

COPYRIGHT A72

DOWNEYS-REFUGEES (450)
BY CONRAD FINK

HONG KONG, MAY 28 (AP)—TWO AMERICANS ARRIVED FROM RED CHINA TODAY AND REPORTED COMPLETE QUIET ON THE COMMUNIST SIDE OF THE BORDER ACROSS WHICH THOUSANDS OF CHINESE REFUGEES HAVE SWARMED IN RECENT WEEKS.

MRS. MARY DOWNEY AND HER SON WILLIAM, OF NEW BRITAIN, CONN., CAME FROM PEIPING WHERE THEY HAD VISITED MRS. DOWNEY'S OTHER SON, JOHN. HE HAS SPENT 10 YEARS IN A RED CHINESE JAIL SERVING A LIFE SENTENCE ON SPY CHARGES.

WILLIAM DOWNEY SAID THEY SAW NO SIGN OF ANY REFUGEES DURING THE 95-MILE TRAIN RIDE FROM CANTON TO HONG KONG. THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES RODE THE TRAIN TO THE FRONTIER BETWEEN MAY 1 AND LAST FRIDAY WHEN COMMUNIST GUARDS TIGHTENED BORDER CONTROL.

"EVERYTHING LOOKED NORMAL TO ME," WILLIAM SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE TRAIN THEY RODE WAS NOT CROWDED.

DOWNEY SAID DURING HIS 1,200-MILE, 13-DAY TRIP HE SAID NO EVIDENCE OF STARVATION OR POLITICAL UNREST THAT MIGHT HAVE TOUCHED OFF THE REFUGEE EXODUS.

HE SAID PEIPING'S RESIDENTS APPEARED ADEQUATELY FED AND CLOTHED. THE REFUGEE FLIGHT CAUSED NO POLITICAL DISTURBANCE THAT HE COULD DISCERN.

"NO ONE LOOKED SHABBY IN PEIPING," HE SAID. "THEY ARE NOT DRESSED AS STYLISH AS IN A LARGE WESTERN CITY BUT NO ONE IS IN RAGS AND TATTERS."

DOWNEY VISITED IN PEIPING TO SEE HIS BROTHER IN 1958. THE ONLY OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES SINCE THEN, HE SAID, "WERE A FEW MORE TREES, BUILDINGS AND BUSES."

DOWNEY SAID THERE WAS NO IMMEDIATE PROSPECT OF JOHN DOWNEY BEING RELEASED, BUT THAT HE HAD "APPEARED IN GOOD SPIRITS."

HE REQUESTED ONLY THAT HE BE SENT MORE MAGAZINES. HE SAID JOHN HAD LEARNED OF ASTRONAUT MALCOLM SCOTT CARPENTER'S SPACE FLIGHT FROM CHINESE NEWSPAPERS WHICH ARE READ TO HIM DAILY.

"HE LOOKED VERY WELL," SAID MRS. DOWNEY, WHO HAS MADE FOUR TRIPS SINCE 1958 TO SEE JOHN, WHO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS WAS CONVICTED OF TRUMPED UP CHARGES.

A73

DOWNEY, AN ARMY CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE, DISAPPEARED DURING THE KOREAN WAR ON WHAT THE ARMY SAID WAS A ROUTINE FLIGHT FROM SEOUL TO JAPAN.

THE PEIPING GOVERNMENT CHARGED THAT DOWNEY AND RICHARD FECTEAU OF LYNN, MASS., WERE SHOT DOWN NOV. 29, 1952, WHILE FLYING OVER MANCHURIA TO DROP SUPPLIES TO ANTI-COMMUNIST AGENTS. FECTEAU WAS SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS.

ON HER LAST PEIPING VISIT IN 1960, MRS. DOWNEY SAID RED CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAD HINTED THAT JOHN, NOW 32, MIGHT BE RELEASED FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR. BUT SHE SAID SHE GOT THE IMPRESSION CLEMENCY COULD BE MANY YEARS AWAY.

BOTH DOWNEYS APPEARED TIRED FROM THEIR JOURNEY, BUT WILLIAM ASKED NEWSMEN FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON THE REFUGEE QUESTION.

AMERICAN IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS HAVE SAID SEVERAL THOUSAND REFUGEES MAY BE SENT TO THE UNITED STATES WITHIN TWO WEEKS.

"WE CERTAINLY WANT TO GET THEM GOING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY HOW MANY WILL GO OR EXACTLY WHEN," SAID H.L. HARDIN, IMMIGRATION SERVICES ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR TRAVEL CONTROL WHO CAME HERE TO HELP PROCESS REFUGEE APPLICATIONS.

THE IMMIGRANTS WILL BE SELECTED FROM ABOUT 19,000 CHINESE WHO HAVE HAD APPLICATIONS ON FILE AT THE U.S. CONSULATE AS FAR BACK AS 1954, HE SAID. IT WILL NOT INCLUDE ANY WHO MANAGED TO ELUDE BRITISH POLICE IN THE RECENT INFLUX ACROSS THE BORDER, HE ADDED.

M718AED