



## SHANGHAI'S LABOUR PROBLEM.

### BEATING THE PROFITEERS.

A few weeks ago we had occasion to refer to the local labour market, and to point out the serious state of affairs then existing. There had been a rush of cargo to the port, far in excess of anything seen during the war, and with a very great shortage of coolies, delay was inevitable in handling it. Inquiries which have been made this week elicit the information that matters are more normal, and they also show a courageous and well-designed attempt to put a stop to the profiteering which was undoubtedly occurring.

The nature of the labour shortage showed that many difficulties would have to be overcome in order to find a satisfactory solution. Wages have risen on an average 50 per cent., and it has been found that the coolie by working half a day, perhaps, can earn enough to enable him to idle the remainder of the time. To pay him a wage which would be adequate and yet call for his employment the whole day, was the first point. Another was to see that he obtained his fair share of the amount paid out by the company, and which would have to pass through several hands—those of contractor, sub-contractor and head ganger, if not one or two others—before reaching him. In addition there was rather more than a suspicion that the gangers were exploiting the situation for their own ends, and the necessity of circumventing them was felt acutely. Finding that the shortage was putting money into their pockets, it is practically certain that they took steps to drive labour away, and succeeding in doing so, they took their proud position among the noble army of profiteers. To add to the trouble of shipping and other companies employing a large body of coolie labour, the shortage became further pronounced by the outbreak of the choleraic diarrhoea.

### IMPORTED LABOUR.

It was this situation that the employers of labour had to face. In the course of time it would have righted itself, but meanwhile cargo was being held up and business dislocated. There is one human commodity in China which can be treated more or less under the heading of imports and exports, and that is the coolie. Every year shiploads of coolies are exported from Shantung to Manchuria, and later on imported back again. A scheme such as this suggested an amelioration of the position in Shanghai, and steps were forthwith taken to recruit labour. The coolies thus obtained were shipped to Shanghai, and set to work on a monthly wage, doing the jobs which were formerly carried on by the free and floating labour which was formerly so plentiful. In view of the conditions in Shanghai this is not regarded as

the ideal solution so far as wharf and godown work is concerned, but it has had beneficial effect. Under stress of this new competition the wharf coolie shows a tendency to do a more honest day's work, and equally important, if not actually more so, it is gradually breaking the ring of profiteers formed by the head gangers, men who control a score of coolies each.

All this has helped the position so far as the wharf labour goes, and a further factor is that the rush of cargo experienced a few weeks ago no longer exists to the same extent. Still, however, it cannot be said that the position is anything like normal, and there is little chance of its being so until the autumn, when further man power will be released from the farms to make its way to Shanghai. Other large employers of coolie labour are experiencing the same shortage as the wharves and godowns, and in some quarters there is a belief that a more extensive importation of labour might be undertaken with good results.

## THE ADVERTISING AGENCY

### HIS PROSPECTS IN CHINA.

At a meeting of the Advertising Club of China held on Wednesday Mr. Carl Crow read an interesting paper on "The Advertising Agency in China and America."

The speaker in the course of an absorbing review of the growth of the advertisement agency remarked that the American advertising agency was an example of a business which at one time was not regarded as an entirely respectable business, had in a short time become a highly respectable profession. From a calling in which there were many questionable practices and a careless disregard for common honesty, it had become a profession with a code of ethics as rigorous as that of any other profession. The first advertising agent in America set up business in Philadelphia in 1840, making connexions with a number of papers soliciting advertising and receiving a commission from the newspapers by way of compensation.

### LIVER PILLS AND PUBLICITY.

A quarter of a century later the business underwent a distinct change due to the work of Mr. G. F. Rowell, who bought up a column each from more than 100 newspapers and, dividing it into smaller spaces, sold them to advertisers at his own terms. Advertisements then rather took the form of business cards, "copy" was rarely changed and there were instances of such advertisements appearing without change for 20 years. Sometimes Mr. Rowell failed to sell all the space he had bought and this he eventually utilized for the purpose of advertising a proprietary medicine of his own which by these means became one of the most widely sold liver pills in America.

It was from that beginning that the value of advertisement became eventually to be appreciated and finally the advertising agent became an expert adviser to the man who had goods to sell.

### FROM BROKERS TO EXPERTS.

Mr. Carl Crow then sketched the infinite pains that are taken by thorough advertising agents to discover the best means of bringing various wares before the public, assisting in every branch of the selling campaign, writing and changing "copy," providing illustrations and selecting the media in which the "copy" was to be placed. He now kept a close watch upon the campaign, watched the sales results as carefully as the sales manager himself and adjusted his advertising as the success or failure of the campaign in various districts necessitated. The result was that now the advertising agent did not primarily have merely advertising space to sell, but his own valuable services, not only along the lines of publicity but in supplying to clients valuable information which they have made it their business to acquire.

### THE WAY TO SUCCESS.

Turning to China the speaker said that here the business of buying and selling advertising as well as the profession of writing and directing advertising campaigns was in an early stage of development and a large part of the advertising business placed in China was through men who were correctly termed "advertising brokers." On the one hand they sought to keep down the rates the newspapers charged and on the other they charged the advertiser as much as he would pay, thus helping to keep the whole rate system in a chaotic condition, giving the newspapers less than they deserved and charging the advertiser more than the space was worth. Only a small beginning had been made by agencies who tried to sell their services rather than deal in rates. The advertising agency in China which started to perform a service for its clients, which made the interest of its clients its own, which studied markets and marketing systems, preferences and aversions as to brands and chops, the likes and dislikes of the people of the various provinces would soon be in a position to give the merchant or manufacturer a service which he could not get from compradores and shroffs, and would play an important part in the commercial development of China.

THE many friends of Lt.-Col. (late Brigadier General) R. N. Bray will be interested to read his "War Record" which is as follows:—

Five times mentioned in despatches  
Awarded D. S. O.  
Promoted Brevet Lt.-Col.  
Awarded C. M. G.

Lt.-Col. Bray is now in command of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment.