

## GEOGRAPHY

# China's Assets

**She has sufficient natural resources and population to prevent future Japanese encroachments, if necessary national developments are carried out.**

► CHINA, where the possibilities of civil war now seem abated through agreement between the Chungking government and the communists of the North, has sufficient area, natural resources and population to prevent Japanese aggression in the future if necessary national developments are carried out.

These include a united government under a new constitution giving the common people some say in governmental affairs, greatly expanded and improved educational opportunities in both general and technical education, a wide-spread effective public health program, the establishment of industries to use China's natural resources, and an extensive program in land management and use.

China also needs a navy; the nucleus of which could well be the remnants of the Japanese and German war fleets, which those two nations will not be permitted to retain.

China has, in Asia, a somewhat similar position and similar possibilities to those of the United States in North America. It has, of course, only one sea-coast. This is perhaps a handicap, but its area is one-third greater than that of the United States, and it has over three times as many people. Like the United States, it extends from a semi-tropical South to a bleak and cold North, from a rainy coastal area to an arid plateau and mountainous interior, and from interior fertile plains suitable for grain and other foods to mountain slopes adapted for grazing and timber. It has great known mineral deposits that are only partially developed, and undoubtedly many more as yet undiscovered.

Mountains occupy 30% of China's area, high plateaus 34%, hilly regions 9%, basins 16%, and alluvial plains 10%. It has almost every type of known topography. Three large navigable rivers drain the three natural divisions of the country; the Yellow in north China, the Yangtze in central China, and the West, or Pearl river, that empties into the South China sea near Hongkong.

Communication and transportation are two of China's great needs to make it a great nation in world affairs. Telephones

were relatively rare in prewar days, in contrast with some 20,000,000 in the United States. Telegraph mileage was also very low and very few families could afford to have radio receiving sets to get the programs from about 50 broadcasting stations. In the United States there were 750 stations and over 40,000,000 receiving sets.

In 1931, China had less than 7,000 miles of railroad. Some additional mileage was built in the next few years, but the Chinese-Japanese war which started over eight years ago prevented putting into operation an extensive railway-building program sponsored by the government. In America at the same time there were 248,000 miles of railroad.

At the beginning of the Japanese war on China, the highways in China totalled some 67,000 miles, less than one-fourth of which were surfaced, the rest being earth roads. The United States has nearly 3,000,000 miles of highways, nearly half of which are classified as improved.

China now produces practically every food and commercial crop that is grown in the United States, and in addition tea, certain medicinal plants, insecticides, and other important products. Rice is the principal food crop raised for home consumption, but normally the wheat crop is half as great. Soybeans, and other beans, are important crops as well as barley, oats, corn, millet, peas, potatoes and sugar. For vegetable oils, sesame, rape, flaxseed and other plants are grown. For fiber, cotton, flax, hemp, ramie, wool and silk are produced.

Although China has much excellent and other usable grazing land, its cattle industry is low in comparison to that of America. Chinese are not heavy meat-eaters, particularly among the common folk, probably for economic reasons. However, China has normally some 20,000,000 head of cattle, millions of sheep, swine and goats, and a large number of buffalo, the latter used principally as beasts of burden. Its meat and dairy industries could be greatly increased.

Coal topped China's mineral production before the war, with limestone and iron ore second and third. In America, China is thought of principally as a

source of tungsten, tin, antimony, mercury, manganese, bismuth and molybdenum. It mines, however, considerable gold, silver, zinc, asbestos, sulfur, and arsenic ore. Many other metallic and non-metallic minerals are also produced. Coal reserves in China are estimated to contain over 240,000,000,000 tons.

*Science News Letter, September 8, 1945*

## ASTRONOMY

## Nova Bursts Forth In Constellation Aquila

► A GREAT stellar catastrophe has produced a nova or new star in the constellation of Aquila, the Eagle, now visible high in the southwest. Of the seventh magnitude, the nova is just too faint to be visible with the naked eye.

The nova was discovered by Nils Tamm of the Kvistaberg Private Observatory in Bro, Sweden, who already has to his credit the discovery of two other novae in this same constellation. News of the discovery was rushed by Prof. Bertil Lindblad of the Stockholm Observatory to Prof. Elis Stroemgren of Copenhagen University Observatory, world astronomical information bureau, who cabled Harvard College Observatory, clearing house for astronomical news in the Western hemisphere.

This nova, which until a few days ago appeared as a faint star on photographs, had already passed its maximum brilliance when discovered on Aug. 26. A study of the star's spectrum shows that this new star, which may have flared into a sixth magnitude star, is getting fainter.

About a hundred novae, stars which flash to sudden brilliance and then usually fade to insignificance, have already been discovered in the Milky Way. Several plates made at the Harvard College Observatory confirm the discovery of this bright star, which at present is a great deal hotter than our sun.

When found, the star had a right ascension of 19 hours, 16 minutes, and a declination of plus zero degrees, 35 minutes. Observatories throughout the world are being notified of this gigantic stellar outburst.

*Science News Letter, September 8, 1945*

All plants and animals living in the sea that have been analyzed contain iodine.

Trees planted next to street lights are likely to hold their leaves longer in autumn and be tardy in budding out in the spring.