

## THOMAS D. BARBER—Biographical Sketch



Mr. Barber is a native of Plainview, Texas, and a graduate of Texas Christian University. He holds a B.A. and a M.A. degree in geology. He served two years in the U.S. Navy in World War II. From 1946 to 1959, he was with Pan American Petroleum Corp. in various geological and administrative positions. He joined Michel T. Halbouty in 1959 as exploration manager. He became general manager in 1968

and was elected vice president of Halbouty Alaska Oil Company in 1969.

He is the co-author of two publications: *Pt. Acres, Port Arthur Fields, Jefferson County, Texas, and Responsibility of Geologists and Petroleum Engineers*; he is the author of the publication, *Practice of Petroleum Exploration in the Gulf Coast Area*.

His professional affiliations include: AAPG, APGS, GSA, IPAA, AAPL, Houston Geological Society, Society of Exploration Geophysicists, Geophysical Society of Houston, South Texas Geological Society, and the Wyoming Geological Society. Mr. Barber is serving as Vice President of AAPG for the 1978-1979 term.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

In October of 1978, a group of 14 American geologists spent 16 days in The People's Republic of China. Their visit was in response to an invitation extended by the Chinese through the Wyoming Geological Society to tour China's giant Taching Oil Field, and meet with Chinese geologists in Taching and Shanghai for scientific, technical and cultural exchanges.

One of the members of the American delegation was Tom Barber, General Manager for Michel T. Halbouty and Vice President of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. Mr. Barber's comments on China's mineral and petroleum potential and its political and economic future are based on observations and experiences during that visit and events which have occurred since.

### WHAT PRICE A BOWL OF RICE: SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE FUTURE POTENTIAL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (Abstract)

China occupies ten percent of the world's land area and is home for one-quarter of all the people who live on the face of the earth. These one billion Chinese are the product of the oldest, continuous civilization in the world with a recorded history that goes back 4,000 years and a geological history that locates a primitive ancestor living and loving thirty miles southwest of Peking over 400,000 years ago.

China is a land of contrasts and contradictions. The Chinese are friendly but wary; smart but uninformed; energetic and industrious but totally subject to the rigid totalitarian rule of the Chinese communist party which has been in power since 1949.

Throughout its long history, China has experienced many changes but probably none so profound or so abrupt as the changes which have taken place during this last thirty year period. Guided by the strong charismatic dictatorship of Mao Tse-Tung, China has found enough oil to be self-sufficient and obtained enough food to provide each comrade a bowl of rice a day. For a people who were starving, this in itself is a significant achievement, but after thirty years, a daily bowl of rice can become a little tasteless.

China has a substantial mineral resource and a petroleum potential that may not be as significant as many have prophesied. The Taching Field in the Sung-Liao Basin of northern Manchuria is symbolic of the anomaly that is China. Nevertheless, China has the capabilities of becoming a major first-rate industrial power. To modernize and industrialize China needs a long period of peace. China does not need territory; it needs hardware and know-how.

With Mao's death in 1976 and the ouster of the nefarious "gang of four", new winds of change are causing the red flag to flutter. The winds are from the west and they carry the sweet scent of a more abundant life. The Chinese must make some difficult decisions in the years immediately ahead. They must choose between more classless socialism or a little bit of capitalism; more Mao Tse-Tung jackets or a few Pierre Cardin gowns. Bet on the Frenchman but realize that the changes these choices provoke may prove to be even more profound and more abrupt than those of the last thirty years.