

DEC 14 1971

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1971

Chinese Haven't Lied, Says Ex-Wife of Fecteau

LYNN, Mass., Dec. 13 (AP)—The divorced wife of Richard G. Fecteau, the man released from a Chinese prison after serving 19 years on a spying charge, said today: "The Chinese haven't been lying."

Mrs. Margaret Fecteau said at a crowded news conference at her home: "It's very involved and I'm not supposed to get into it. He was a civilian working for the U. S. Government. I know what he was doing, but I can't say. Let me put it this way—the Chinese haven't been lying."

The Chinese had charged that Mr. Fecteau was on a mission for the United States Central Intelligence Agency to drop Nationalist Chinese spies. The United States has repeatedly denied the charge.

Mrs. Fecteau said she was "paralyzed" with joy by the announcement of Mr. Fecteau's release. She attributed the Chinese decision to free him to President Nixon's move to open lines of communications with mainland China.

"It should have happened a long time ago," Mrs. Fecteau said. "If we had only owned up to the Chinese in the beginning, perhaps he wouldn't have had to spend all those years in prison."

"It's better to have an enemy you can argue with than one you can't even talk to."

Mrs. Fecteau was divorced from Fecteau in 1951, the year before he was captured and never remarried. "We hold no resentment against our Government," she said. "They did what they thought was best."

Mrs. Fecteau and her 21-year-old twin daughters, Suzon and Sidnice, talked to reporters after a day spent preparing for Mr. Fecteau's return and of

waiting for word from the State Department.

The last photograph the twins have of their father was taken in 1958 when Mr. Fecteau's mother visited him in prison. Until stopped by the Communists four years ago, the twins corresponded with their father every month.

Girl's Parents Had Given Up
PALO ALTO, Calif., Dec. 13 (AP)—The father of Mary Ann Harbert, who was released from prison by China, said today that he and his wife had given their daughter up for dead three years ago.

"I'm pretty numb," said Gene Harbert when he learned that his daughter, whose 26th birth-

day is Dec. 27, was alive and on her way to the United States.

Mr. Harbert, a civil engineer on the staff of the United States Geological Survey in Menlo Park, Calif., said his daughter had left San Francisco on April 18, 1968, to fly to Hong Kong to meet a friend of the family, Gerald Rosse McLaughlin, who had bought a yacht in Hong Kong.

Mr. Harbert said his daughter and Mr. McLaughlin had planned to sail the yacht back to the United States. "We didn't miss them for 10 days or so because they were supposed to report at Manila," Mr. Harbert said.