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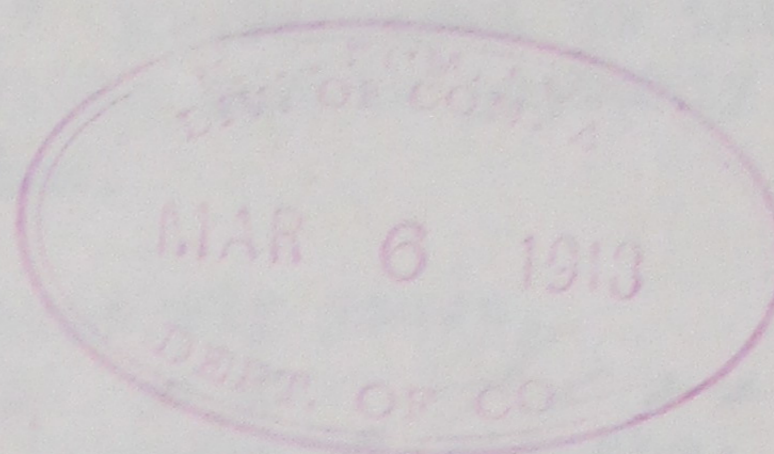
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January 7 1918

Mr. C. E. Herring,
Chief Division Commercial Agents,
Bureau Foreign & Domestic Commerce,
Washington, D.C.;



My Dear Mr. Herring;

In reply to your letter regarding the effect of the Lansing-Ishii agreement on the Chinese mind, I have to say that as far as I can learn the agreement was received at first with a feeling of astonishment approaching stupefaction, and that it was at first interpreted as having delivered China to Japan bound hand and foot. This feeling was fostered by certain Japanese influences which made the most of the unfortunate fact that the agreement was communicated to the Wai-chiao-pu by the Japanese minister and not by the American minister. Indeed, I believe that the American minister was the most surprised man in Peking when the agreement was made public. The official text of the agreement was not received at the American legation until the Chinese papers had all published it.

This first adverse opinion upon the agreement has been largely superseded by a feeling that the collapse of Russia and other misfortunes of war had compelled America to adopt a temporizing policy and that after the war the question of China will be taken up again, and that Japan will not be allowed to work her will in China without let or hindrance.

Japan has pretty well reversed her tactics in regard to China and has recently adopted the role of China's best friend, playing this role so well that even many Americans who formerly were bitterly anti-Japanese are now saying that as China seems unable to help herself it may be as well to let Japan assume the lead and reform China along Japanese lines. I think myself that Japan could very materially accelerate the progress of China industrially, financially and commercially. I have seen enough of Japanese efficiency in Korea and Manchuria to have much faith in Japan as a civilizing agency. Whether the happiness of China would be greatly increased by progress thus forced upon her is another question. Apparently the Chinese are very doubtful about it, especially those who dwell in Manchuria and Shantung.

I have already forwarded some newspaper articles and a copy of the Shantung protest which has been privately circulated in Peking, which shows that the "brown brother theory" is not as popular among the Chinese as it might be.

The Japanese are rapidly gaining interests in Chinese financial institutions and in industrial and mining enterprises which will give them a big lead over the other powers, and doing it in a way which seems to be legitimate, though rumors are rife enough that bribery of officials plays a large part in the Japanese program. They are also gaining rapidly in the railroad field. The minister of communications, Taso-Ju-lin, is openly pro-Japanese, and Japan has loaned so much money to the Bank of Communications that it is popularly believed that she controls the

ministry and through it the whole government railway system.

The bulk of the Chinese do not like Japan, but those officials who are not pro-Japanese seem to think that China is helpless and that to struggle against the inevitable is a waste of time and effort.

As a sample of the views of the Japanese themselves, I enclose a translation of a chapter from Mr. I. Tokutomi's recent book "The Rising Generation in the Taisho Era and the Future of the Japanese Empire." Mr. Tokutomi is the editor of the Kokumin Shimbun, the leading newspaper of Japan and is probably the most influential publicist in the land of the Rising Sun.

Sincerely yours,

A. W. Ferris
Commercial attache.

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