

OFFICE OF COMMERCIAL ATTACHÉ  
PEKING, CHINA

R.F.D.C.

26 JUN 1924

REC'D

Peking, May 24, 1924.

CARDED

SUBJECT: Proposed World Exposition, Shanghai

INDEXED

FILE NO.

722

China

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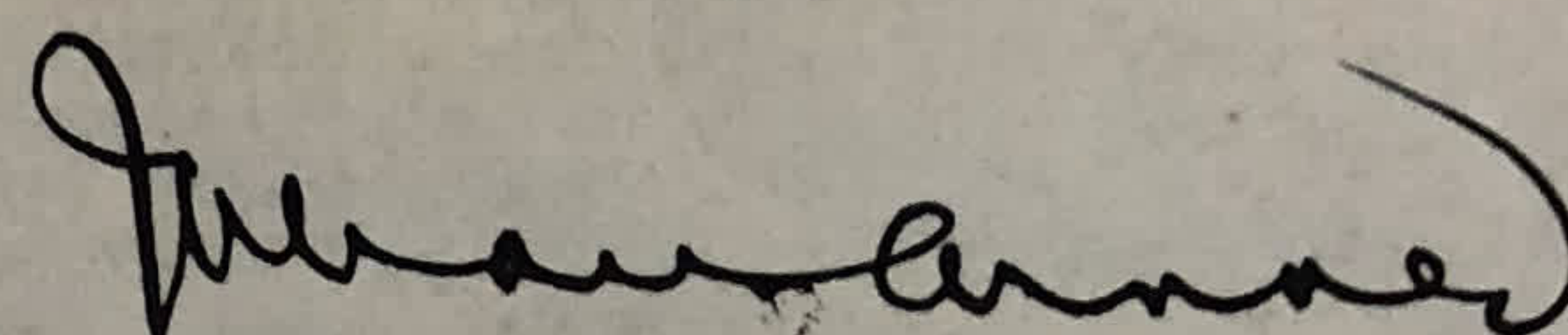
Director  
Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce  
Washington.

Sir:

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Mr. Howard, of our Shanghai office, sent me the attached clipping on the above subject. Until the matter takes on more definite shape, it would not, in my opinion, be well to give it publicity in the United States.

Yours truly,



Julean Arnold  
Commercial Attache

A:JW

Enc. 10151





MAY 17 1924

Dated.....

## SHANGHAI WORLD EXHIBITION

### Mr. Bena's Project: Meeting of Business Men Called to Discuss Feasibility

#### MANY ENTHUSIASTIC

Since publishing in outline his suggestion for a World Exhibition at Shanghai, Mr. G. A. Bena has busied himself in discussing the matter with prominent people, Chinese and foreign, and has so far succeeded in enlisting their sympathies as to warrant the holding of a public meeting to consider the scheme, at least in principle. The meeting will be held on the 29th instant at the rooms of the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce (in the "North-China Daily News" Building), and will be attended by representatives of various nationalities who are members of the Chamber, and of the principal public and commercial organizations in Shanghai: the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the China Association, the American Chamber of Commerce, etc.

#### Varying Opinions.

Naturally, in introducing a scheme of such magnitude Mr. Bena has met with varying success. By some the idea has been approved without hesitation, and among the enthusiasts may be included leading French and Japanese merchants. The American Consul-General also has expressed approval of the suggestion, and has kindly placed at Mr. Bena's disposal a complete set of

the records of the St. Louis Exposition. Another warm supporter is Mr. Julean Arnold, the American Commercial Attaché, who, in a recent letter, wrote:

"I heartily endorse Mr. Bena's proposal for a World's Exhibition at Shanghai.

During the past few decades, and more particularly during the past 10 years, physical means of communication have been improved so rapidly as to bring the West and East in close physical contact. Unfortunately, intellectually the West and East are coming together very slowly. A World Exhibition at Shanghai along the lines suggested by Mr. Bena will be signally helpful towards making for closer and more effectual intellectual contact between the West and the East. Much indeed has been done during the past few decades to train the peoples of the Orient better to understand Western civilization, but very little has been done towards bringing the Occident to a better appreciation of the civilizations of the nations of Asia. Thus, I am heartily in favour of the proposal as made, and congratulate Mr. Bena on the able manner in which it has been presented by him."

Not all, of course, are so enthusiastic as Mr. Arnold. Others who have been approached, if not entirely against the scheme, at least hesitate and point to the present unhappy state of affairs in this country as a reason for not proceeding, for the time being. On the other hand, there are those who think with Mr. Bena that the present time is essentially an occasion when a great united effort, loyally supported by foreigners and Chinese, and above all worked for with enthusiasm by Shanghai, would have the effect of greatly improving Chinese and foreign relations, help to remove many outstanding difficulties, and pave the way for further progress, more particularly the progress of Shanghai. It would be a purely international enterprise, conducted

for the general benefit of all and without reference to the profit of any individual group.

#### Financial Prospects.

The further development of the idea will depend entirely upon whether a sufficient number of influential people can be got to approve of the scheme in principle and give it their support; and this point having been gained, it will then be for a provisional Committee to prepare a working foundation—a task in itself which would probably occupy the greater part of a year. Incidentally, Mr. Bena suggests 1930 as Exhibition year. Expert opinion, of course, will have to be brought to bear on the matter, for very many important considerations are involved and even the preliminaries—before any definite step were taken—would require a vast amount of organizing effort. But Mr. Bena is optimistic; even in the matter of finance he is persuaded that, however the necessary funds were raised—by formation of a public company or otherwise—the enterprise, costing anything between \$10,000,000 and \$30,000,000—would pay its way.

The scheme has not passed out of the stage of indefinite discussion, and thus no set plan will be submitted to the forthcoming meeting. What is required is careful discussion of the general situation from a variety of points of view, but under the guiding idea that the exhibition is intended to promote the development of China and mark a path for the future of Shanghai. Mr. Bena will be happy to receive comment and criticism from all who are interested.



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MAY 17 1924

*Dated*.....

#### An Exhibition for Shanghai

Congratulations are due to Mr. Bena for his energy and persistency which have brought the project of a Shanghai World Exhibition at least to the point of a public meeting being called to consider it. No one needs to be reminded of the importance of going cautiously in such an enterprise, but on all occasions of this kind there can be and usually is too much caution in some minds. The first difficulty is to persuade people that the scheme is practicable and really it is hard to see why it should not be. From its position and importance, Shanghai is well situated for such an undertaking, and were it properly launched there cannot be a doubt of its financial success. We foresee some difficulty over the question where it is to be held. There is no site big enough, we imagine, within Settlement limits, and if the exhibition is set on Chinese territory there will certainly be the usual rumpus over sovereign rights. However, if a sufficiently strong body of Chinese interest can be enrolled—as it must be to make the scheme a success—this need present no insuperable obstacle. In any case Mr. Bena deserves support and we hope he will get it.



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