

WHY JAPAN INVADES CHINA

By H. F. Levett

It is commonly supposed that the Japanese Empire is in dire need of more territory to accommodate its large population and has therefore found it necessary to invade the mainland of Asia with a view to acquiring territories from China. Excessive population (if such a condition can ever exist in modern times) is the most feeble of all excuses for war. In the first place, China itself has a large population and should therefore be one of the last countries to be invaded on this pretext.

A peculiar fact revealed by Japanese statistics is that the Japanese military operations on the Asiatic mainland have been active only since 1931, and since 1931 the birthrate in the Empire has been steadily falling. Japan is **not** overpopulated. The Japanese Empire has an area of more than 260,000 square miles, and the total population is some 98 million persons, giving a density of about 370 persons to the square mile. England has a density of about 740, while Belgium has a density of about 670, and in practically all countries to-day there is actually migration from the less densely peopled areas to the cities, and Japanese statistics also reveal this peculiarity.

In any fair-sized country, density of population never causes economic distress; poverty and unemployment are the result, almost entirely, of an iniquitous system of land "ownership." In the Japanese Empire, one-half of the arable land is "owned" by only one per cent of the population, the actual figures being as follows:—

Total population of the Japanese Empire	97,697,000
Owners of arable land who do not work it, but rent it to tenant farmers	998,000
Farmers who own their land	4,122,000
Tenant farmers	14,140,000

Including the families of the tenant farmers, some thirty-three million people get their living on rented agricultural land, and seventy per cent of them are compelled to try to exist on approximately one acre of land per household.

Taxes on farmers in the Japanese Empire are "commonly considered twice as heavy" as taxes on persons engaged in commercial and industrial pursuits. For land-owning farmers "the burden of taxes and rates has been lightened, but for tenants it has actually been increased" in recent years. Tenant farmers are therefore "compelled to overwork" and often to seek employment outside their farms in order to increase their small incomes; "but a portion of the money thus earned slips away to landowners or to the Government in rent and taxes and the deficit thus caused is made good through a reduction" in the standard of living."

Disputes between the tenant farmers and the landowners have steadily and considerably increased, because the difficulty of a tenant farmer getting another farm is much greater than the difficulty of getting work in the towns, and "to lose one's farm is to starve." The price of land is going up as one of the effects of the "Rice Control Law" and other laws supposedly designed to assist the farmers, and consequently rent is also increasing, to add to the troubles of the tenant farmers. Fifty per cent of the disputes between tenants and landowners are on the subject of "tenant's rights."

In 1868 all the land belonged to the Emperor as the head of the nation, and in 1875 the national revenue was 59,000,000 Yen, of which 50,000,000 Yen was derived from land. From 1872 onwards, however, the

Japanese Government sold the land of the nation to private land "owners," and as early as 1874 "Regulations for the Relief of the Poor" had to be put into effect, while in 1885 emigration began and has continued on an ever-increasing scale. As a result of the sale of the nation's land, the governmental revenue from that source has declined, amounting in the financial year 1935-36 to only 58,000,000 Yen out of a total revenue of 2,215,000,000 Yen.

It must be remembered that Japan opened itself to the outside world in the latter part of last century, and it therefore appears that, during the time the national revenue was mainly derived from the land, there was no need for emigration and no desire for war. A steady decrease in the land revenue has developed side by side with a growing war spirit and a continuous fall in the standard of living of the working classes (especially the farmers).

Their natural rights to their own land having been taken from them by the landowners with the connivance of the Government, the Japanese peasants are now being told (as were the Italians about Abyssinia) that it is necessary for them to take away the land rights of the Chinese peasants.

(Figures and quotations mainly from *The Japan Year Book 1936*, published by the Foreign Affairs Association, Tokyo.)

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CANADA

Mr Arthur W. Roebuck, late Attorney-General of Ontario, writing about the recent general election in the Province, in which he was returned for his constituency of Bellwoods, says:—

"No doubt you know by this time that the Liberal government was returned with a very large majority so that the Prime Minister is in the driver's seat. The labour issue faded out to very small proportions. During the campaign, the Prime Minister stated that he did not intend to license unions, he admitted that he could not prevent the labour leaders from the United States finding entry to the country, that was within the jurisdiction of the Dominion Government, and he stated that working people were free to join any union they pleased. There was very little left to the issue. He still made faces at the American labour 'racketeers, thugs and gold-diggers,' but that was all. The big majority was the result of the substantial accomplishments of the government such, for instance, as the reduction of Hydro rates and the abolition of Hydro deficit, the balancing of the Provincial budget and the lowering of taxes, the enactment of a good deal of social legislation, and generally the carrying on of the government in a more or less business-like way.

"So far as Bellwoods is concerned, it did its duty in a most pronounced manner. I had no help of any kind from outside, financial or otherwise, but the riding came across with the largest majority any Liberal has achieved in the history of the City of Toronto."

We join in the congratulations Mr Roebuck has received from all over the Province, and indeed from various parts of Canada. In his nomination speech he insisted he would follow no leadership but his own and accordingly he has a mandate from his riding to follow conscience as he sees it. Mr Roebuck is an earnest advocate of land value taxation and in his new freedom he will have the greater opportunity to advance it.