

## NEWS NARRATIVE

**The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of The Public for earlier information on the same subject.**

Week ending Tuesday, February 20, 1912.

### China Becomes a Republic.

Following the abdication of the Manchu dynasty last week, all China began to fuse into the republican government already organized in the south. The Ching Hwa Republic becomes the official name of the new China. On the 14th the Imperial Premier, Yuan Shi Kai, officially informed the foreign legations at Peking that the Throne had instructed him to form a republican government which would for the time being continue to be carried on with his former cabinet. An official telegram from Peking to the Chinese legation at Washington has directed that while "a provisional government is being established, all ministers accredited to foreign governments shall act provisionally as diplomatic representatives and continue to perform their duties as heretofore. All members of the legation staff and consular officers (in America) shall temporarily retain their present posts." [See current volume, page 153.]

To make possible a coalition between radical south China, already organized into a republic under the Presidency of Sun Yat Sen, and conservative north China, just coming out from under the dominance of the Manchu Emperors, and left by the Imperial edicts in charge of Yuan Shi Kai, regarded in China as the ablest of living Chinese, it became immediately necessary to arrange for some compromises. President Sun Yat Sen, following out a course he had indicated from the beginning of his official responsibility, resigned the Presidency on the 14th, two days after the abdication of the little Emperor; and on the 15th the National Assembly, sitting at Nanking, unanimously elected Yuan Shi Kai President, and decided that the provisional capital should remain at Nanking, though it is also reported that a majority of the members are willing to permit a temporary removal to Peking for convenience. Dr. Sun Yat Sen's resignation was accepted by the National Assembly, on condition that both he and the present cabinet should hold office until the new President and cabinet should take over the duties. The National Assembly afterwards passed an impressive tribute to Dr. Sun, saying of his voluntary resignation of his exalted office, that—

**Such an example of purity of purpose and self-sacrifice is unparalleled in history. It was solely**

**due to his magnanimity and modesty that northern China was won over.**

It was at first announced that Yuan Shi Kai would undertake the responsibilities to which he had been elected, but that he could not go to Nanking at present, as his presence was needed in the north to ensure tranquillity. It was reported on the 17th, however, that he had on that day telegraphed Dr. Wu Ting-fang, the Republican Minister of Justice, as follows:

I am unable to control the involved situation in China, as I am suffering from impaired health. Now that the aims of the Republicans have been attained, I have accomplished my duty. The post of President of the Republic would only serve to lead to my ruin. I ask your kind offices and interest with the people of the country to elect Dr. Sun Yat Sen, to whom credit should be given. I will wait here until I am relieved. Then I will return to my home and resume my work as a husbandman.

In the meantime Yuan is said to have had his queue cut off, to signify his acceptance of Republican customs as well as principles.

The old style Chinese calendar, abrogated by President Sun Yat Sen on his inauguration on January 1st, went finally out of existence on Friday, the 16th, when the year 4609 ended. [See current volume, page 15.]

According to news given out by the Department of State at Washington, China is now assured of an early abolition of the Indo-Chinese opium traffic, and the prohibition of the importation of morphine or cocaine except for medical use, by the terms of the convention between the Powers represented at the international opium conference at The Hague. The United States, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Japan, Persia, Russia and Siam have signed the convention, and all other civilized Powers not represented at the conference will be urged to do so. The subscribing Powers agree to limit the number of ports where prepared opium may be exported, and the Powers agree to control the manufacture. Traffic in raw opium will be limited to authorized persons. [See vol. xiv, pages 318, 323, 363, 443.]

### Land Tenure in Papua.

On January 12 the London Morning Post, a Tory paper which strongly opposed the great Budget of 1909-1910, printed an interview with Mr. Staniforth Smith, Administrator of the Australian dependency of Papua, the southeastern part of the large island of New Guinea lying north of Australia and just south of the equator. Mr. Smith expressed himself as well satisfied with the