

Opium Now Sold Openly In Streets Of Hankow

(Central Press)

Hankow, August 21.—Opium is now openly sold in the streets of Hankow as well as in all parts of the province under military protection. It is a common sight to see lumps of opium and small tins of prepared opium displayed in the windows and on the shelves of shops, while opium dens are found throughout the city. Many opium shops have notices posted outside their shop such as:—"Good Opium For Sale," "Wanted: Opium Dust," etc. Many times the opium shops even boil their opium in the street in front of their house.

A regulated tariff on opium is being collected through the agency of the Military and Police Inspection Bureau throughout the

province for the maintenance of the 200,000 troops of Hupeh. In many districts, opium planting is forced on the farmers under military coercion, and the entire scheme of opium taxation on a large scale is sponsored by the military commanders, who have divided the prosperous revenues among themselves on agreed proportions. It is said that about \$20,000,000 is raised from opium annually by the Hupeh military from the Tupan down to the military officer of the lowest rank.

The tax on each ounce of opium sold to the consumer is fixed at 30 cents, besides which of course there are other exactions by local troops. The tax on smoking dens is \$5 per lamp per month, while for individual smokers the lamp tax is \$3 per month.