*Charles Hunt: Missionary and Martyr*

Brother Anthony

Charles Hunt was born on December 12, 1889 at Corbett Street, Barton Hill, Bristol, the youngest son of John Tuck Hunt and Clara Elizabeth. His father died the following year. Educated at Newfoundland Road Board School, Bristol, Charles was employed for a time as a solicitor’s clerk, and apprenticed to an upholsterer in Bristol. He then spent a year in the Society of the Evangelist brotherhood, Wolverhampton, and a year at Canning Town’s St Cedd Church before studying for the Anglican priesthood at St. Augustine’s College 1911-15, the (former) missionary college of the Anglican Communion in Canterbury. He left for Korea as a missionary before ordination, having earned a licence in theology from the University of Durham by his studies at Canterbury. He maintained contact with St. Augustine’s, writing them a total of 38 letters throughout his life.



**Photo of a portrait of Father Hunt displayed at Seoul Anglican Cathedral in Jeong-dong.**

Arriving in Korea in 1915 together with Ernest Henry Arnold (1890-1950), he went to live on Ganghwa Island to learn Korean. In 1916 Hunt was ordained deacon together with Arnold and served in the church in Jincheon, North Chungcheong Province, until their ordination as priests

in 1917, after which he served at the Cathedral in Seoul, living at least for a time with Bishop Trollope (1862-1930) and Fr. Henry John Drake SSM, (who served in Korea 1898-1941) in the Bishop’s Lodge.

In 1920, Bishop Trollope and Father Hunt travelled together to England, the bishop to attend the Lambeth Conference, while Father Hunt gave a number of talks in various parishes. They arrived in England, having crossed North America by train, on June 15, and Fr. Hunt wrote (in a letter to children in an issue of *Morning Calm*, a little magazine published in England since 1890 to give news of the Anglican Church in Korea): “at St. Bartholomew’s, Herne Bay, a little girl ran up to me and said: “Please, Father, here is sixpence for you; I was going to buy a photograph in a shop, but I want to give it to you for Corea.” I was much touched by her self-sacrifice. About a month ago I was at Rosliston, in Derbyshire, and the kindergarten children gave me six beautiful Nelson Bible Pictures for our children in Corea. How kind of them!”



**Father Charles Hunt, center right in dark robe, poses with the cast of a production of “The Pied Piper of Hamlin” he directed in the early 1930s. (Courtesy of Seoul Foreign School)**

During his time in Korea, Fr. Hunt produced a number of plays, including “The Pied Piper of Hamelin” at Seoul Foreign School as well as a regular series of Shakespeare plays. “As You Like It” was performed in 1931, with a performance for the foreign community and a separate one for Koreans and Japanese learning English. Hunt also produced at least one nativity play, with Koreans, in the Cathedral Crypt Library for Christmas 1934. The bishop’s letter in *Morning Calm* for April 1935 noted

that "Fr Hunt had procured a record of Stille Nacht, which was to be played as soft music on a gramophone. Unfortunately, the records seem to have got mixed, and the Wise Men approached with slow dignity to the strains of the Hawaiian Fox Trot!" He is also reported by a Korean source to have been familiar with the celebrated Korean writer Lee Gwang-soo.

In 1928 Fr. Hunt was put in charge of the Anglican mission to Gyeonggi Province and had a house in Yeoju, probably linked to St Anne’s (or Anna’s) Hospital which had been established by Dr Anne Borrow in 1922, providing medical benefits to poor farmers. She ran it until 1940 when it was forced to close. This would explain his interest in the royal tombs in that area, about which he wrote in the RAS *Transactions* vol. 31 in 1948-49. He also taught at St. Michael’s Theological Seminary in Incheon, which the Japanese finally closed on March 13, 1940. He regularly wrote a Letter for Children for *Morning Calm* and helped care for the boys in the hostel near the cathedral the Anglicans had established for boys from the countryside who were studying in Seoul.

In 1930 Bishop Trollope died of a heart attack as the ship on which he was returning from Europe after the Lambeth Conference struck another ship while entering Kobe harbour. He was succeeded by Alfred Cecil Cooper. Father Hunt left Korea just before the start of the Pacific War in 1941, together with some of the other English clergy, and served during the war as a British naval chaplain.

After the war, Bishop Cooper was able to return to Korea in April 1946 and his diary says that Fr. Hunt joined him there on October 4, 1946. From 1946 onwards, Fr. Hunt was Vicar General and seems to have been busy. Writing in *Morning Calm* in June 1948, when Bishop Cooper was on his way to the Lambeth Conference in England, he noted that he was teaching English on a casual basis to many students and more formally to members of the research department of the Bank of Chosen. He lectured to US Red Cross societies, and was heavily involved in the RAS. He periodically stood in for American chaplains and took services wherever he travelled. Bishop Cooper was able to travel to England to attend the 1948 Lambeth Conference thanks to donations from the (mainly American military) congregation at the Cathedral in Seoul.1 He travelled as he had in 1920, sailing eastward to North America, then travelling across the United States before taking a ship at New York for England. In 1948 he had a considerable number of speaking engagements in the United States, no doubt part of a post-war fundraising campaign. He gave a talk at Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) in London on

1 *The Living Church*, Volume 116, May 16, 1948, 9.

June 30, 1948.

Father Hunt arrived in England on January 25, 1949, having flown from Hong Kong in four days. He gave a talk at Chatham House on August 17, 1949, prior to returning to Korea in September. He also spoke at the 248th annual meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) in London, stressing the need for more missionaries in Korea. He is listed as RAS Korea’s vice president for 1948-9 in Volume 31 of *Transactions*, (which was printed in Hong Kong, dated 1948-9) and became the RAS president at the start of 1950 (listed as such in Volume 32 of *Transactions* dated 1951 and also printed in Hong Kong after the North Korean withdrawal from Seoul).

After refusing to leave Seoul at the outbreak of hostilities on June 25, 1950, Father Hunt was captured and taken North together with the Anglican Bishop Cooper, Sister Mary Clare (Whitty) and other religious figures, including the Catholic Apostolic Delegate Bishop Patrick Byrne (a Maryknoll missionary, who also died in captivity), Monsignor Thomas Quinlan (St. Columban’s Society, prefect-apostolic of Chuncheon, who survived), a number of Catholic priests and sisters, American military, and several diplomats including British Minister to South Korea Vyvyan Holt and Vice-Consul George Blake, who later became notorious as a Soviet spy. Father Albert William Lee (1893-1950), who came to Korea from England in 1920 and was principal of the Theological College in 1950, was arrested in July 1950 at Incheon by North Korean forces, together with two Korean clergy, and all disappeared without trace.

Charles Hunt died at the end of the terrible Death March, when the prisoners were forced to undergo a nine-day march of over 80 kilometers in November 1950. Information about his last weeks is given by Larry Zellers in his book, *In Enemy Hands: A Prisoner in North Korea*:

Monsignor Quinlan and someone else were assisting Father Charles Hunt, the Anglican priest. A very large man with foot problems, he found it difficult to keep up with the fast pace of the march. Monsignor and his partner were supporting Father Hunt’s upper body, while the lower lagged behind by about three feet. This unnatural position placed an added burden on the two carriers. Father Hunt wore excellent shoes, but either they didn’t fit him very well or else they couldn’t fit because of gout. I remembered his problems with gout as far back as the schoolhouse in Pyongyang. When I asked him about it on one occasion, he sarcastically replied: “I always blame such things on that tomato juice I drank last night.”

(Father Hunt was very fond of whisky). The only time so far in our prison experience that we had had anything close to a balanced diet was at Manpo. Father Hunt, however, had not been able to eat the dried fish supplied to us there. To have missed the relatively good diet during that one month at Manpo was to place oneself at added risk when the diet degenerated. He was thus able to survive as far as Chunggangjin, in the far North, very close to the Yalu River, then they finally arrived in Hanjang-ni, a few hours’ march to the east, where he died, three weeks after Sister Mary Clare, the Irish Anglican sister from Seoul.2

Zellers continued:

We arrived in Chunggangjin on November 8, having departed Manpo on October 31 In Chungganjin we were quartered

for a week in an old school house, where we were met by the women and the elderly who had been transported by bus and truck from Chasong. Helen Rosser came up to inform me that Sister Mary Clare had died after she arrived at Chunggangjin.3

Bishop Cooper in his diary gives the death dates for Sister Mary Clare, who had first arrived in Korea in 1923 and was Mother Superior of the Society of the Holy Cross, as November 6, 1950, at age 67, and for Father Hunt as November 20, 1950. An article in *The Living Church* of May 10, 1953, just after Bishop Cooper was released, includes the following:

Father Hunt, already a sick man at the time of his capture, died in Bishop Cecil’s arms. Sister Mary Clare, who had remained in Korea to be with the Korean Sisters of the Holy Cross, died also, but apart from the Bishop, since women were not allowed to be with men. She was cared for by the Roman Catholic Sisters, who risked their lives to bury her and to bring her cross and ring to Bishop Cecil as a testimony of her death. Bishop Cecil knows, as we all realize, that death

2 Larry Zellers, *In Enemy Hands: A Prisoner in North Korea* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 100.

3 Ibid., 118.

came to these two as a merciful release. Both had been in ill health, neither could have faced long captivity. They had walked until their shoes were worn through, and later Fr. Hunt had walked to the bones of his feet. He had never been even a mild walker, and could not live on Korean food.

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# Appendix 1

The following is a description of a talk given at the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House in London by Rev Charles Hunt on August 17, 1949. RAS London Librarian Edward Weech discovered it in the Chatham House archive and obtained republication permission.

# Korea 1915-49: Changes and Prospects

Sir Frederick Whyte welcomed the speaker and told the group that Father Hunt had seen changes and developments in Korea over a period of 30- odd years. He would be returning again in the autumn.

Mr Hunt said he thought that there were signs of promise and progress in the future, and he had a great belief in the Korean people. After spending four years in the Navy during the war he had found on his return to Korea that he liked the people better than when he had left to fight the Japanese. During the time he had been away, however, more changes had taken place than one could have believed possible in such a short period.

First of all Mr Hunt said that he would like to tell the group how he found Korea in 1915. Last year, Bishop Cecil Cooper, who had spent 40 or more years in the country, had told them about conditions there. He had been in that country some six years before the annexation of Korea by Japan on August 23, 1910, and by 1915 when the speaker had arrived a considerable amount of progress had already taken place. In 1925-35 the standard had improved and living was comparatively easy, and life was pleasant on the whole, but in 1941 feelings were very bitter, and one felt an inevitable change coming over the country. From 1938 onwards the Koreans had taken a new view of the Japanese occupation. Japan was ‘on the top line’ to quote a Naval expression, with victories in Manchuria, and Korea thought it best and more profitable to hang on to Japanese coat-tails as it were.

In 1915 life was very primitive in Korea. There was one railway in the whole country from Fusan [Busan] north to the north of Korea. Transport was extremely poor; a line ran down to the port of Chemulpo [Incheon] on the east coast, and from Fusan in the south to the north of Korea, but otherwise there was no other transport in the country. As far as Mr Hunt knew the only motor car in the country at that time belonged to the governor. But conditions soon changed under the beam of Japan’s rapid expansion policy. The Japanese built roads, and covered the countryside with a network of electric trains running east and west and opening up new ports — notably Rashin [Rajin] and Seishin [Cheongjin]

— which served the military forces of Japan as a base from which to attack Russia and China. All transport was made with the idea of precipitating exploitation. Life became prosperous for produce was easily obtainable and commodities were cheap. Some of the best rice lands in Korea were acquired and a great deal of rice was taken over for feeding the Japanese army and much was sent to Japan. They certainly improved, however, agriculture and seri-culture and fruit growing. More than anything else Japan improved the forestation of the country by replanting the hills and improving irrigation. The speaker had been shocked on returning in 1946 to find that these forests had all disappeared. Therein lay Japan’s mistake. She had treated Korea as her subject, not as her protectorate, and had exploited her too much. There were great potentialities in Korea but there were limits to a country’s productivity, and Japan had over-stepped the mark. The Korean people had always hated the Japanese. During the first years of the Japanese occupation the Koreans had watched with amazement the progress of the Japanese, not only with their expansion policy in Korea but in war also, where they seemed to have everything their own way. Mr Hunt did not think that the Japanese would be back in Korea for 100 years at least. Japan’s war potential was destroyed for many years to come: ‘She had gone up like a rocket and come down like one’ was a true Korean saying.

Of the Japanese rulers, Baron Saito was in Korea for a long time. He succeeded General Hasegawa and was the first liberal governor. He brought peace and prosperity to the country. There was no independent Korean government; all policy and law was controlled by Japan.

It was a military government.

At that period life was fairly easy for the people. Iron, machinery and utensils were cheap and plentiful, also beautiful silks. The Japanese had built the perhaps second-largest hydro-electric plant in the world on the Yalu River, which provided cheap electricity for practically all Korea and power for the factories. Russia now had control of this. At that time it supported a large number of textile factories throughout the country, In order to encourage the home market and to ensure trade with Japan, most of the trade with Britain in the form of cloths and cottons had ceased by 1920, although Bradford cloth could still be bought in small quantities. By 1937, there was an army of perhaps 2 million troops in Korea, Mongolia and Manchuria, and all foreigners in Korea were suspected of being spies. During the war the manufacture of real cotton goods was forbidden and a coarse fibrous substitute ‘sufu’ was all that was allowed. Food became scarce for Korea’s rice went to feed the Japanese army. The Japanese imported beans and inferior rice from Rangoon into Korea, and by that

time it was a treat to have a bowl of rice. Soya beans, peas and millet were also used as substitutes.

Today, Mr Hunt said that in the large towns where rationing had been introduced by the Americans, food was extremely scarce, but the country people were reasonably well off. In the late 1930s the fishing industry, which the Japanese had improved, had again deteriorated, especially salmon fishing in the Tumen River, owing to the lack of tin for the tinning trade. Shoes, especially those of the villagers, were very poor. Rubber shoes ‘komo shin’ disappeared altogether. The Korean men were drilled and put into uniform. They were not, however, allowed to join the Japanese army. Later they were conscripted and some fought at Okinawa, and elsewhere on the borders of Manchuria with the Japanese.

Discussing Japanese colonial rule the speaker said that they had had no real contact with the people, and hadn’t even made any attempt to learn their language. Japanese had been taught in all schools. This total ignorance of what the Koreans were thinking and how they would react was demonstrated at the time of the ‘Mansei’ disturbances in March 1919 when the Koreans had shouted as a body for their freedom and yet not one Japanese had known of this plot. The demonstration was suppressed with great brutality and the Korean police were worse than the Japanese. Their methods were frightful, and they had a reputation for cruelty. After the rising, however, General Hasegawa was replaced by the comparatively enlightened Admiral Viscount Saito, and conditions for a time improved, but in the 1930s they again deteriorated and by 1941 the country’s standard of living had dropped still further. There was open hostility towards Great Britain and later to America.

Mr Hunt said he returned to Korea via Japan where he had been with the British Navy. He had seen the destruction at Hiroshima, and so he was prepared for a great shock on returning to the country, but he had been horrified and amazed at the destruction he had seen. Kure, the great naval port (in Japan), was in ruins. Korea had not greatly suffered from war damage, but the Japanese had cut down the pine trees to make trench poles or to extract fuel from the roots. Everything was in chaos, including communications and transport, and there was an acute housing shortage. Korea had been promised her freedom ‘in due course’ at the Yalta Conference but the 38th parallel had become an arbitrary line splitting the country between the Russians in the North and the Americans in the South. When the speaker returned there were no Japanese left in Korea. Not even ‘key men’ to assist in the transfer of government to the Koreans, and as a result there were great difficulties and misunderstandings when the Americans took over the capital and southern half of the country. The

Americans had at first wished to keep a few Japanese to help in the transfer, but the Koreans had enough of the Japanese, and the Americans had to manage as best they could, with no knowledge of the Korean language. Their task was not made easier by the enormous increase of the population, refugees and much riff-raff returned from Mongolia, Manchuria and elsewhere.

In Seoul alone, the population had increased from 500,000 to over 2 million. This increase was caused by refugees from Manchuria and Japan. Shortages of food, and especially water, were acute, and there was no light, since the Russians had control of the electricity plant in the north. Oil and candles were almost unobtainable, or in very short supply, and the town was under curfew. As can be imagined, no man’s possessions were safe. Mr Hunt said that before the war he had not found it necessary even to shut the doors or lock his drawers, but now an American ambassador had lost 14 shirts the night he arrived. There was still smuggling too on the borders of Mongolia, Manchuria, and China, where the Koreans had been used by the Japanese for smuggling silver and drugs, heroin, opium, etc.

Most of the rolling stock had been taken to the North when the Japanese thought there was to be an invasion in the South by the U.S.A. and thus remained in the Soviet zone. The Americans were doing all they could, at great cost to themselves, to import raw materials, especially raw cotton for the textile factories, and machinery and plant for electricity production, but supplies were very slow coming through. Some 100 locomotives had been bought from Germany by the U.S.A. Mr Hunt said that to add to the difficulties, the food rationing scheme worked out by the Americans was breaking down. Coal for the South was imported in a small way from Japan, and there was a soft-coal mine on the southeastern coast of Korea, but apart from this, all Korea’s coal mines were in the North and those were in the hands of the Russians. Moreover, the great coal mines in Manchuria were no longer available. Southern Korea had gone without fuel from December to March 1946.

The United Nations Commission was sent by the United Nations to supervise the setting up of a government for the whole of Korea, but was refused entry into the North by the Russians, who had set up a police government with perhaps 250,000 communist troops. In May last year [1948], the commission had supervised the setting up of a government in the South, and 82 percent of the electorate went to the polls, with complete freedom to select their representatives. The interim government was then dissolved. The new government was inaugurated by General MacArthur on 15 August 1948, who said on that occasion that he would ‘fight for

Korea as he would for California,’ whatever this might mean. The newly elected cabinet looked well on paper, perhaps as window dressing, but they were an impressive lot.

This government was known as the Han Kuk or Republic of Han, the new name for Korea, but the Russians had refused to recognise it. Mr Ann Ho-sang was appointed the minister of education, Mr Chang (later replaced by Mr Ko) became foreign minister and Miss Louise Lim, the minister of industry and commerce. General Lee Dum-suk [Lee Beom- seok] was elected prime minister. He had been in charge of the Youth Movement in South Korea something after the nature of the Hitler Youth movement, and had fought as a general in the Chinese army.

The Land Reform Bill was now being discussed. Tenant farmers have already bought land of their own, and it is possible that lands belonging to the Buddhist monasteries and religious and educational institutions and perhaps the church may be confiscated, and perhaps compensation given. This move would deprive Buddhist temples, schools and hospitals of a large proportion of their revenue. But no decision on this has yet been reached. Should the Land Reform Bill go through, including this confiscation of church land, all the endowments which have been built up slowly for over 50 years will be lost, and the church will be much impoverished.

The Americans were evacuating Korea. There was now only a small skeleton army near Chemulpo on the west coast and at Ascom City of perhaps 10,000 men. The United States ambassador has not yet been able to present his credentials, and whether he would succeed or not remained to be seen. Rising Communist troops have been driven into the hills of Songdo and Kaesong and to Qualpart [Jeju] island, and there had been a serious revolt at Yoshu [Yeosu] and Soon-Chun [Suncheon].4 It was a grim picture that Mr Hunt had to present today.

# Questions

Colonel Somerville said that in 1915 he had been in Korea and many people had told him here that the Koreans were very inclined towards Christianity. He wondered if the speaker agreed with this.

Mr Hunt said that he had especially avoided the subject of religion but it was certainly true to say that the Koreans had a capacity for religion. Buddhism had at one time been a popular religion but was now driven into

4 He is referring to the Yeosu-Suncheon revolt of October 1948.

the hills and there were some, perhaps several temples left. These were beautiful, and Buddhist services were always performed with great ceremony, but they had no real hold or effect upon the lives of the people; their religion was a thing apart, and there was no bridge between everyday life and spiritual beliefs. There were no places of worship in the towns; all temples were built outside on the hillside, away from the bustle of the cities and villages.

There was room for Christianity in Korea, and since he had been there, Mr Hunt said he had experienced stimulating and even exciting times. It was a characteristic of the Korean people that once they had grasped a fact they clung to it with dogged determination as evidenced by several periods of persecution and martyrdom. At the moment there was no strong feeling towards other religions or anti-foreign movements, although there had been a revival of a kind of Korean Shintoism after the manner of Japanese Shintoism, which was fostered by the revival of a cult called ‘Tangunism’. Tangun was the mythical founder of Korea in 2281

B.C. and Tangunism encouraged a war-like nationalism, which might well have the same effect on Korea as the same spirit had had on Japan.

There were Christian high schools, a Christian university and a woman’s Christian university, but, all universities suffered from lack of textbooks, since all the previous textbooks had been in Japanese, and these were now destroyed. Mr Hunt had asked the minister of information if it would be possible to introduce Christian ethics into their textbooks, but he said this was not possible. Korea had its own philosophy, and books on Korean philosophy were to be used. Before the war new converts to the Christian religion had numbered 1000 converts a year.

Mr Kennedy said that in South Korea the Americans were encouraging a police force. Did Mr Hunt consider that if and when the Americans had withdrawn, this police force would be able to stand up against the well-trained Communist army in the North of Korea?

Mr Hunt said that it was not a police force. The Constabulary was now the Korean National Army and quite distinct from the police. But there was a much-hated police force in Korea, a powerful one continuing on Japanese lines. There was a strong youth movement in Korea, very like the Hitler Youth Movement. It was true to say that the Communists in the North were very strong and it was evident that sooner or later the North must be united with the South. The Americans had given the Koreans in the South a quantity of ammunition, but they would need a great deal more. He thought that above everything the Korean people dreaded a civil war, and rather than that they would compromise. Whether the threat of Russian backing would carry weight he did not know, but the South could

put up a good fight. The revolts in Son Chun [Suncheon] and Songdo [Kaesong] had been successfully dealt with by the constabulary. Korea also had a Coast Guard Section, now the Korean Navy.

Mr Kennedy asked if when the Russians had withdrawn they had left Communist officials to influence the people. Were there still liaison officers in the North?

Mr Hunt replied that there were not very many left now. He thought the behaviour of Korean Communist troops without the Russians would be even worse than with the Russians. For the Koreans were a wild and savage people when roused. General Cho, the North Korean governor, was a very able man; the Russians had spotted him, and encouraged him, and he had learnt much from them.

Mr Green said that at the elections last year (1948) it was reported that there were about 400 different parties taking part. He asked Mr Hunt if the intellectual classes supported the government wholeheartedly or was there a danger of a weakening of the government by scrapping, and inability to compromise.

Mr Hunt replied that one of the weaknesses in Korea was that the parties never pulled together. But there had always been political parties in Korea, and there was always bickering and argument. But he did not believe that there was anything like as many parties as 40, although, admittedly, there were a great many. At the moment, the Americans, with their phobia against anything akin to Communism, would not let the Koreans have any party more left wing than a lukewarm liberalism. The Koreans, however, loved to ‘split hairs,’ each man stood for himself, and at the moment they were more or less at liberty to do this. The Koreans believed in personalities and principles rather than parties, and he was quite sure that they had no idea how Communism worked out in practice. General Piggott said that he had enjoyed Mr Hunt’s talk enormously. The speaker was obviously an enthusiast on his subject, and he found his affection for Korea very refreshing. Mr Gubbins had described Korea as ‘an oriental state in complete decay.’ This was at the time of the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95. Then there was the struggle for Port Arthur which the Russians seized in 1898. There was no question where the aggression came from. It came from Russia and from Russia alone. He considered there had been some excuse for Japan wishing to build up her strategic defences in case of war, and helping Korea to do the same. The annexation of Korea gave Japan the power to do this, and her position there was not dissimilar to ours in Egypt. General Piggott spoke of the part ceremony played in the lives of the Korean royal family; he remembered that when he had called on Prince Ito [Hirobumi, the first

Japanese resident-general of Korea from 1905 to 1909], Admiral Saito had chided him for not also calling on the Korean royal family.

There was the question of the future. It has been said that the Japanese would not be back in Korea for 100 years, but he was sure that they would be back much sooner, and for the sake of Korea he hoped that they would.

Mr Cassels said that conditions in the towns seemed to be very bad. Could not the refugees from Manchuria and elsewhere be directed in some way into useful employment?

Mr Hunt said that negotiations were in progress for a trade agreement with Japan, and refugees were being placed on the land. Provided that the Americans could set up power plants which would give the people work and set industry on its feet again, the prospects were not so bad. Korea had a future in fruit farming for instance, her apples and peaches were as good as any in the world. But at the moment they suffered from unscrupulous leaders. The government was corrupt; Miss Lim had been a bad choice for minister of commerce. He thought the only hope was to encourage people to go on the land, so that food production could be speeded up. There were increases in tungsten ore and the fisheries were a valuable source of income.

Mr Oliver asked how free elections had been held, if even the southern half of Korea was police-ridden. The statements appeared to be incompatible.

Mr Hunt said that the Americans had largely been responsible for organising and protecting the freedom of the vote at the elections, although the elections were organised by a committee of Koreans who had done the job well. The prisons were overcrowded and moral standards were very low. Conditions were improving, he said, but it was necessary to maintain a large police force.

Fr Milward asked if the speaker would say that the police were out for their own ends, or did they pursue a policy which they believed to be their duty.

Mr Hunt said that the police were hated and it was a police-ridden state really. The president however, was the choice of the people. The American Army and police also supported the president, and wanted to see him protected. The government was anti-communist.

Sir Frederick Whyte thanked the speaker warmly for his talk. 17 August 1949

Chatham House

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