

# The New REPUBLIC

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THE House has accepted what is known as the Senate's navy program, authorizing the largest construction in our history and the biggest armament budget ever passed in time of peace. No one should suppose that because we are preparing such heavy armament we are necessarily better defended because of it. If there is one cardinal fact in the world's recent experience it is that no amount of military preparation can in itself constitute adequate defense. No matter how big a navy the United States may build, its security will not rest upon that navy. Its security will rest upon the proper adjustment of its relations to the great Powers of Asia and Europe and especially to the British Empire. Unless our diplomatic policy is formulated in such a way as to assure us the friendship of the liberal Powers of the west, unless, in other words, we are diplomatically secure against a hostile combination of Powers, all this naval construction will simply be more money wasted in a futile race of armaments. Build the second greatest navy in the world, accompany it with a policy of

diplomatic isolation and with what the Republicans call "the intention of upholding all our rights everywhere and all the time," and if the world's experience means anything we shall see formed against us a combination of forces greater than anything we can create. The naval program will add to the security of the United States only if we are governed by a policy which recognizes that force must be used in combination with the progressive nations of western Europe.

THE senatorial situation in New York State throws a curious light on the working of American politics. The Democrats, responding to a real popular demand voiced by the labor unions, the more genuine Progressives and the liberal Democrats, have succeeded in securing the endorsement of Judge Seabury as candidate for governor. Having exhausted their virtue and their interest in conceding so much to the spirit of the times, the senatorship is about to go by default to a colorless friend of the organization, Mr. William F. McCombs. No evidence exists that Mr. McCombs has any ideas on the subject of policy, though he is regarded as a fairly competent political manager. The Republicans seemed to take so little interest in their nomination for senator that before anybody quite realized it ex-Congressman William Calder had filled the vacuum where a real candidate ought to have been. Few people care about Mr. Calder. No one identifies him with any important national policy. He is the type of conventional political broker who has done what the mediocre Congressman spends most of his time doing—acting as a kind of small attorney for local patronage and local interest. Finally, the more nationally minded Republicans in New York seem to have waked up in the last few days and the name of Mr. Robert Bacon, former Ambassador to France, has been mentioned. Mr. Bacon probably has the support of Colonel Roosevelt, and he also has the great virtue of standing for a definite issue.

**A**FTER long delay, and what was probably a hard secret political fight, President Wilson has nominated Judge Charles M. Hough to be Circuit Judge in New York in place of Judge E. Henry Lacombe, who had resigned. The appointment carries on the highest traditions of the judiciary, for it is obviously one made not for political motives but because of meritorious service and from a desire to fill the higher grades from men who have distinguished themselves in the service. The nomination will be recognized by men of all parties as a credit to President Wilson and to the bench.

**A**NY city department of health in the nation would probably have duplicated the fumbling with which the New York health officials began their fight against infantile paralysis. Experts in epidemics knew that the only chance of stopping such a scourge is to take it early. They knew that the most important measure of prevention is not ordinary sanitation so much as isolation and control of contacts. Yet New York did not fully recognize the existence of the epidemic until nearly a month after it became evident from statistics, and did not begin control of contacts until there were over two thousand cases, and other methods had been initiated. The reason is that the health department did not contain a bureau under an experienced expert in epidemics. Such men are rare, and most health departments do not know that they are necessary to coördinate and put into action the contributions of laboratory researchers and sanitary officials. As Dr. Charles E. North ably shows in the *Medical Record*, we should be prepared to combat not only the infrequent epidemics such as poliomyelitis, but also those which occur regularly, such as typhoid fever, pneumonia and grippe. But to do this we must develop and add to our health departments men trained in the almost new science of epidemiology.

**I**T will be in a high degree regrettable if the possibilities contained in the recent settlement in the car strike of New York City do not obtain their opportunity for development. Certainly the alleged dismissal by the companies of some thirty or forty men who played a prominent part in the strike is calculated to destroy exactly that confidence through which alone any hope of permanent peace will become possible. Even from the standpoint of the railroad companies it is not good business. The recent strike showed quite plainly that they are dependent upon public support. That support must clearly be withheld if they are unable to live up both to the spirit and to the letter of their agreements. The aftermath of any great

labor agitation has its "twilight zone" where the essential thing is the reconstitution of mutual understanding—and in the case of a public utility that is even more essential than in so-called private industry. The companies, moreover, must bear in mind that to the terms of settlement were attached the signatures of the Mayor of New York, and of Chairman Straus of the Public Service Commission. Neither of these can allow their guaranty of good faith to be wantonly violated. The action charged against the companies is the inevitable accompaniment of almost every strike and nothing tends so much to continue bad feeling. If the charges of the men are justified, it will be the duty of the Mayor and of Mr. Straus to make it very plain to the companies concerned that the faith of the public is not to be tampered with in this easy fashion.

**T**HE officials of the New York City Railways Company have learned exactly nothing from the strike of a fortnight ago. In labor matters they are the same inept and fumbling gentlemen that they were when the strike broke out. They signed an agreement, which they had presumably read and understood, but which they are now violating without any apparent sense that it is dishonorable to break an agreement with your own employees. The entire attitude of the company officials is replete with bad faith, and indicates a determination to undermine the union by any means. The company has been discharging men who took part in the strike. It has sought to control the manner in which the men should organize, which is tantamount to appointing the representatives with which the company is to deal. Its officials have made speeches which cannot be construed otherwise than as a warning to the men not to join the union.

**P**RIOR to the strike the officials were not aware that the men had grievances. To-day they still believe that these grievances can be settled by private solicitation by employees and individual acts of justice and grace by the company. How the company proposes to settle these grievances is illustrated by an incident which occurred during a speech by Mr. Frank Hedley, the general manager of the company, to his employees. Mr. Hedley said that he wanted to talk direct to the men and wished them to tell him their grievances "in a sensible manly way." If anyone thought he was not properly paid he should let him know at once, "man to man." Whereupon a spokesman of the employees, a Mr. John McNamara, asked Mr. Hedley whether he could do anything for twelve men in the company's real-estate branch, who were

receiving only \$12 a week. "Write to the head of your department," Mr. Hedley replied, "and I will take the matter up." "We did, and received a most humiliating reply two weeks ago," McNamara replied. "Well, I have been too busy to read any letters during the last two weeks. Write to him again about it and say that I told you to do so."

**T**WO weeks ago we said that the weakness of the radical labor movement is due in some measure to the incompetence of the Socialist press. We mentioned the *New York Call* as an example of unfair and untruthful journalism. The *Call* retorts that THE NEW REPUBLIC, being an endowed publication, finds the *Call* too truthful. Let us see. On August 5th New York City was in the midst of a great traction strike and the *Call* proposed to make itself the mouthpiece of the strikers. Here is the way the *Call* sized up the situation:

That, however the conflict may go, the strikers will find the city administration hostile to them; that the so-called Republicans and Democrats elected to city office will one and all take their stand with the Shontses and Hedleys and Mahers and against the strikers; that they will not only tolerate but encourage the bringing of thugs and gunmen here to break the strike; that they will lend the companies the aid of the police force as far as possible for the same object; that, in short, their entire power and influence will be thrown on the side of the bosses and against the workers.

A more crucial subject could hardly be selected on which to test a paper's ability to act either as the mouthpiece or adviser of the labor movement. On the biggest issue presented to it, an issue of supreme importance to hundreds of thousands of workers and millions of people, the *Call's* judgment was just exactly one hundred per cent wrong. Its editors wrote, not as a result of honest inquiry of the facts, but out of sheer prejudice and preconception. How under the circumstances can labor entrust its fate to the leadership of the *Call*?

**O**N the last day of August the Republicans will notify Mr. Fairbanks that he is their nominee for Vice-President. Sometime in September the Democrats will notify Vice-President Marshall that they have renominated him. These two pieces of news are not unexpected. The country was more or less prepared for them by what happened at Chicago and St. Louis. Yet such news must always be unwelcome. From the standpoint of each party the best way to notify such candidates is not with speeches and barbecues and the flapping of flags, but in deserts where no men abide, in caves from which newspaper men and telegraph wires are excluded, in sackcloth and

ashes, in a whisper. Mr. Marshall is an argument for the election of Mr. Hughes. Mr. Fairbanks is an argument for the reelection of Mr. Wilson. These assertions are accepted as truth nearly everywhere in the United States. Why pretend that either party has reason to be proud of its choice for Vice-President? Because habit is strong. Because it is more humane to make much of each candidate than to ignore them both. Because the real damage was done when the nominations were made.

**T**HE case of Charles Frederick Stielow is rapidly becoming a scandal. Conviction, sentence to death, preparation for execution two or three times, reprieve, stay of execution, third-degree confessions, new confessions, charges of conspiracy, have made the case a horror to people of decent feeling. Here is a man, obviously of low mentality and perhaps feeble-minded, about whom there rages what looks almost like a political controversy as to whether he should or should not be executed. A number of disinterested, public-spirited citizens have taken up the fight in his behalf, and the district attorney who convicted him seems more bent on proving that he did not convict an innocent man than on finding out whether Stielow is really innocent or not. A stronger argument against capital punishment has not been put forward in many a day, for the case is so full of doubt that the thought of executing Stielow is impossible. The cruelty of the whole affair as it falls upon Stielow can hardly be exaggerated. Even the one redeeming feature of the whole situation is tragic—that Stielow's mind is not capable of a full realization of the horror to which he is being subjected.

**I**T did not need the suppression of Bernard Shaw's war play to prove he could irritate loyal Englishmen. Before the war he consummately irritated them, and now—"this venomous reptile," as one angry patriot puts it, "has turned to bite the foolish hands that cherished it." Shaw's advice to England on the Casement case, however, was probably the wisest advice he ever gave it, and it becomes increasingly to be regretted that England failed to take it. Shaw was revolted by the temper and spirit in which Germany executed Captain Fryatt on technical grounds. He believed rightly that democratic neutrals were similarly revolted. The evidence that is now coming to light shows that Germany itself knew how little humane excuse could be found for it. But as Shaw saw it, Roger Casement was also an open enemy of the country that captured him and in effect a prisoner of war. "We have now a priceless opportunity," he said, "of placing a reprieve of Casement in the sharpest contrast to the execution of Captain



Fryatt. If we miss it, and miss it in cold blood, we must not expect America and France, or any other country, to draw that distinction between the merciful and magnanimous Briton and the cruel and ruthless Hun which most of us, I hope, would like to see realized in deeds as well as in printer's ink." How much England appreciated this argument the sequel unfortunately shows.

**M**OST good Englishmen probably regretted the Casement execution as a disagreeable necessity. They were sorry for his plight, but they felt he had invited it, and they deemed that the war gave England no option but to carry out the law. In much the same spirit, beyond question, German officialdom deemed it an unpleasant duty to shoot Miss Edith Cavell and to punish Captain Fryatt. In much the same spirit, to go a step farther, artillery men on both sides on the Somme feel it an unavoidable calamity to fire on the Red Cross. There is no limit to the argument of "military necessity" and no answer which, by its own measure, will not seem sentimental if it pleads for the foe. But democratic neutrals, rightly or wrongly, expect their faith in the Allies to be justified by the deeds of the Allies. Faith is not blind. It involves an anticipation which under given circumstances must be met.

## Railroad Strikes

**P**RESIDENT WILSON is showing energy and resourcefulness in his efforts to compel the railway managers and trainmen to agree to a settlement. As usual in such cases there is an attempt to split the difference between what the men demand and what the companies offer, to fix upon terms which will be reasonably tolerable to all parties. But the task is difficult. Both sides manoeuvre for position; each seeks to place the onus upon the other; each realizes that even if it must consent in the end, the longer it refuses the better. As for the public, all it wants is that there should be no strike.

If the President succeeds we may for the time being sleep in our beds undisturbed by the nightmare of a general railway strike. We can forget the image, which has flashed through our minds, of cities without milk or food or coal, with unemployed men rioting, and thousands literally dying of starvation. Yet until the next threatened railway strike we shall have only a short respite. During the last twenty-two years a whole series of these railroad strikes have been threatened, in each of which we have expended our liberal indignation on one side or the other, and then, after the peril passed, gone back to our homes and businesses and forgotten

all about it. We scarcely pay attention to the terms of each settlement. As for the basic conditions of the problem or the manner in which we may save ourselves from future crises, we do not concern ourselves at all.

Perhaps the chief reason why we do not foresee and seek to understand this problem is that its essential factors run counter to our customary modes of thought. On the labor problem we have certain fixed ideas. We believe that men may always quit work if not satisfied, and employers may discharge their men and shut down their plants at will. What wages are to be paid and what conditions of labor shall prevail must depend upon a free contract, in which the industrially stronger party secures the advantage. When this bargaining power of employees and employer is translated into the strike or lockout, we resent it as an interruption to business. Yet it is exactly this withholding of labor or of jobs, which constitutes the essence of our industrial system. We oppose any legal compulsion to work, or legal compulsion upon the employer to run his business on unsatisfactory terms. The threat of a strike or lockout, therefore, is the last argument in industrial bargaining—one might almost say the only argument.

On the railroads, however, a general strike or lockout cannot be permitted. It is not a matter of justice. Here the principle of free bargaining, whether individually or collectively, is subordinated to public necessity. A railroad strike or lockout of any duration means a cessation of the railway service, and the community cannot continue to live if the trains stop running. If the strike were to last only a few days, the damage might be repaired, but the key of the situation lies in the fact that employers and employees can hold out for an indefinitely longer time than can the public. As a consequence, general railroad strikes are in fact, though not by law, proscribed.

This contradiction between legal theory and economic fact, between the legal right to strike and the actual impermissibility of striking, has been immensely sharpened during the last twenty years. The railway strike of 1894, when the unions were still weak, could not, without resort to violence, completely shut down railroad transportation. The President could break the strike by insisting that the mails be carried. No injunction to-day, however, could compel four hundred thousand peaceful strikers to return to their work. There are not enough unemployed railway engineers in the whole country to run the trains. The great railway brotherhoods are therefore able to put pressure upon the companies to the extent that the public permits.

Whether in any given case the demands of the