

# The New REPUBLIC

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THE refusal of the Senate to confirm the nomination of Mr. George Rublee as Federal Trade Commissioner can be fairly characterized as a deplorable and outrageous breach of trust. The nomination was not rejected because of any actual or alleged disqualification for the work. On the contrary, Mr. Rublee is probably better qualified to be Trade Commissioner than any man in the United States. As the majority of the Senators have every reason to know, he had made an exact and exhaustive study of the functions of the Trade Commission and its possible value in the American business and legal system. A properly conducted government would have scoured the country and have offered any reasonable inducement to secure the services of a man who was so exceptionally well qualified to mould the work of the Commission during its formative and experimental period. Yet the Senate refused to accept his services, and it refused frankly and exclusively because Mr. Rublee was personally obnoxious to a Senator from his own state. The reason might have been explicable, if not excusable, in case Mr. Rublee had behaved so as to furnish Mr.

Gallinger any legitimate grievance. But in truth Mr. Rublee's only offense had been that of opposing in a manner less objectionable but more effective than that ordinarily used by political campaigners Mr. Gallinger's reelection to the Senate. He was obnoxious to the Senator because he had been dangerous. As a result of its action the Senate has served notice that senatorial courtesy can be used by a Senator to keep political enemies, even of the opposite party, out of office. Mr. Rublee has only one consolation. In the eyes of the Lord more credit must attach to being personally obnoxious to Senator Gallinger than in being Trade Commissioner of the United States.

THE Conference bill will provide for a larger, better equipped and better organized army than seemed probable at the beginning of the session; but the pity of it is that the new army might easily have been made so much better than the present legislation permits. The forces in Congress making for and against an adequate and thorough plan of military preparation were more nearly balanced than in the beginning they appeared to be. As the discussion proceeded the disposition in Congress and particularly in the Senate to do a good job became stronger; but it received little or no support from the administration. President Wilson refused to use his influence in favor of any particular kind of an army. He even repudiated his Secretary of War, because that gentleman took the administration plan for a Federal militia seriously enough to propose to fight for it. Yet if Mr. Wilson had been willing to insist upon an army of a certain size and character, one adapted to the needs of American domestic and foreign policy, he might very well have obtained it. The Congressmen who wanted to do a good job only needed a little encouragement from the administration in order to put up a stiffer fight. As it was they lost out in almost every instance; and they failed at least in part because the President did not attach very much importance to the size and character of the army

of which he is commander-in-chief. He instinctively thought of the army, as all Democrats of the old school thought of it, not as a finely tempered and dangerous instrument, which above all other instruments should be fully prepared to do its work, but as a creature of American domestic politics.

**A**S a consequence of his preconceptions Mr. Wilson will under the new legislation continue to command a military force determined chiefly by political rather than military considerations. The regular army will indeed be substantially increased, and if the new soldiers can be recruited, a shorter term of enlistment will result in the accumulation of a really efficient first reserve. But there are few other reasons for satisfaction. The increase in the regular army is insufficient, in part because altogether unsatisfactory provisions are made for a second reserve. It is in the organization of this "armed citizenry" that the new legislation egregiously fails. Congress is carefully bestowing on the President a body of citizen soldiers of whom he will not be the commander-in-chief, over whom his authority will under ordinary circumstances be purchased, who will have many temptations to accept national aid without conforming to national standards, and who from their very nature will always be fishing for subsidies and playing politics rather than learning to wage war. In relation to the regular army Congress betrayed some symptoms of wishing to do a good job. In relation to the militia Congress had one object already in mind—the all-important object of creating a body of citizen soldiers who, like the body of citizen pensioners, can be made into a political asset of Congressmen at the expense of the American nation.

**A**DVOCATES of "preparedness" who are anticipating that the work of military preparation will bring into existence a higher standard of public behavior all along the line cannot find any confirmation of their anticipation in the army legislation. Congress has postponed all the serious difficulties connected with the job of organizing an adequate and able army. It has done nothing to eliminate the extravagance and the waste which makes the existing army so unnecessarily expensive. On the contrary it has created sources of future waste, which in the course of time may become as flagrant a national scandal as are the pension appropriations. A body of professional and citizen soldiers is being provided which probably cannot be recruited, and which if recruited will be drawn chiefly from a limited number of classes. This is the most sinister aspect of the matter. Congress has been legislating on "preparedness" without

any sufficient consideration of the problem of making the new army entitled to the confidence of the whole community; and in this respect Congress is merely reflecting the prevailing state of mind among the most enthusiastic unpolitical advocates of military preparation. How many of the thousands of people who participated in the "preparedness" parade in New York on May 13th noticed that the labor unionists did not join in the demonstration, and stopped to reflect on the meaning and the possible consequences of their absence? No: the military legislation of the existing Congress makes a poor beginning of a big job. It will have to be revised in the next Congress; and it will have to be revised not only for the purpose of getting a better but for the purpose of getting a more representative army. Although the legislation was determined chiefly by politics, it ignores the fundamental political considerations involved in the organization and recruiting of a large and effective army in an industrial democratic state.

**I**T is impossible to tell whether the current peace rumors will hasten the conclusion of the war or will merely end in mutual protestations and recriminations. The rumors seem to emanate from Berlin. This, of course, does not mean that Germany is beaten, or about to be beaten, but only that she holds this to be the opportune moment to call off the war. Germany believes that a warring nation, like an orator, should know when to stop. It should not continue fighting, even victoriously, after it has reached the point of highest relative success. That point Germany has reached, as Japan reached it after Liao Yang, and like Japan, Germany would now like to "cash in." For time is likely to run against her. Month by month the economic pressure increases. The food problem becomes more difficult, the financial situation more threatening, while victory in the west seems unattainable and in the east hardly worth while. If Germany is to conclude peace she must hurry, for what she has to offer—her conquests on all frontiers—does not increase in value, while what the Allies have to offer—peace and an end to the blockade—becomes daily more desirable.

**T**HE very considerations which incline Germany to peace fortify her enemies in their desire to prolong the war. If Germany is now at the high point of success and is declining relatively, then, as the Allies reason, the longer peace is delayed the better. The more a nation wants peace the more it must pay, for a willingness to treat is held to be a confession of weakness. Therefore all avowals of peaceful desire are ambiguous and even minatory, and each nation, while making its advances, protests

that it will fight to the last breath. All this talk, however, is far from being without its effect. Peace rumors are disturbing to the more pacific citizens of belligerent nations, who ask themselves what after all they are fighting for. The average Englishman is not willing to give up his life that Russia may rule at Constantinople, or Italy dominate the East Adriatic. If a peace could be obtained that would be reasonably permanent, would give justice to Belgium and Serbia and security to France, the western nations might be willing, if it were necessary, to grant Germany compensation at the expense of Russia, against whom these western nations may some day be forced to defend themselves. Naturally no such admission could be made to-day, for to desert Russia would be to split the alliance. In the end, however, some such agreement may come to pass. Germany or Austria, if it is possible, will be made to pay; otherwise, will not Russia have to pay?

SENATOR HOLLIS has established a place for himself on the roll, none too long, of constructive American legislators through his work in preparing and securing the passage in the Senate of the rural credits bill that bears his name. If the bill fails to become law, it has none the less carried us a long way toward a national handling of the rural credit problem. If it does become law we may confidently look forward to a rapid transformation of the system of loans upon farm security. The three-year loan at seven per cent, with broker's commissions on renewals, and constant risk of foreclosure, will eventually give way to the ten, twenty or thirty-year loan with flexible conditions of repayment and interest at five per cent or less. The American farmers carry an aggregate mortgage indebtedness of over four billions. The security for this huge volume of loans is unimpeachable. If interest rates average two per cent more than in other equally safe investments, this is chiefly on account of the immobility of this form of credit. The Hollis plan works toward mobility of farm loan credits. Once under way, developed and readjusted as experience dictates, it is capable of relieving the American farmer of an annual excess interest charge of eighty million dollars. It should be added that the changes made by the House in the Senate bill are all for the worse and should be eliminated in conference.

CRITICISM of the Hollis bill is abundant and varied. It is said that the farmers themselves are not interested in rural credits legislation. Perhaps this is true. Ten years ago hardly anybody in this country knew anything about the remarkable achievements of the rural credit systems of Europe.

It would be too much to expect that the mass of the farming population should have become sufficiently informed on this complicated subject to become enthusiastic over any particular project. Most of the financial critics of the Hollis bill themselves betray serious gaps in their knowledge of rural credit institutions abroad. Objection is raised to the employment of government funds to launch the proposed land banks. A prominent financier points out that by the terms of the Hollis bill the government may, at the end of ten years, have invested sixty millions in the project. Well, at the end of ten years it may be saving the farmers eighty millions a year. Did the government never use its funds to promote commercial banking? Did it never employ its deposits for the relief of Wall Street? Wisely, be it admitted. But it is somewhat absurd that gentlemen who have once benefitted from government financial intervention should now be crying out so loudly against "subsidizing the farmer."

CONFIDENTIAL letters from the Ray Detective Agency and Merchants' Secret Service go broadcast over the country. The latest instance is of a letter addressed to employers in the shoe business:

We offer you the services of the following operatives who are expert detectives and fine workmen:

- (a) Expert cutter and good in other parts of shop. Union man.
- (b) Expert laster on No. 5 machine. Non-union man.
- (c) All round man—best in team work on make-up. Greek. Non-union man.

Any one of these can give you exact sentiment within your shop and report on efficiency and other matters, if you so desire.

What is the community to think of manufacturers who employ this sort of spying while simultaneously protesting their goodwill toward labor?

ANTHONY COMSTOCK was deservedly criticized during his lifetime for the mistakes he made in trying to censor every sex expression and sex appeal. The same sort of mistake is being made by his successor, John S. Sumner. Mr. Sumner is not satisfied to confine himself to pursuing those flagrant cases of sex exploitation which do really call for police intervention. He wants to play a much more ambitious rôle, that of censoring all adult literature and art. With due respect to Mr. Sumner's taste and intelligence, it must be realized that he is not competent to take up this office. His judgment in suppressing "Homo Sapiens," to say nothing of his tactics, closes any prospect of his being considered as a moral dictator for the United States. It is fortunate that his absurd case against *Hearst's Magazine* has col-



lapsed. But if he does not learn from this failure, authors and artists and publishers should be ready to keep him in his proper place, whatever the cost.

## Republican Debt to Roosevelt

**M**R. George Wickersham's recently declared preference for Justice Hughes over Elihu Root as Republican candidate for President is based on sound reasons. Whatever Mr. Root's qualifications for the office itself he is not an available candidate. As much as any other man who could be named, his candidacy would revive the controversies of 1912 and decimate the Republican vote in those central western states which are already predisposed in Mr. Wilson's favor. Justice Hughes, as Mr. Wickersham says, would have a better chance of healing the divisions in the Republican party than any other candidate. He is not implicated in the quarrel of four years ago; he has no personal responsibility for the bankruptcy of Republican leadership during the Wilson administration; he enjoys the confidence of the great majority of the Republican conservatives and progressives. The momentum in favor of his nomination would be irresistible were it not for two obstacles. He is distrusted and feared by certain of the party politicians who remember what he did as governor to the Republican organization in the state of New York. His attitude towards the immediately important issues of foreign and domestic policy are unknown and will not be known until and unless he is nominated. The first of these obstacles would scarcely count were it not for the second, but the second is important because the election of the Republican nominee is a matter quite as much of his opinions as of his personality.

The effective reunion of the Republican party does not depend merely on the nomination of a candidate who is not tainted by the quarrels and the failures of the past six years. It depends still more on the ability of any candidate who is nominated to revive the Republican tradition, to give back to the party some of its former aggressive fighting spirit and moral self-assurance. The Republicans more than the Democrats need an underlying integrity of conviction and some positive vitality of impulse. They have always been a party of action which sought to promote the national welfare, not by leaving things alone, but by using the powers and resources of the national government to carry out an economic and political program. In the coming contest they are likely to be defeated unless they regain their old ability to force the fighting and to formulate a vigorous and comprehensive national policy. The country is passing through a grave physical and moral crisis. It is confronted

by dangers to which it is not accustomed and problems which elude the grasp of its older traditions. More than at any time since the Civil War the opportunity and necessity exists for courageous and far-sighted political initiative. The Republicans must supply it or become a party of negative and superseded ideas.

The need of Republican initiative is all the greater because of the course pursued by the Democrats. Under President Wilson's leadership they have reversed their party traditions and have replaced the policy of letting things alone with a policy at least of partly preparing in advance against future exigencies. The Democrats are putting in a better claim to be considered a party with a formative national policy than at any time in their history. Their policy of preparation does not, indeed, consist of anything more than a series of compromise half-measures, designed to allay a dangerous political agitation. It is as much as anything else an attempt to emasculate "preparedness" by concessions, just as so many progressive policies have been emasculated by laws which are not intended to be effectively administered. But by their course they have prevented the Republicans from appropriating any exclusive credit from a policy of preparation and they have imposed on their opponents the difficult task not merely of developing a more radical program of preparedness, but of getting into that program a lively and contagious enthusiasm for the national welfare. If the Republicans are to recover their ascendancy and to become once again the aggressive national party, it is up to them to fill the cup of American national aspiration with a larger and better contents—one which expressly associates the fulfilment of a high standard of domestic responsibility with the fulfilment of responsibilities to other countries. In no other way can they regain the moral self-assurance indispensable to a reunited and reinvigorated organization. In no other way can they fit themselves to be a desirable substitute for the Democrats instead of a more or less deplorable alternative.

Up to the present time the Republicans have utterly failed to develop the kind of leadership demanded by their own predicament and that of the country. Only one man has succeeded either in putting up an effective and significant opposition to the Democratic administration or in expressing anything of the spirit and the policy needed by an aggressively national party. That man is, of course, Theodore Roosevelt. It is a remarkable fact that the Progressive leader, around whose person the bitter controversies of 1912 chiefly centered, and whose candidacy would seem to bring with it the greatest possible provocation to discord, should also