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W. H. THURSTON, - Editor

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Miss MacPhail To Her Critics

Official Report, from Hansard

Miss MacPhail: Since the letter I have written to the school children in my constituency has been placed on Hansard and an attack made upon it, may I make a reference to it now? Whether the hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Ross) was in order or not, I have a right to reply to the attack made upon me and to make a reference to the letter I wrote to my constituency. First, however, I desire to thank the hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Fdwards) and the hon. member for Kingston for the courtesy they have extended to me in giving equal rights in this House, because I desire that women have equal rights in regard to criticism, equal rights in matters of abuse, as well as equal rights in the best things in life. May I tell the House now how that letter came to be written? When I came here in 1921, fired with zeal in the service of my constituency, and finding that the wheels of justice turned very, very slowly—one might say provokingly slowly—and seeking for some way to help my people, I thought of trying to inform the children in school as to what went on in the House, and I wrote a series of letters—I am not sure of the number, possibly twelve or fourteen — discussing government matters and the form of government we have in Canada. Whether the letters were good or not is not for me to say, but normal schools in Ontario have ordered them by the hundred from that time to the present, and I have been asked by teachers to put them in book form so that they might be used in the public schools. After finishing that series of letters I did not do much in that line, in fact I did not write a letter till the last session or the session before last, and during my campaign last year many teachers said to me: "If you are elected I hope you will write some letters again. We like them so much."

I wrote one letter this session previous to the one under dispute—quite a lengthy letter, dealing with two subjects altogether unrelated, I told them about the new Governor General and his wife, how very much I liked them, the impression I received when I was entertained at Rideau Hall. If hon. members do not believe me I can quote from a letter from one of the school children. I received dozens of them. The child said he was pleased to think my impression of the Governor General was so good and he said: "I am glad the Governor General is a fine man and that you like him." I was patriotic in that one thing anyway. The letter proceeds: "I hope the bill passes about the soldiers' farm lands, because is is much needed."

Then he said he hoped I had a good time when I entertained some little girls at dinner which I had told about. I described my visit to the penitentiary. Unless I tell hon. members about the work I carry on in my constituency, it may seem odd to them that I should deal with such a thing as a birthday party, but I enjoy hearing of a birthday party. In the last letter I said that I had covered the form of government thoroughly, and there seemed to be so little in connection with parliament to talk about that I would be glad if they would suggest subjects me to write about. I got ten or twelve letters suggesting that I should tell them what I thought about the Chinese war. I had not thought of it until it was suggested by letters that I received from my constituency. However, I must tell hon. members the whole thing, so that they will understand the matter. I sent them a little poem about two roosters having a fight and I suggested it was a very good thing, if two people wanted to fight, to let them fight it out and let the rest of the people alone. A little boy named John McMillan said, "I liked the poem, I thought it referred to the Chinese trouble, and would like to know what you think of it." That is the reason I wrote the letter. I have no apology to make for that letter. There may be one or two innacuracies in it in detail, but it is substantially correct, as I hope hon. members will realize shortly. The hon. member for Kingston does not want to call the war in 1839 and 1842 the Opium War. In the Encyclopedia Brittanica, volume 6, page 199, it is indexed under the "Opium War." I want, however, to go into it more fully. In 1830 permission was given by the Lieutenant Governor of India to extend the cultivation of the poppy with a view to increasing the supply. This alarmed the Chinese emperor of that time. He knew it was a growing evil in his country, and he instructed Commissioner Lin to go from Peking early in 1839 to Canton, and his orders were to get rid of the opium evil. Mr. Lin did go there, and he took from the British merchants 20,283 chests of opium and destroyed them. This led to the war. I will quote from Black Opium, a book by the Rev. Eric Lewis, B.A., published by Marshall Broheri, Limited, Lonoon and Edinburgh. At page 21 they give this story, which I have told in briefer form, and then they cite several great British authorities. Dr. Arnold said: "This was so wicked as to be a national sin of the greatest possible magnitude."

Mr. Gladstone denounced it in these words: "A war more unjust in its origin, a war more calculated to cover this country with a permanent disgrace, I do not know and I have not read of. The British flag is hoisted to protect an infamous contraband traffic; and if it was never hoisted except as it is now hoisted on the coast of China, we should recoil from its sight with horror."

Those were strong words from Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Lewis goes on to say: "This, our first war with China, has been justly called 'the opium war,' for the opium traffic was the prime though not the only, cause."

Let me give the committee one more authority. Sir R. Alcock, who was the British ambassador to Pekin soon after, was a witness before the House of Commons East India finance committee in 1871, and in the report of that committee at page 283 I find these words credited to him: "We forced the Chinese government to enter into a treaty to allow their subjects to take opium."

I think that about proves my point. But that was not the only war. There was a second and a third opium war. I am going to quote only one authority in regard to these, Lord Elgin. He conducted these wars, and of the second he wrote in his personal letters in very frank terms. Under date of December 22, 1857, I find the following: "When we steamed up to Canton and saw the rich alluvial banks covered with luxuriant evidences of unrivalled industry and natural fertility, I thought bitterly of those who for the most selfish objects are trampling underfoot this ancient civilization."

On Dec. 9th he wrote: "Nothing could be more contemptible than the origin of our existing quarrel. . . I have hardly alluded in my ultimatum to that wretched question of the 'Arrow' which is a scandal to us, and is so considered by all, except the few who are personally compromised."

On Dec. 25th he wrote: "Canton doomed to destruction, through the folly of its own rulers, and the vanity and levity of ours."

On August 30 he wrote: "This abominable East; abominable not so much in itsself, as because it is strewn all over with the record of our violence and fraud."

And under date of November 6 he wrote: "In our relations with China we have acted scandalously."

An hon. MEMBER: That will hold them.

Miss MACPHAIL: I hope so. I am quoting now from the New Leader of January 25, 1927. Speaking of this opium evil, it says: "The foreigners are entrenched in the treaty ports where they live under the protection of a system of injustice euphemistically termed extra-territoriality."

That quotation refers to the close of the opium war, which was terminated by several treaties. These treaties opened up what are now known as treaty ports. Possibly it is worth pausing to say that the same treaties that legalized the sale of opium gave privileges for the 'propagation and practise of Christianity.'

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): May I ask the hon. member in what part of the treaty can she find the word opium?

Miss MACPHAIL: I am not quoting from the treaty. I can quite understand that the people who were instrumental in bringing about the war would keep the word out of the treaty. That would not be hard for them to do.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): If that was the whole subject matter of the treaty would not opium be mentioned therein?

Miss MACPHAIL: It was not the whole subject, but it was the prime reason for the war. I am sure it must cause everyone who believes in christianity to blush with shame to think that the same treaty dealt with these two things: legalizing the opium traffic and the teaching of christian doctrines.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): Will the hon. member mention the clause in the treaty which legallized the opium traffic?

Miss MACPHAIL: All the authorities on the question agree that the treaty legalized the opium traffic. I have not the treaty under my hand.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): Mr. Chairman, I would insist—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): I would ask the hon. member to read the treaty clause dealing with opium.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Ordr.

Miss MACPHAIL: I am not quoting from the treaty, I am quoting subject of legalizing the sale of opium in China. As I stated a moment ago, the teaching of christianity and the sale of opium were included in the same treaty, Rev. Mr. Lewis, author of Black Opium, quotes from official documents. I wish to quote for a moment from British Imprialism in China, a small volume published last year by the Labour Research Department. It can be procured at 162 Buckingham Palace Road, London.

An hon. MEMBER: A good road.

Miss MACPHAIL: Yes, it sounds patriotic. It says: "Through the indemnities imposed upon China for her feeble resistance to these attacks, a load of debt had ben imposed, and foreign officials had been appointed to collect customs duties to meet the interest due. The foreign communities in the treaty ports established rights of extra-territoriality; they administered the local government, had their own police, and established their own assessors in the law courts; after 1912 the mixed courts became practically foreign institutions, even the Chinese representatives being appointed by the foreign authorities. The Chinese had become in effect a subject race."

It is said that at Shanghai, one of the treaty ports, there is a park at the entrance of which is displayed this sign: "Chinese and dogs not admitted." One can imagine how we would feel if before one of our parks we saw a notice warning us: "Canadians and dogs not admitted."

The treaty that closed the first opium war was called the Treaty of Nankin, 1842. By it China had to pay $6,000,000 for the cost of the opium destroyed, $12,000,000 for the expense of the war, and $3,000,000 for debts due to English subjects, in addition to $6,000,000 already paid for the ransom of Canton. Hong-Kong was ceded to us for refitting ships, and four additional ports were opened to trade. In the New Leader of Sept. 17, 1926, Bertrand Russell in an article, The White Peril in China, says:

"The extent to which China has been deprived of independence is not always realized. Let us illustrate it by an analogy. Suppose the Germans had won the war, and had compelled us to sign a treaty giving them the city of London, control of the railway from London to Harwich, the right to garrisons at Reading and Oxford as 'treaty ports,' the exclusive administration of the business quarters in Glasgow, Liverpool, Southampton, with a score of other ports, and the right to determine import duties, collect the customs, and hand over the proceeds only to such governments as they approved of, and to decide all disputes between Germans and British by German courts. This would represent fairly accurately the state of affairs which Europe and Japan have created in China. I think that even the present cabinet and foreign office would be found among the patriots if that were the condition of England."

I am sure that even the member for Kingston (Mr. Ross) would be found amongst the patriots if that were the condition in Canada.

In regard to the Boxer rebellion, it is said I should have guarded myself by saying that it was really a civil war, rather than a rebellion. How could it be a civil war with foreign powers backing one faction and exacting very heavy indemnities from the section whose army was defeated? I cannot see why we should call it a civil war. It is as true to say that crossing sacred ground with railways aroused the Chinese populace to anger as to say that the Boston tea party was the cause of the American revolutionary war, or that the greasing of bullets with cows' fat was the cause of the Indian mutiny, or that slavery was the real cause of the Civil war. There is no doubt that the Chinese were ignorant and that they did not understand the real causes of the war, but I may say to this House that the people of any country never understand the real causes of a war while that war is proceeding. There was a huge indemnity exacted from China after the Boxer rebellion, amounting to 67 million pounds.

Mr. YOUNG (Weyburn): Will the hon. member permit a question? In the opinion of the hon. member, would these indignities have been heaped upon China if she had been in a position to defend herself?

Miss MACPHAIL: No, I do not think so. But I think that if Great Britain had been as anxious about her christianity as she was about her opium,—not al—l of Great Britain, but the ruling faction—China would not have had to defend herself while trying to get rid of something harmful to her own people. Who gave us the right to trot around the world settling the difficulties and quarrels, or imaginary difficulties, of the different countries? I have often wondered about that.

It was not at that time that the five per cent customs tax was imposed, but rather that the foreign powers undertook the administration of the customs and used the moneys thus collected as a guarantee of the indemnity, turning the surplus over to whatever governmental body they chose. By controlling the customs thy controlled trade; they would not allow an increase in that tariff. Fancy how the hon. member for Frontenac-Addington (Mr. Edwards) and the hon. member from Kingston (Mr. Ross) woul feel if the United States controlled our customs tariff and would not allow us to raise it higher than five percent. In the Western Producer of January 27, 1927, which is published by Harris Turner, a returned veteran and a well known Canadian who gave his sight in the service of his country, and who could scarcely be called anti-British, appeared the following article: "The Boxer war ended with the occupation of Pekin by allied forces for a period of one year and the extortion of enormous indemnities extended over forty years. The payment of the indemnity was guaranteed by the institution of a foreign controlled customs service; surplus funds being handed over to the central government. In addition to the Boxer indemnity, various foreign loans have been secured against customs receipts."

The hon. member for Kingston had scorn in his voice when he said that in my letter I stated that livingc conditions in the factories were horrible. On this point I wish to quote at some length from The Globe, even at the expense of wearying the House; I do not weary it very often. The Globe is now very much interested in my letter, and I want to recall the things it printed in earlier days. The Globe of March 5, 1923, contains the following: "A hopeful sign in China is the demand of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai for higher standards of human welfare in industry. The chamber urges all firms and factories to employ no children under twelve, to permit one day's rest in seven, and to safeguard the health of the workers by limiting working hours, improving sanitary conditions and installing safety devices for machinery."

Then they quote from Doctor Sherwood Eddy, as follows: "There are at least fifty cotton mills around Shanghai, and more are going up. Thousands of chilren down to the age of eight or nine are employed. Little girls, eight or nine years of age were standing between double rows of whizzing unguarded machinery, steadily but wearily feeding the machines. One mite, perhaps eight years of age, was curled in an exhausted heap on the cement floor, sound asleep. Over in a corner, under a pile of waste, a tiny baby was spending the night, while his mother worked at a machine near by. . . In one small hospital there were one day this winter three children under ten years old. The arm of one had been caught in an unfenced machine and was all but torn off. The leg of another was smashed from hip to ankle by the teeth of a machine. The third, a little girl, had been caught by the hair in her machine and her scalp torn off. Not one of these accidents would have happened had the machines been fitted with safety devices. Most of the accidents happen in the night shifts, between two and four in the morning. Such are the terrible conditions in Chinese industry."

Then The Globe continues: "At Chefoo, where 17,000 women are engaged in the hair-net industry, the wage is six cents for a ten hour day. In the forty pongee silk factories in the same city 26,000 men and boys work a thirteen-hour day for the same amount. Only Christian employers close their mills on Sunday. At Tientsin 51,000 boys in the weaving factories work an eighteen-hour day, from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., the majority receiving no pay but their food. In the match-making industry in the city, eighty little workers must go to the hospital each day to be treated for the effects of cheap phosphorus and sulphur on the lungs and eyes. Better chemicals would prevent this, but profits would not be so great.

"It is difficult to believe that a century ago, in the first stage of the industrial revolution, conditions in Great Britain were little better than in China today. There are few more poignant chapters in history that the victimization of British children by the rise of the abuses gradually abolished by the public conscience and the growing power of labor organization, but such forces are still weak in China. The chief hope for the present generation of Chinese workers will come through international effort. The movement set on foot by the League of Nations for equallizing, so far as possible, labor standards throughout the world, has borne fruit already in Japan and India, though the state of things in these countries is still deplorable: It is in the interest of all nations that industry in no nation should be built on sweated labour. Economic and humanitarian reasons join in demanding the protection of the oriental laborers against the application of western industrial-

(Concluded on Last Page.)

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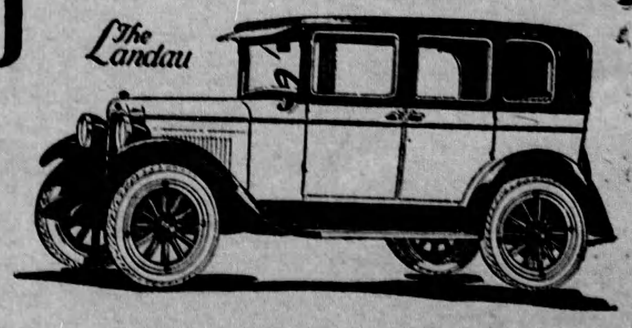

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