

Boycotting Canton

Probably no more effective method could have been devised of bringing Chinese provincial authorities to their senses than that adopted by the three principal oil companies in refusing to import further consignments of oil and kerosene into Kuangtung, this as a counter-measure to the internal tax which has been imposed. No doubt the Kuangtung like other markets in China is a very valuable one, but it has to be remembered that the affairs of these great oil companies are world-wide, and exclusion from one province of trade will not have the effect upon them that it would on firms with smaller resources. Furthermore when this exclusion is a voluntary act and done in conjunction with other concerns operating in the same territory, it in no way compromises their future prospects so far as trade is concerned. What it may be expected to work is a temporary hardship on the people at large, but while this may be regretted it is the sort of thing likely to create and harden public opinion to a pitch where even the militarists will find themselves compelled to bow to it. Were this not the anticipated logical result of such action there would be little force in taking it. The resolve of the oil companies in Kuangtung is accordingly a very important event, for it may bring home to those who need the lesson in China that a boycott is not necessarily confined to the consumers alone but may be a much more serious thing when the suppliers take the case in hand. In any case a sharp lesson is needed by officialdom in Kuangtung.