

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATIONS.

Nanking, June 22, 1937.

ENCLOSURE

Subject: Restrictions on the taking of
photographs by Foreigners in
China.

Dr. Wu Sung-kao, Director of the Department of
International Affairs, Ministry
of Foreign Affairs.

Dr. Hsu Mo, Political Vice Minister for Foreign
Affairs, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs.

Mr. Raymond C. MacKay

Mr. Peck.

Mr. Peck and Mr. MacKay called on Dr. Wu Sung-
kao, Director of the Department of International Af-
fairs at the Foreign Office, in the morning, in order
that Mr. Peck might introduce Mr. MacKay to several
of the Foreign Office officials, and the opportunity
was taken to discuss the current restrictions on the
taking of photographs by foreigners in China.

Mr. MacKay mentioned the fact that just before
taking the train at Canton to go to Hankow he had
asked Mr. Tseng Yang-fu, Mayor of Canton, to arrange
matters so that he, Mr. MacKay, might be allowed to
take photographs of the scenery along the railway.
The Mayor had sent representatives who had made this
request of the railway guards; as soon as the train
started, however, Mr. MacKay found himself forbidden

to

to take any photographs whatever. Mr. MacKay and Mr. Peck both invited attention to the fact that preventing travelers from taking photographs of beautiful scenery and of well constructed railroads as distinguished from still pictures. Mr. Peck said deprived China of an immense amount of free advertising which otherwise might result in substantial benefits to China, first in the way of attracting lucrative tourist travel and, second, in the way of convincing foreign investors of China's progress and the desirability of investing funds in the modernization of the country.

Dr. Wu said that he and other Foreign Office Officials realized the loss to China involved in the current restrictions on the taking of photographs by foreigners and they were engaged in trying to persuade the authorities concerned, the military and some other authorities, to consent to a revision of the regulations.

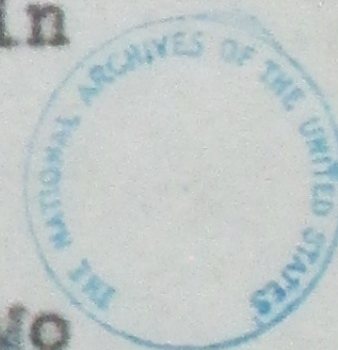
Mr. Peck said that while they were on the subject of photography, he might mention the fact that the two motion picture films which had been confiscated by the National Motion Picture Censorship Committee had not yet been released. Dr. Wu said that he was sorry that this was so, but it seemed to be a question of "mental attitude" on the part of the Committee.

During a call on Vice Minister Dr. Hsu Mo, following the call on Dr. Wu, the subject of restrictions on photographing again received attention. (Dr. Wu

Dr. Hsu Mo said that the Foreign Office had try-

had suggested that the matter be mentioned to Dr. Hsu Mo.) Dr. Hsu Mo observed that there were special regulations applying to the taking of motion pictures, as distinguished from still pictures. Mr. Peck said that it seemed irrational to suppose that the regulations governing the taking of motion pictures should refer to the taking of amateur pictures, because the regulations were clearly devised to apply to the making of motion picture plays, and some of the regulations, such as the supplying of scenarios in advance, could not be complied with in the case of amateur motion picture taking, because there were no scenarios to report. Dr. Hsu Mo recognized that this was true but said that the regulations require the supplying of all pertinent information, with an application for permit, in the case of any taking of motion pictures in China.

Willis R. Peck,
Counselor of Embassy.



Both in talking with Dr. Wu and with Dr. Hsu Mo mention was made of the illogicality of enforcing these restrictions on foreigners, while they were not enforced against Chinese, since nothing would be simpler than for a foreigner to buy pictures taken by a Chinese. Mr. Peck recalled that Mrs. Peck had been stopped by a policeman from taking pictures of a street scene near the Confucian temple in Nanking, at the very time that a Chinese photographer was taking pictures of the same scene and was not stopped.

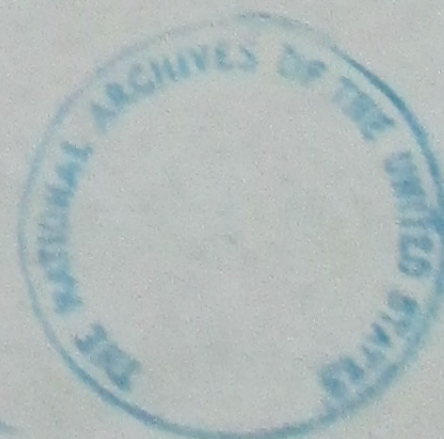
Dr. Hsu Mo said that the Foreign Office was trying to bring about a relaxation of the strict prohibition

now

now enforced against the taking of photographs
by foreigners in China. These regulations, at
present, permit the taking of photographs in a
comparatively small part of the country.

Mr. Peck and Mr. MacKay advanced a number
of arguments to show that China stood to gain
a great deal by adopting a liberal position in
these matters, such as is taken in most European
countries and in Japan. Dr. Hsu Mo concurred in
the views thus expressed, but explained that there
were persons in the Chinese Government who felt
that one photograph detrimental to China would
outweigh the advantage that might be expected from
a great many of a different sort.

Willys R. Peck,
Counselor of Embassy.



WRP:MM

Nanking, June 29, 1937.

No. 534.

Subject: Rules Prohibiting Foreigners from
taking Photographs in China.

TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

SEP 22 1937

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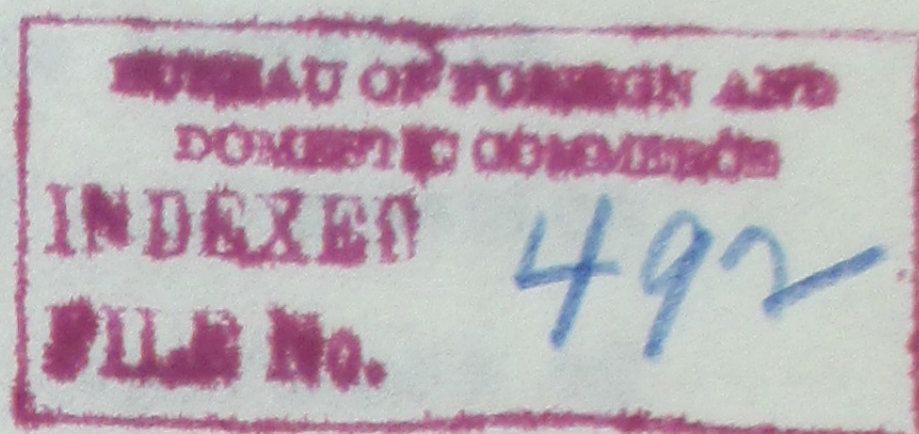
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FOREIGN TARIFF DIV.

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this report sent.....



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COMMERCIAL LAWS

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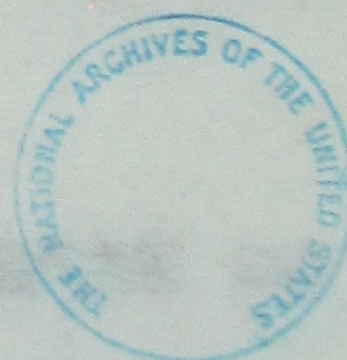
AUG 26 1937

FAR EASTERN SECTION

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.



Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch No. 493, of June 7, 1937, from Nanking, transmitting a translation of rules recently approved by the Executive Yuan which impose numerous restrictions on the taking of photographs by foreigners in China.

These restrictions are so obviously to the disadvantage of China, particularly in the way in which

they

they will discourage tourist travel, and they contain possibilities of so much trouble for American travelers that I have deemed it advisable to attempt on every suitable occasion to enlist influence to bring about a revision.

1/ An opportunity occurred when I accompanied Mr. Raymond C. Mackay, of the Far Eastern Division, to the Foreign Office to introduce him to various officials there. There is enclosed a memorandum of conversation on this subject with the Director of the Department of International Affairs and with Vice Minister Dr. Hsu Mo.

It will be noted that both of these Foreign Office officials recognized the damage which vexatious restrictions on the taking of photographs will probably inflict on China, but expressed inability to do anything to remedy the situation. The Department's attention is invited to Dr. Hsu Mo's remark, reported on page 4 of the enclosure, that the new regulations "permit the taking of photographs in a comparatively small part of the country".

Some Chinese officials with whom I have conversed on this subject have indicated their ignorance of them and have expressed incredulity that anything so sweeping had been enacted. Others have admitted knowledge of the regulations, but have not shown any great interest in them. The fact of the matter seems to be that the authorities in Nanking turn out rules and restrictions without much thought of the consequences which would follow from enforcement and that in this case, in particular, the wishes of the military authorities have been followed without any consideration being given to the ill-will toward China which will be aroused. Another

feature

feature which strikes foreigners, but apparently is not evident to the Chinese military authorities, is that practically no effective steps can be taken to prevent the taking of photographs by foreign persons who genuinely desire to get them for supposedly military purposes, while the taking of photographs by chance travelers, which alone can be stopped with any effectiveness, can do no harm to the country.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

Mr. Raymond C. Mackay

Mr. Peck.

Willys R. Peck,
Counselor of Embassy.

Mr. Peck and Mr. Mackay, Counselor of Embassy, kuo, Director of the Department of International Affairs, the Foreign Office, in the morning, in order
Enclosure:

1. Memorandum of conversation.

original and two copies to the Department
Copy to the Embassy, Peiping.

840.3

WRP/MOL

A true copy of
the signed original.
[Signature]

