sun Yat-sen. During more recent years, detailed engineering plans for the construction of such a port have been drawn up by our conservancy engineers. An independent project was also devised by some American engineers with the hope of interesting American capital to carry out the work. All these plans fell through for the time being, partly because of unfavorable political developments, but mostly because of the selfish opposition of the imperialist bankers, who do not want to see an economically independent Canton, lest Hongkong should lose its present grip over the economic life of our province.

"But the time has come for independent capital to come to our assistance on equal and fair terms. Already inquiries concerning the project from both Europe and America have been received by the government. As soon as necessary details are concluded, actual work toward the realization of our much needed deepwater port for Canton will be started.

"The next equipment we must provide for to meet our legitimate needs is a powerful radio station, capable of establishing communication with the major centers of the world.

"We are glad to announce that equipment for the erection of such a station has already been ordered from Europe, and within a few months Canton will be able to communicate with the outside world freely and unhindered. This will not only accrue to our own benefit, but will benefit outsiders as well. As it is, no reliable news about Canton may be obtained by newspapers and their reading public in Shanghai and other ports. *Reuters*, a British-owned news agency, send out not only malicious rumors about us fabricated in their offices in Hongkong, but intentionally labelled as coming from Canton. With a powerful radio station installed here, Canton will be in closer touch with the world, and less mischief will be done by imperialist press agents.

"Other plans under consideration by the Department of Reconstruction, include the extension of railways and a system of highways linking up Canton with the present rather inaccessible parts of the province.

"The present Yueh-han Railway must be extended from Shiukwan northwards toward the Hunan border in order to tap the rich coal resources. Once that is done, Canton will not have to depend upon Japan, Tonkin, and other places for its coal, but will be able to supply the needs of its own consumers.

"The Canton Samshui line will need two extensions to complete its usefulness. One extension would run westwards along the north side of the West River up to Wuchow, the gateway of Kwangsi. The two Kwangs will be then more closely bound together. It will also stimulate the exploitation of the rich mineral resources of our neighbor. Another extension would be southwest from Fatshan to Kongmoon, which is already the terminus of a local private line. When this is built, the next move will probably be a further extension from the present Sunning Railway southwestward to Yeungkong, Kochow, and the districts to the extreme southeast.

"A new railway from Sheklung eastward to Waichow and Swatow is also needed to bring the East River districts closer to Canton. But before all these lines can be built, it is the government's plan to construct motor roads between the important centers. This will be done both by direct government construction and by local and private enterprise through government encouragement.

"To adequately provide for the economic needs of the province, \$100,000,000 would be needed as expenditure for public works. Such a sum appears excessive and beyond

our means at present. But it should be remembered that this is the richest province in China, that under normal conditions with an obsolete system of fiscal administration, more than \$40,000,000 were collected annually. With the introduction of a modern and efficient financial administration, together with the reduction of military expenditures, the annual income may be readily increased to fifty millions. Legitimate military needs will take at most \$18,000,000 a year, thus leaving \$22,000,000 and more for the civil administration. It is quite possible that, even without recourse to foreign and domestic loans, the constructive program of \$100,000,000 may easily be carried out within a period of from five to ten years.

"Our constructive program is therefore to work for the complete economic independence of Kwangtung within the next few years, through the development of our means of communication and transport. We shall not rest until this object is a reality."

With the double object of making Kwangtung Province economically independent of Hongkong, and of utilizing the labor of the Hongkong strikers in the attainment of that independence, the Canton Government has already begun the construction of the "Sun Yat Sen Highway" from Canton to Whampoa, and will soon enter upon the development of a deepwater port at the terminus of the motor road, according to reliable reports which have reached Thanghai from Canton.

The distance to be covered by the new highway has been divided into twenty-four sections, and work is to be conducted simultaneously on all portions. Some two hundred Hongkong strikers are reported to be laboring in each section gang. The total of the working army is now in excess of five thousand, it is said.

The Government has set the goal of completing the highway within one month from the commencement of operations, which was approximately two weeks ago.

Following the completion of the new main artery, it is planned to enter upon the erection of warehouses and the construction of sufficient piers to accommodate the first of the ocean steamers plying directly to Canton's new port. The Government appears highly confident of its ability to succeed in the elaborate reconstruction program, and in support of its faith, declares that not only is an enormous supply of labor available, but also many offers of foreign capital have been received.

Authentic reports have also reached Shanghai to the effect that the Southern Government contemplates the construction of a railway which shall link the Canton-Kowloon Railway with Swatow, and also the early continuation of the North River Railroad toward the coal fields bordering on Hunan Province.

In order to make Canton independent of Hongkong of Hongkong in point of communications, the Government has already ordered equipment for a powerful radio station which will be ready for use within approximately ten weeks, according to the official announcement.