

SIX MONTHS OF SECRETARY HUGHES

By NICHOLAS ROOSEVELT

IF Mr. Hughes maintains the standards set during the first six months of his control of our foreign relations, history will record him as one of America's greatest Secretaries of State.

Not since the days of Root and Hay has there been such a combination of firmness, political shrewdness and idealism in the direction of America's foreign affairs. Where Mr. Hughes' predecessors since 1908 floundered or theorized or vacillated, he has kept both feet firmly on the ground, and yet not lost sight of his ideals.

There was doubt expressed when the public first heard of his selection. Mr. Hughes was still laboring under the curse of the 1916 campaign. His enemies likened him to Wilson. They said he was obstinate, that he resented advice, that he knew nothing of the world beyond America.

But it took less than six weeks in office to dispel this hallucination. Mr. Hughes, it was discovered, had lost his mantle of ice. He showed great firmness, but sought advice and readily accepted it when it was sound. He manifested an uncanny shrewdness and quickness in mastering the intricate problems brought before him. Those who had dealings with him were struck with his skill in discarding the non-essentials. He examined questions thoroughly, from all possible angles. But his decision was swift and sound.

The country, however, could only judge from his public statements. And these, instead of being in the long-winded ambiguous verbose style of the Wilson Administration, were

brief, clear and firm. The world was surprised. It had become so accustomed to Wilsonian methods that it was convinced that of the making of notes there was no end. The policy of shaking the fist and then the finger had deadened any latent belief that behind these notes was a firm intent. But in Mr. Hughes' statements, from the first to the latest, there has been a ring of conviction, a firmness of purpose, that has been as refreshing as a cool breeze after a fevered night. As they read them, people said to each other, "Mr. Hughes means business!" And this has indeed proved true.

One of the first important questions brought before the new Secretary of State was the Panama-Costa Rica boundary dispute. This had dragged along for years, and was a sore spot in our Pan-American relations. Panama refused to abide by an arbitration award made by Chief Justice White. War with Costa Rica threatened. Firm action was required. The Secretary never hesitated. A principle was at stake—the sanctity of arbitration awards. Panama and Costa Rica had agreed, before it was made, to abide by the White award, and under the circumstances Mr. Hughes announced that the United States stood firmly back of the decision of the Chief Justice. Not to enforce the award was to make a mockery of the principle of arbitration.

Panama, accustomed to the Wilson wobbling, protested again, and yet again. Mr. Hughes stood pat and in May announced that "reasonable time" would be allowed Panama to accept the award. In August, Panama being still obdurate, the Secretary announced that the reasonable time had elapsed, and dispatched a battalion of marines to preserve order. Panama accepted.

There are three lessons in this affair. The first is the unflinching adherence to a principle. This same firmness has marked all of the Secretary's acts. The second is the use of the big stick. The Secretary knew that unless American troops were near, there would be war and bloodshed. Having taken the precaution, he preserved the peace. The third lesson is the appreciation of the effect on our Latin-

American policy. South America considered Panama as the special pet of the United States. Panama counted on this and hoped that the United States would reverse the award that favored Costa Rica at Panama's expense. Therefore, when the United States upheld Costa Rica and the cause of justice, it made a deep impression in the Latin countries.

The importance of this Panama action is all the greater in view of the unfortunate blunder of the administration in passing the Colombian blackmail treaty. Mr. Hughes, it appears, had little to do with this, and the principle odium belongs to Senator Lodge, whose extraordinary reversal of the policy which he had upheld for eighteen years can find no charitable explanation. The evident part that oil played in affecting the passage of the treaty made it quite plain to the South American nations that the United States acted not because they believed Colombia's claim just, but solely because they hoped by paying this bribe of twenty-five million dollars to protect American interests from foreign encroachment. The impression in South America, where Colombia's claim has always been supported, can therefore only be most unfortunate. The Panama affair, on the other hand, will go far towards offsetting this vicious blunder. So also will the withdrawal of American marines from Santo Domingo.

Two other acts early in the Administration were also significant. The first was the declaration that Soviet Russia was still beyond the pale. The second was the approval of the China Consortium. In pledging the support of the Government to the American group in this four-power banking syndicate to control the financing of Chinese loans, the Secretary confirmed the policy of protecting American rights in China and paved the way for the active resumption of the Open Door policy. Mr. Wilson in 1913 condemned governmental support of American business in China, and later reversed himself. Mr. Hughes at once gave the policy new vigor.

More important still, he later took occasion to elucidate his position on the Open Door in a note that stands out as

particularly significant in view of the coming Conference on the Limitation of Armaments. "Your reference to the principle of the Open Door," he wrote to the Chinese Minister, Dr. Sze, "affords me the opportunity to assure you of this Government's continuance in its whole-hearted support of the principle which it has traditionally regarded as fundamental both to the interests of China itself and to the common interests of all powers in China, and indispensable to the free and peaceful development of their commerce on the Pacific Ocean.

"The Government of the United States has never associated itself with any arrangement which sought to establish any special rights or privileges in China which would abridge the rights of the subjects or citizens of other friendly states, and I am happy to assure you that it is the purpose of this Government neither to participate nor to acquiesce in any arrangement which might purport to establish in favor of foreign interests any superiority of rights with respect to commercial or economic development in designated regions of the territories of China, or which might seek to create any such monopoly or preference as would exclude other nationals from undertaking any legitimate trade or industry or from participating with the Chinese Government in any category of public enterprise."

This declaration was a reaffirmation of America's China policy.

The next important step was the note on mandates, with special reference to Yap. The Secretary picked up the negotiations started by Mr. Colby and developed them with force and finality. The United States, he pointed out, had not authorized either the League of Nations or the Supreme Council to bind it in any negotiations. "It will not be questioned," he said, "that the right to dispose of the overseas possessions of Germany was acquired only through the victory of the Allied and Associated Powers, and it is also believed that there is no disposition on the part of the British Government to deny the participation of the United

States in that victory. It would seem to follow necessarily that the right accruing to the Allied and Associated Powers through common victory is shared by the United States and that there would be no valid or effective disposition of the overseas possessions of Germany now under consideration without the assent of the United States."

Not only did this position affect Yap, but it indicated America's stand on the Mesopotamian question which had been in dispute and it did so in a manner that could not be refuted. In September Mr. Hughes took occasion to elaborate America's stand on mandates, developing this same argument. It was evident that he "meant business."

His next adventure was with Germany. Accustomed to browbeating the Wilson administration, the German Government tried the old tactics on Mr. Hughes. It sought to enlist American sympathy on the side of Germany in the matter of reparations. It hoped that Mr. Hughes would show the administration's gratitude for the German vote in the 1920 election by using his influence to moderate the reparations.

But Secretary Hughes' first announcement was to the point. "This Government," he said, "stands with the Governments of the Allies in holding Germany responsible for the war, and therefore morally bound to make reparations so far as may be possible."

Germany ignored the bitter thrust in the first part. Seeing only the last phrase, she thought it was a Wilsonism. She suggested that America act as mediator between the Allies and the common enemy.

Mr. Hughes refused, and urged the German Government "at once to make directly to the Allied Governments clear, definite and adequate proposals which would in all respects meet with its just obligations."

Germany then accepted his advice and the reparations were paid.

Poland, probably motivated by France, next tried to "pull his leg" and entangle him in the Silesian question.

Mr. Hughes at once pointed out that this was "a matter of European concern in which, in accord with the traditional policy of the United States, this Government should not become involved." The statement was categorical and effective and put an end to misunderstandings in Europe.

The scene then shifted to Mexico. "When it appears," wrote the Secretary, "that there is a Government in Mexico willing to bind itself to the discharge of primary international obligations, concurrently with that act, its recognition will take place." He pointed out that certain provisions of the Mexican Constitution could be interpreted retroactively and could then be applied in a confiscatory manner. So long as they were not interpreted conforming to international law, America could not recognize the Mexican Government. He made it plain that it was a matter of legal status, and not a question of personality.

The negotiations proceeded slowly and deliberately. It took Mr. Obregon some time to realize that Mr. Hughes meant what he said. He made various feints, and was so ill-advised as to turn (so the report goes) to one of Mr. Wilson's most notorious publicity agents for advice and counsel. He also appealed to the people of the United States through the press.

But Mr. Hughes was patient, and when someone apparently by mistake ordered several gunboats to Tampico, the Secretary withdrew them and made it plain that there was no desire in any way to repeat the Vera Cruz incident.

He allowed Under-Secretary of State Fletcher to give an interview to *El Universal*, one of the leading Mexican papers, in which America's friendly intentions were made thoroughly clear. He urged the oil men to settle their difficulties direct with the Mexican Government. He did everything in his power to smooth the path of the negotiations. Through it all he was firm but just.

Of the separate peace with Germany not much can yet be said. By cutting out all those articles of the Versailles Treaty prejudicial to America's interests, an agreement has

been reached which preserves to America practically all the benefits of this treaty without its disadvantages. The fact that we have not taken up the European's burden seems to have annoyed the Administration's critics. They appear to feel that we received too much in the bargain and did not give away enough. Much more to the point, however, is the fact that instead of chasing after rainbows, the Secretary has looked after America's interests first, and has among other things, obtained a reaffirmation of America's joint interest in Yap and other German mandated territories.

Stephane Lauzanne, one of France's sanest journalists, views this treaty from the point of view of America's special interests. "Happy America!" he writes. "She has just signed a peace treaty with Germany after having negotiated it alone, without partners who praise you today and betray you tomorrow, and without dealing in compromises and politics and lying promises. Her plenipotentiaries have had to consider only American interests; have had to take account of only American wishes; have had to defend only American traditions. Her statesmen will in the future have to consult only the American people if difficulties arise over the execution of the treaty. Thrice happy America!"

And yet this seems to annoy the Administration's enemies.

But in the negotiations for the Conference on the Limitation of Armaments, the Secretary of State has shown that he possesses true statesmanship. Coming at the particular time and in the particular manner, it at once placed America in the rôle of world leader. More important still, it opened the way to a closer Anglo-American understanding. It made it possible to seek cooperation in the settlement of those knotty Far Eastern problems which stand in the way of world peace. With great wisdom the Secretary coupled the question of the Pacific with the limitation of armaments, realizing full well that none of the nations would consider disarming so long as there were acute problems unsolved. But he went one step further and made it possible to bring

up the discussion of questions such as came up before the Hague conferences. By inviting merely the five powers he recognized the fact that the general peace of the world is now in the custody of a particular group of nations. In them resides the power, and there can be no effective guarantee of peace that is not backed by power.

There is, of course, much more than appears on the surface in the negotiations for this conference. There have been daily meetings between the Secretary of State and foreign Ambassadors. Notes have been exchanged as to subjects for discussion. Efforts have been made to settle pending negotiations that might otherwise prove embarrassing. It has been made clear to Japan that the conference is in no way meant to arraign her before the Western powers. Proposals have been advanced to class Shantung and Yap as "accomplished facts" outside the sphere of the conference. The substitution of an Anglo-Japanese-American understanding for the old Anglo-Japanese Alliance has been suggested.

In other words, the calling of the conference has made it possible to bring up for settlement many of the most puzzling questions at present disturbing the world. And once these are disposed of it will be possible to take active steps towards the reduction of armaments.

The matter may be summed up thus:

In six months the new Secretary of State has placed America's foreign policy on firm foundations. He has recognized that economic facts are at the base of international relations. By his action in Panama, by the withdrawal of American troops from Santo Domingo, and by his Mexican policy, he has strengthened us immeasurably in South America. He has stood out against German intrigue and forced Germany to do her duty. He has negotiated peace with that country. By keeping us out of the Silesian muddle he has reaffirmed America's traditional policy of not mixing into local European affairs, but by naming a delegate to the supreme council he has reestablished contact with European

nations, and made it possible for us to speak when our interests are concerned. He has established our right to a voice in the mandates. He has revived the doctrine of the Open Door in China. And finally he has called a conference to remove the most imminent causes of war and has done it in a manner calculated to place America in the strongest possible position.

This is a record of achievement. He came into office to find our foreign relations demoralized and our national prestige frittered away. In six months he has pulled America out of the slough. Where all was dark before, we now see the dawn of a foreign policy. This is the work of Mr. Hughes.

BODY AND SOUL

By MARIE LUHRS

Her eyes are sleepily gray,
Her hair droops in oily strands,
And she has an awkward way
With her fleshy hands.
But her soul is quite different.
Her soul
Has showery hair
That curls enchantingly
When it is wound around a carrot,
Her soul
Has green eyes flecked with brown:
Little wet leaves;
And the lashes are sometimes
Webbed and wet.
Her soul
Has a mouth kiss-shaped,
Cheeks petal-pallid,
And walks with pardonable vanity
In garments that are influenced by the rainbow,
Infatuated with the wind.