

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INDEXED

FILE No.

727.1
China

February 5, 1927.

23 | 12
China

Hon. Wilbur J. Carr,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

Attention A-00

Dear Mr. Carr:

CARDED

We have received from the State Department copy of a report from George C. Hanson, American Consul at Harbin, under date of December 24, 1926, in which he gives a very interesting account of the Gandjur Fair, which took place in Barga, Mongolia, during the summer of 1926.

Letter (23), dated February 5, 1927, to Consul

While this report is of a somewhat general nature, it contains much information of interest with reference to trade methods and commodities in that part of the world. The picturesque character of the material suggest the possibility of its use as an illustrated article in COMMERCE REPORTS, provided we would be able to obtain some photographs of the shops and traders which made up the Fair, entitled

THE We would be very glad, therefore, if you would inform Mr. Hanson of our desire to publish portions of his report, giving him due credit therefor, should he be able to send us copies of photographs which he might be able to obtain. Without these it does not seem probable that we could make the material suitable for use in COMMERCE REPORTS.

Very truly yours,

Louis Demeratsky,
Liaison Officer.

613-77

[Handwritten signature]

WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE

OFFICE OF COMMERCIAL ATTACHE
PEKING, CHINA

September 23, 1927

File 492.0

BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE INDEXED FILE No. <i>722.1</i>
--

China

Director,
Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

A "Mongolian Fair"

1/

I am sending to the Bureau several copies of a report prepared by Consul Hanson of Harbin entitled "The Gandjur Fair".

This report contains some interesting material regarding Mongolian trading methods.

Very truly yours

Julian Arnold

Julian Arnold
Commercial Attache.

Enclosure No. 21835

JA/H

China

AMERICAN CONSULATE
HARBIN CHINA

September 7, 1927.

SUBJECT: THE GANDJUR FAIR.

Ferdinand L. Mayer, Esquire,
Charge d'Affaires ad interim,
American Legation, Peking, China.

Sir:

ENCLOSURE

I have the honor to report that, in company with Mr. Alfred Schweyer, a Russian, who is the local manager of the International Harvester Export Company (American), I left Harbin at 8:10 P.M. on Thursday, August 25, 1927, by train for Hailar, which is situated on the west branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway, and arrived at the latter place at 4 P.M. on the following day. We were met at the station by Messrs. Kaplan and Varshavsky of the firm of Kaplan and Varshavsky, agents of Ullmann Co., fur buyers of New York, and escorted to the latter's residence.

Commencing at 5 P.M. I made a round of calls at the offices of the Special Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, the garrison commander and his chief of staff. It was learned that the first two had departed a few days before for Tsitsihar, the capital of Heilungchiang Province, and the last named could not be located either at his office or residence. Besides desiring to pay my respects to these officials, whom I had met before, I also wished

to

of a shipment of 800 odd cases of gasoline belonging to the Standard Oil Company, which the officials in Harbin had stated was detained because of fear that it would fall into the hands of forces inimical to the present Peking Regime.

At 6 P.M. on August 27th, our party, now consisting of Mr. Schweyer, Mr. Keyes, a British wool buyer from Shanghai, a Russian of Jewish extraction, who spoke the Mongol dialect of Barga fluently and who had much experience in buying products in Outer Mongolia, a Russian chauffeur and myself, left Hailar in a Dodge touring car, kindly supplied by Mr. Varshavsky. At the outskirts of the town, it was necessary for us to report our intended departure to a local police officer, who allowed us to proceed without question when I presented to him my Chinese card. The morning was cool and sunny and the air on the plain was clear and bracing. The trail leading to the Gandjur Monastery, which is located 110 miles southwest of Hailar, was plain and was evidently the one used by Mongol carts before the advent of the motor car for it twisted and turned, so frequently and sharply, that it was clear no chauffeur had marked it out on such a level stretch of land, where a motor car could traverse easily and swiftly in any direction. Motor cars, which had previously taken this trail, had in many places cut about a dozen deep ruts in the road and travel in these ruts, with frequent jumping from one pair of ruts into another.

part of and the risk to their respective passengers made

their speed competition.

However, some diversion was furnished by the presence of bustard along the roadside and it was astonishing to note how close the chauffeur could guide the noisy car (ours had no muffler) to these birds without their taking flight. I had a shotgun with me and two birds were secured by shooting them from the car on the trip out and five on the way back without hardly any delay in the journey.

The Fair grounds, which were located about two miles from the Gandjur Monastery, were reached at 11 A.M. and on the street devoted to cattle selling and buying, called Russian street, because the yurtas (Mongol tents) of the Russian merchants were located there, we found the small yurta, which one of Mr. Varshavsky's employees, a young Buriat, Ah Lim Kai, aged fourteen, had secured and erected the day before. In this yurta we had our meals cooked by Ah Lim Kai and the whole party slept one night on camp cots brought with us in the motor car. It might be added that it was necessary to bring with us our entire food supply, as only Chinese and Mongol food can be secured at the Fair. There existed no yurta where hotel accommodations, such as sleeping space, could be secured by the general public.

The Fair has been held for many years in a hollow plain, which becomes a mud puddle when it rains hard, as it did in September, 1926, when I attended the Fair,

or a provider of dust, which is constantly thrown in the air by the moving cattle, horses, sheep, camels, men, women and children, when the weather is dry, as happened this year. This dust made the taking of good photographs difficult and filled the eyes, nostrils and ears.

There are other locations nearby much more suitable for Fair purposes, but tradition in this respect was strong among the Mongols and the Fair was held here because it had always been held at this spot. The Fair is presided over by a Mongol President and streets are marked out, with yurtas on each side, one for the buyers of cattle, another for the buyers of horses, another for the buyers of camels, another for Chinese restaurants and shops, etc. The first two days of the Fair are devoted by the Mongols attending to the sale of their livestock. Mongol men, women and children lead their horses, cattle and camels up and down the streets, calling the attention of prospective buyers to the animals and bargaining about price, which is done by pressure on the fingers of hands concealed in the long sleeves of the Mongols. This silent method of bargaining is used in order not to allow bystanders to know what prices are offered by seller and buyer. On the first day, prices for cattle demanded by the Mongols were high. A Russian, who purchases annually cattle for Manchuria Station, informed me that he could purchase cattle cheaper at that place than at the Fair, so he held

off until the next day, when prices fell off. One enterprising Jewish buyer from Hailar purchased from time to time cattle which he immediately resold to other Russian buyers at an average profit of Harbin \$3 per head. In this way he covered half of his expenses. On the second day, he bought 15 head to be driven to Hailar. Buyers for the Hailar market brought freely and soon accumulated a large number. The buyer is so experienced that he can quickly size up the amount of meat on a head by looking at it and feeling for the fat on the side and rump. As soon as a sale is made, the steer is led behind the yurta, branded with the mark of the owner and tied to a long rope stretching a hundred feet or so between wooden pegs fixed in the ground. After a few dozen have been thus collected they are driven by Mongol herdsmen out into the open plain, where they are allowed to graze until the time comes for the overland trip to Hailar or Manchuria.

Horses were bought by agents of the Chinese military and by private Chinese dealers, the former for the purpose of securing military mounts and the latter for the purpose of reselling to Chinese farmers and carters. Needless to say, the Mongols keep the best horses for themselves and sell only the inferior lots. In the afternoons, Mongols race their ponies up and down a stretch of the fair grounds to show the good qualities of their animals. Only a few camels and small flocks of sheep were in evidence this year.

The last two

The last two days of the Fair are devoted by the Mongols to the purchase of supplies from the Chinese shops. Chinese street presents a busy scene and the ponies of the Mongol men, who seldom walk, are so numerous that it is difficult to traverse the street on foot. The Chinese merchants, who come from Peking, Harbin, Hailar and Manchuria Station are sharp traders and the simple Mongols soon part with the money received from the sale of their products. They purchase saddles, bridles, cotton cloth, buckles, nails, toys for children, Chinese flour, Chinese wine, tea, tobacco, wooden wheels and frames for their waggons, wooden frames for their yurtas, boots, pots and pans, knives, sugar and other articles needed by a primitive people, who absolutely manufacture nothing for themselves. Articles of Chinese and Japanese make predominated, while some German iron ware was in evidence. Very few articles of British or American make were seen.

This year the Fair was smaller than last year and it appears to be becoming of less importance each year. Formerly, Mongols came with their herds from as far away as Kalgan and Urga and sales ran into tens of thousands of heads. At the present time, the Government of Outer Mongolia forbids Mongols living there from attending the Fair, ostensibly for the purpose of keeping the cattle within its own boundaries. This year the Chinese military authorities prohibited the

sale

sale of cattle to Soviet agents, on the alleged grounds that such cattle would find its way into Siberia for use among the military, who are accused of being hostile to the Peking Government. The Mongols knew about this last prohibition and even many of those in Barga stayed away from the Fair with a result that the number of Mongols attending and the cattle presented for sale was small. It was facetiously remarked that this year there were more spectators in attendance than buyers and sellers.

Our party visited the Gandjur Temple in the morning of August 28th and I had a talk with the "living" Buddha (阿旺羅桑丹畢兼參) who was there. The Temple is the principal one in Barga and is very rich in cattle, horses and sheep, which were presented as gifts by devotees and as taxes by resident Mongols. It supports several hundred priests. There was a small service being conducted when we arrived. The priests appeared more interested in the material benefit to be secured from the temple's resources than in the religious part. Several women were seen with heavy books contained sacred writings walking around and around the temple to acquire blessings. The Temple priests prescribed the number of times these women should walk around the Temple, ranging from several hundred to several thousands. The Temple appeared popular with women who desired to have children. The "living" Buddha, who stated he was 22 years of age, in all

seriousness

seriousness, admitted that he had been re-incarnated three times, his first appearance having been made two hundred years ago.

The party left the Fair grounds at 2 P.M. on the 28th and after a hair raising journey, which was broken by detours made for the purpose of getting a few shots at bustards, quese and duck, arrived at Hailar at 9 P.M. The only event of interest on the return trip was when passing a Mongol encampment, a drunken mounted Mongol charged down on us while we were stalking a pair of bustards. His manner was threatening and, as I afterward learned, he shoutingly wished to know why we had left the road. Our small sized Mongolian interpreter jumped from the car and made him cringe before what sounded like a volley of curses, after which all fight left the Mongol and he bothered us no more.

At Hailar, Mr. Kuo Chung-hsi, the Chinese Assistant Manager of the Chinese Eastern Railway, who happened to be there, invited us to return with him to Harbin in his private car. Mr. Schweyer and I left with him at 2 A.M. on the 29th and arrived at Chalantun, a summer place on the Chinese Eastern Railway, at 11 A.M., where Mr. Kuo desired to stop one day. The next day we left Chalantun in the morning and arrived at Harbin at 9 P.M.

By way of summary it might be added that the Fair was not so large as in 1926 and that there was

evidence

evidence that next year it would still be of less importance. From what I could learn from people I met on the trip, there was little danger of a successful Mongol uprising against the Chinese authorities in Barga and the concensus of opinion was that the Soviet authorities had lost much prestige among the Mongols on account of the setback received by the Soviets in their activities in Northern and Central China.

Copies of photographs taken on this trip and other information regarding the Fair will soon be forwarded to the Department with a reference to this despatch.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) G. C. Hanson
American Consul.

030

GCH/T

Copies have been sent to the Department and the Consulate General at Mukden.

China

November 16, 1927.

L-330

23

Mr. Julean Arnold, Commercial Attache,
American Legation,
Peking, China.

SUBJECT: A Mongolian Fair.

Dear Mr. Arnold:

I have before me your letter of September 23, enclosing several copies of a report prepared by Consul Hanson of Harbin, entitled "The Gandjur Fair".

As the Department of State is now furnishing the Bureau with copies of all consular reports dealing with economic matters, there will be no need hereafter for you to burden your office with the work of copying consular reports dealing with matters of a general or economic nature.

The only reports which might be available to you there for copying and transmission to us would be those of political nature in which we would be interested as a matter of background.

Very truly yours,

Louis Demoratzky,
Chief, Division of Regional Information.

CDU/a

Julean Arnold,

Commercial Attache.

5
3