

Wisconsin Man Again Feeding Hungry China

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New York N. Y.—The latest American Red Cross attempt to feed starving China and care for her war wounds via the reopened Burma road will be directed by John Earl Baker of Eagle, Wis., who gained international fame combating floods and famine in China before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war.

Baker, a University graduate, was technical adviser of the American Church Committee for China Relief and has just been released to the Red Cross to direct its new relief efforts.

He is now in Burma supervising shipment of 630 tons of American medical supplies and 15 tons of Javanese quinine to China via the Burma road. The Japanese have never objected to transportation of medical supplies by this route. When the British reopen the road to military traffic Thursday, Baker plans to ship American wheat, rice and other surplus commodities to stricken areas in North China, where prolonged floods and war have spread famine and destruction.

Ship Wheat, Rice

Red Cross headquarters in Washington, D. C., announced Tuesday night that cloth and medical supplies from China would be shipped from New York to Rangoon on Oct. 19 and 25 on the steamships Washington and Express. Tuesday 500 tons of rice and wheat left Seattle for Shanghai.

Baker went to China in 1916 as administrator of China's hodgepodge railroad systems and has spent more than 20 years there trying to bring order and peace into a strife torn land. In 1920 Baker had his first joust with famine. A disastrous drought burned the grain crop and generous nations across the seas responded with cash and food for the sufferers. Unfortunately, the bulk of the stricken people lay far inland, beyond the reach of rail and river transportation. Baker was given the job of getting the food to these starving masses.

He conscripted thousands of Chinese workers and set them to work building 850 miles of roads and paths through four starving provinces. The Chinese sweated, but they got their food and Baker won his spurs as a famine fighter.

Back to Waukesha

He left China in 1926 and lived in his family's old gray Wisconsin farmhouse in Waukesha county while he wrote about his Chinese experiences. But in 1928 famine flared again in China and the call went out for Baker. Once again his energy brought order into China's transportation system and food to the starving. More than 12,000,000 Chinese starved to death or died of cholera during 1928-'29, but millions more owed their lives to Baker's efforts. In 1931 the mighty Yangtze river went on a rampage and Baker was called back again to direct flood relief. Again he returned to America seeking peace.

But strife will leave neither his life nor that of the Chinese people whom he has struggled so long to aid. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, Baker organized the famous "bowl of rice" dinners to again bring food to a land now starved by war. Floods and disease were added to the horrors of war and so Baker is back again in China, fighting his old foes. With 24 years of this kind of battle under his belt and 60 years behind him, he still is carrying on for the people he loves against the things he hates.