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Letter from Taiwan, Republic of China

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Letter from Taiwan.

Republic of China

As this is the first letter from Free China, it may not be out of place to give some background data on Taiwan, a province of China, and the results accruing from efforts being made under a free Government in the fields of agricultural, industrial, and religious development. Historically, Taiwan belongs to China except for 38 years under the Dutch (1624-62) and 50 years under the Japanese (1895-1945). Taiwan, where the seat of Free China Government is located, is one of thirty-five provinces of China Proper. Together with 77 outlying islands with a total area of 35,000 sq. kms., Taiwan Proper (377 kms. long, 142 kms. wide) is situated between 119° and 122° E. Lat. and 21°45' and 25°38' N. Long., about 120 nautical miles east of China Mainland and 479 n.m. from Hongkong, 433 n.m. from Nagasaki, Japan; and 774 n.m. from Manila, Philippine Islands. Topographically, a central range of mountains, running the whole length of the island from north to south, divides it into unequal sections, mountainous areas to the east occupying 70% of the island, leaving 30% (1 million hectares) of plains to the west, suitable for cultivation.

Population (1964) numbered 12,256,682 (including 200,000 aborigines of Protomalayan origin) of

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whom 52% were males, 54% under 20 and 2.5% over 64 years of age, with a crude birth rate of 36.27 per 1,000 and death rate of 6.13, the natural increase being about 3% per annum. The population has more than doubled since 1947 (6.5 million) and has a density of 330 per sq. km. Literacy rate is high — 96.7% of school-age (6-12 years old) children were in school (1963). Major causes of death (1962) per 100,000 were: Pneumonia: 59; Vascular lesions of CNS: 59; Gastro-enterocolitis: 49; Neoplasms: 42; accident: 35; Tuberculosis — respiratory: 34; Heart diseases: 28; early infancy diseases and immaturity: 30; suicides and self-inflicted injuries: 18. Notable decrease is seen in deaths from Gastro-entero-colitis which constituted 14% of all deaths in 1952 was reduced to 8% in 1962, Tuberculosis, from 8% to 6% (285.2 in 1947 to 39.2 in 1962) due to improved sanitation and 15 years of BCG vaccination for negative Tuberculin tested reactors, case findings and free mass treatment domiciliary or hospital. On the other hand, deaths have increased significantly from CNS vascular lesions from 5 to 10%; and malignant neoplasms from 3 to 7% of deaths from all causes within the same decade. Heart diseases, excluding chronic rheumatism and arteriosclerosis and

degenerative conditions (unrecorded in 1952) were responsible for 28 deaths per 100,000 or 5% of all deaths in 1962.

Infectious diseases: There has been no plague since 1947; cholera since 1946 (small outbreak in 1962); smallpox since 1954; rabies since 1958; and only 34 cases of malaria in 1963 (over 1 million cases per annum from 1947-1952). Taiwan is the first country in the Far East certified by WHO in 1965 to be free from malaria.

To provide food for people, increasing at the rate of 3% p.a., and to increase per capita income and prosperity, the Chinese Government initiated popular education, land reform (land-to-the-Tiller), promoted industries, social welfare and health services. The results may be seen in the increase of national income from NT\$13,047 million in 1952 to NT\$66,512 or 112.2% (in terms of 1952 value) in 1963 towards which agricultural products (with surplus for exports) contributed 28.6% and industries and mining: 29.20%; and commerce, 15.3% — the largest share. The per capita income was NT\$1,505 in 1952 and NT\$5,358 in 1963 (NT\$2,231 in monetary value of 1952) or a 48.2% increase.

Health Services: Taiwan has one health department which administers and supervises the activities of 22 bureaus in 16 counties and 6 municipalities and 361 health stations in townships and 441 health rooms in villages. There are 17 provincial and 9 county hospitals in addition to 8 special clinics and hospitals with a total of 40 pro-

vincial, 51 county and 997 township, including 441 mobile units, medical institutions. Immunizations and consultations are free and the payable drugs are charged at cost. To man them, there are 5,442 medical personnel, including 1,063 doctors, 1,790 nurses, 9 pharmacists, 1,483 technicians and 1,016 administrators on Government pay-roll. On a per 100,000 population basis, Taiwan has 101 hospital beds against 907 in U.S.A., 2 physicians against 125; 14 nurses against 481 and 6 midwives against 17. There is one doctor to 2,400 persons; 1 dentist to 14,707; 1 pharmacist to 11,394; 1 midwife to 3,713 and 1 nurse to 1,609. In Taiwan as a whole, the number of medical personnel is 19,870 as compared with 15,188 in 1958. These include 7,498 registered medical graduates and 2,270 herbalists. There are 3 medical colleges of western grade and 3 inadequately staffed and ill-equipped, including one of quasi-indigenous medicine. The nurses are trained in 7 schools, 3 of which are affiliated with medical colleges.

Catholics in the Medical Field: All religions are tolerated in Free China. Though predominantly Buddhist with a mixture of animism and polytheism, there are 57 Christian sects and denominations on Taiwan. The Catholics now number 244,900 (2% of total population) whereas there were only 23,579 in 1952, distributed over dioceses on the Island under H. Em. Thomas Cardinal Tien. The Archdiocese of Taipei, the capital of Free China, with an area of 1,822 sq. miles and a pop-

ulation of 2,396,929 of whom 43,165 are Catholics, is administered by 65 priests and 157 religious. Here is located the only Catholic University (Fu-Jen) in Taiwan, teaching Arts, Science and Engineering but not Medicine. The sole Catholic Technical School of Nursing, attached to St. Mary Hospital, was opened this year to take in 20 students for a 3-year course of general and public health nursing. Other denominations, like the Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventists, and Mennonites, have each established a nursing school for their own purposes only, as they are not registered with Ministry of Education for reason of faith.

In the whole of Taiwan, Catholics have in each diocese educational, cultural, and welfare institutions. These consist of schools of all grades, language institutes, hostels, hospitals, and dispensaries. Thus there are 5 primary schools, 6 middle schools for boys and 7 for girls, 1 university, 2 technical schools, 128 kindergartens, 15 hostels and lastly, 109 dispensaries and 12 hospitals.

The hospitals and dispensaries run by the Catholic missionaries serve all people, regardless of religion, and

they are barely enough. Supported partly by the German Caritas Agency, Cardinal Tien is building a new Medical Center, named after him, near Taipei. The groundbreaking ceremony was performed by H. E. Archbishop Caprio, Internuncio to China, on March 14 of last year. The hospital is for 147 beds to be expanded to 270 if and when funds permit. The Cardinal is using all gifts, given to him on his Silver Jubilee, for the hospital. A sum of \$100,000 is needed for equipment and supplies.

The medical problems facing us such as: diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, tuberculosis, and trachoma are being taken up by the Government and so are industrial diseases and sanitation. The poor, despondent, and frustrated are always with us. They require moral rearmament as much as food and medicine to enable them to stand up and overcome their miseries.

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