China No. 2 (1932)

Preliminary Report on Conditions in Manchuria

from the Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Council of the League of Nations

Mukden, April 30, 1932

Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Parliament by Command of His Majesty

LONDON
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses
Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 120, George Street, Edinburgh
York Street, Manchester; 1, St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff
15, Donegall Square West, Belfast
or through any Bookseller

1932
Price 1d. Net

Mukden, April 30, 1932.

Note by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations.


The Secretary-General has the honour to circulate (1) the following preliminary report, dated Mukden, the 30th April, which he has received from the Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Council in its resolution of the 10th December, 1931:—

(Telegraphic.)

Mukden, April 30, 1932.

1. Commission of Enquiry appointed in conformity with paragraph 5 of Council resolution of the 10th December arrived at Mukden the 21st April and is now occupied with its investigations on the spot. Since its arrival in the Far East, the Commission has investigated general conditions prevailing in Japan and China in so far as may affect its work. It visited Tokyo, Osaka, Shanghai, Nanking, Hankow, Tientsin and Peiping, conferred with members of both Governments, and interviewed representatives of many interested groups and classes in both countries. In Peiping it met representatives (of) authorities who had been in charge of three North-Eastern Provinces prior to the 18th September. Since arriving at Mukden, the Commission has interviewed, amongst others, Acting Consul-General of Japan, and General Honjo, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Forces in Manchuria.

Declaration of the President of the Council with reference to Council Resolution of the 10th December directed the Commission to submit to the Council as soon as possible after its arrival on the spot, a preliminary report on the existing situation in so far as this affects fulfilment or otherwise by the Governments of China and Japan of certain undertakings embodied in Council Resolution of the 30th September, and reiterated in Council Resolution of the 10th December. These undertakings are—

(a) That the Japanese Government "will continue as rapidly as possible withdrawal of its troops into the Manchurian Railway Zone in proportion as safety of the lives and property of Japanese nationals is effectively assured."

(b) That the Chinese Government "will assume responsibility for the safety of the lives and property of Japanese nationals outside that Zone as the withdrawal of the

(1) Communicated to the Council and members of the League.
Japanese troops continues and the Chinese local authorities and police are re-established."

(c) That both Governments "will take all necessary steps to prevent any extension of scope of the incidents or any aggravation of the situation."

The Commission is not yet in a position to submit full information on these three points. It must reserve for later report the consideration of the undertakings of both parties "to prevent any extension of the scope of the incidents or any aggravation of the situation," but as the Council is awaiting an early report on the existing situation in so far as it bears on the undertakings of Japan and China, referred to above under (a) and (b), the following information is transmitted:—

**Actual Situation in Manchuria.**

2. Information regarding military situation in the three North-Eastern Provinces has been provided by Japanese military authorities. It is given under five headings, the first three relating to Japanese troops and other forces co-operating with them, the last two relating to forces opposed to them. Information with regard to fourth heading has also been obtained from a Chinese source.

It will be noted that in the classification adopted a new feature appears, which was not contemplated by the Council in September last. In the course of the events which are the subject of the present enquiry, the local administration was transformed. "Committees for the preservation of peace and order" were first established with Japanese help in the last month of 1931. These were subsequently superseded by an authority which was established on the 9th March, 1932, as the "Manchukuo Government." This explanation is necessary in order to account for use of expression "Manchukuo Army" by the Japanese military authorities.

I.—Japanese Regular Forces.

On the 18th September the numbers of Japanese troops in the South Manchurian Railway Zone is stated to have been 10,590. Numbers given for the first part of December are: 4,000 inside and 8,900 outside South Manchurian Railway Zone, making a total of 12,900.

For the latter part of April the numbers are given as 6,600 inside and 15,800 outside the South Manchurian Railway Zone in the region of Tsitsihar-Taonan-Liaoyuan Railway, Mukden-Shanghai Railway, Chinese Eastern Railway east of Harbin, and the northern sector of the Kirin-Tunhua Railway, making a total of 22,400.

II.—"Manchukuo Army."

Troops designated by the Japanese military authorities as the "Manchukuo Army" are said to have been formed partly of
Chinese regular troops stationed in Manchuria before the 18th September, and subsequently reorganised, and partly of freshly recruited soldiers. This force has been created with the help of Japanese military authorities. Many Japanese officers, either retired or still belonging to Japanese Army, have been engaged as military advisers, and their number is increasing. Contracts with some of these officers have been made for one year. A Japanese officer has been appointed adviser to the "Department of Defence of the Manchukuo Government" at Changchun.

These troops are stationed or operating chiefly in the region Mukden–Changchun–Taonan–Tsitsihar–Tunhua and along Chinese Eastern Railway, particularly on the Eastern branch, where they are engaged against forces not recognising the authority of the "Manchukuo Government." Total number of the "Manchukuo Army" is stated to have been 85,000 men at the end of March. Actual number is not reliable owing to uncertainty of the information regarding these troops at the present time.

III.—Local Police Force.

The number of this force is given as about 119,000, of whom 60,000 are local guards. This police force is stated to be in the main a continuation of that existing on the 18th September. Its reorganisation is taking place with the help of Japanese officials.

IV.—Forces opposed to Japanese Troops and the "Manchukuo Army."

The Commision was informed in Peiping by General Chang Hsueh-liang that forces outside the Great Wall on the 18th September, including non-fighting elements, numbered 60,000 for Fengtienfu Province, 80,000 for Kirin Province, and 50,000 for Heilungkiang, making a total of 190,000, of which about 50,000 from Fengtienfu Province were subsequently withdrawn inside Wall. This would leave 140,000 outside Wall.

Japanese military authorities give the number of troops now remaining outside the Wall as 110,000, of which they state that 60,000 joined the "Manchukuo Army," 30,000 remained in north-east of Kirin in opposition to Japanese troops and to "Manchukuo Army," and about 20,000 may have joined the so-called Volunteer Corps. The situation is described by them as follows:—

(A) Portion of former Chinese army not recognising the authority of the "Manchukuo Government":—

(i) Forces north-east of Harbin, estimated at 30,000 (stated officially by the Chinese to be composed of Kirin Self-Defence Army, under the command of General Li Tu, and of the Chinese Eastern Railway Guards, under the command of General Ting).

(ii) A force under General Li Hui Cheng in the region north-west of Mukden, estimated at 10,000.
(iii) Remnant of nine Cavalry Brigades, on the north-eastern frontier of Chengtehfu, estimated at 3,000.

(B) Volunteers:—

(i) The so-called North-Eastern Army of anti-Japanese volunteers in the western part of Fengtienfu Province, mainly south of Chinchow, estimated at between 15,000 and 25,000 men.

(ii) The so-called National Volunteer Army of the North-East, under the command of Wu Chin Tsin, mainly operating around Mukden. The present strength of this force, which has had several encounters with the Japanese troops, is unknown.

(iii) The Volunteer Army of Chengtehfu. This comparatively well-disciplined body of some 3,000 men, under the command of Tang Yu Lin, which comprises remnants of the cavalry of General Chang Hsueh-liang’s first and second armies, is reported to be active on the borders of Chengtehfu and Fengtienfu Provinces.

(iv) Several minor volunteer corps north-west, partly in the Shanhaikwan region, partly between Tunhwa and Tienpaoshan, where they are in touch with regular forces hostile to the "Manchukuo Government."

The total strength of these irregular forces mentioned under (i) to (iv) is said to be about 40,000.

(v) Bandits. The bandits, who are not organised primarily for political purposes, appear to have increased in number, due to the disturbed conditions. They are reported by the Japanese to be scattered throughout Manchuria, especially in the part south of the Chinese Eastern Railway. The Japanese estimate their total number as 40,000. In addition to these, a special bandit force of 12,000 north and east of the town of Kirin are said to be co-operating with the Chinese forces north-east of Harbin mentioned under (A) (i).

Armed conflicts between these various forces are frequent. There are bandit raids; attempts of the Japanese soldiers and of the "Manchukuo Government" troops to suppress them; and fighting between the various military forces attempting to maintain the new régime and those opposed to it. The result is loss of life, destruction of property and general sense of insecurity.

3. The Commission purposely refrains from commenting at this stage on the facts and figures above recorded. The Japanese authorities maintain that they cannot at present withdraw their troops without endangering the "safety of the lives and property of their nationals" outside the Railway Zone. They appear to consider that this withdrawal must depend on the progress of the reorganisation of
the troops described as the "Manchukuo Government Army." The Chinese Government does not now exercise authority in any part of Manchuria, and, as events have developed recently, the practical question of the fulfilment of its responsibilities has not arisen. The possible and equitable measures which may restore peace and security and create a reasonable measure of goodwill throughout Manchuria will be considered by the Commission in its final report.

The Commission will visit Changchun next week, and then continue its investigations in other parts of Manchuria.

LYTTON (Chairman of Commission).
ALDROVANDI.
CLAUDEL.
McCoy.
SCHNEE.