NOW that Secretary Lansing has secured his weapon, he is confronted by the extremely difficult task of using it both tactfully and effectively. He has, we believe, no present intention of departing from the benevolent neutrality which has hitherto characterized American policy towards the Allies. He has no disposition to enter into a commercial war with Great Britain or to do anything which will seriously embarrass that Power in its blockade of Germany. But something must be done to diminish the grievances of American business men and if Great Britain refuses to make any concessions the situation may become serious, precisely because the weapon placed in the Secretary's hands is so powerful. As we understand it, the State Department is not looking for a formal declaration of a new British maritime policy, but it will seek, and confidently expects, to obtain a less burdensome and exasperating administration of many aspects of the British blockade. Should the British consent, the pressure on the American State Department will moderate and the weapon handed to the President by Congress can be allowed to rust in its scabbard. But if the British do not consent, what then? We trust this contingency will be fully considered before any specific demands are made, backed by overt or covert threats. The British are not in an accommodating state of mind, and they may count upon the extreme reluctance of the President and American public opinion to seriously embarrass them in the conduct of the war. In that event it would be unwise for the State Department to assume any position which it could not maintain without commercial warfare or abandon without humiliation. It should always leave one means of escape open—a reference of the immediate difficulty to an arbitral tribunal.

What Norman Angell Did

MR. WILSON'S speech of acceptance contained one sentence which overshadows anything that has been said or will be said during the campaign. In the years to come that sentence will surely gather a significance which has been ignored in the heat and haste and distraction of the moment. The statement that " no nation can any longer remain neutral as against any wilful disturbance of the peace of the world " is a doctrine the importance of which it is hardly possible to exaggerate. The fact that it is uttered now by the President of the most powerful neutral, by the President of a nation which has practised and preached international laissez-faire, is a reversal of such importance and with such endless consequences that it would absorb our attention if we had a just perspective on our own future. Whether the tariff should be moved up, down or sideways, whether it was wise or unwise to go to Vera Cruz, whether the eight-hour bill is right or wrong are questions that will soon be forgotten, but the principle that neutrality is obsolete is the basis of organized peace in the world.

The idea was born simultaneously in many minds in different nations. It is imbedded in Mr. Asquith's declaration that Britain is fighting for the public law of Europe. It is the residue of truth in Mr. Roosevelt's agitation about Belgium. It is the idea behind the large movement for a League to Enforce Peace which has the general approval of Viscount Grey, M. Briand and, it is said, of certain members of the German Foreign Office. The President's utterance was made not into a vacuum, but as a contribution to an international cause.

The particular words used by Mr. Wilson are worth noting. He speaks of neutrality as no longer possible. This attack on neutrality originated with a man who should have the credit for it. It originated with Mr. Norman Angell, and the words used by the President are Mr. Angell's own words.

Mr. Angell spent last winter in the United States lecturing and writing. In the weeks preceding the last crisis with Germany over the Sussex, he formulated the doctrine that neutrality was obsolete. It emerged after hours of discussion on the basis of memoranda which were recast many times. The results reached the President, not only directly, but through his confidential advisers, and there can be no doubt that the most important sentence in Mr. Wilson's speech was written by Mr. Norman Angell.

The whole episode is interesting for its own sake. It is necessary to emphasize it in view of the report that the British government intends to deny Mr. Angell a passport and prevent him from returning to the United States. Leaving aside every consideration but the success of the British cause, it is a great blunder to keep Mr. Angell from the United States. He served his country and ours beyond all Englishmen who have come to us since the war began. Most of the semi-official visitors have hurt more than they have helped by their insensibility to America and their moral pretentiousness. But Mr. Angell quickly and effectively did an incalculable amount to convince leaders of American liberalism of their international responsibilities. He drew us closer to that England with which alone an Anglo-American understanding is possible.

"The Reign of Reason"

DURING the past fortnight the political campaign has assumed a new phase. Mr. Hughes has uncovered the fighting issue, more immediate than that of Mexico, more stirring than that of administrative efficiency, on which he is asking a verdict in his favor or that of Mr. Wilson. The refusal of the Railroad Brotherhoods to arbitrate the eight-hour day, the refusal of the President to insist on arbitration, and the passage by Congress of the eight-hour law in order to avert the strike have disgusted the Republican candidate and aroused him to a vigorous and courageous protest. In Mr. Hughes's opinion the President's behavior and that of Congress have compromised principles and values essential to the perpetuity of the American nation. They have ignored and flouted the reign of reason in the settlement of industrial controversies. "We have a new spirit abroad in these recent days in America. It is the spirit which demands legislation in advance of investigation. It is the spirit of force. It is not American." Such are the terms in which Mr. Hughes states the issue. It is a challenge which no one who has supported the President in his handling of the crisis can afford to ignore. It is a challenge which every one, who hopes eventually for some approach to a rule of reason in the treatment of social grievances and in the settlement of industrial conflicts, should welcome cordially and answer with candor and good faith.

What, then, does Mr. Hughes mean when he accuses the President of allowing the rule of force to be substituted for the rule of reason in the settlement of domestic controversies? He means that the President and Congress had no business to intervene in an industrial dispute except on behalf of an essentially just settlement, and that the one sufficient means of reaching such a settlement was the submission of the controversy to an exhaustive and impartial investigation. The perfectly reasonable solution existed and had only to be discovered by inquiry. It is not difficult to divine the source of these assumptions. Mr. Hughes approaches the situation from the standpoint of a judge, who is administering a body of law, presumably just and at all events binding upon all parties to a controversy, and who in order to hand down a reasonable decision needs only to ascertain all the facts by granting to both sides a full hearing. A board of arbitrators sitting in judgment on an industrial controversy would possess the same equipment for administering justice as does the Supreme Court. Society, so Mr. Hughes must assume, has achieved a fund of reasonable social principles which when applied to a full array of facts, concerning any particular controversy, give birth necessarily to just judgments. The verdict of such a board would come as near to being reasonable as human imperfections permit.

As a matter of fact, however, the situation of Congress was not that of a judge administering a body of law, binding on both litigants and acceptable to both of them, which needed only a complete reënforcement of facts in order to give birth to a just and reasonable verdict. Neither would a board of arbitrators, established to settle the controversy, have found itself in a comparable situation. There is no body of social principles binding upon both parties to the dispute and accepted by them, which either Congress or an arbitration board could have evoked from the vasty depths of American social irresponsibility. There was no existing fund of social reason, upon which the national representatives could depend for guidance in the settlement of this industrial dispute. A board of arbitrators in rendering a verdict would have been obliged, as Congress was, to legislate—that is to establish and declare the rule upon which a verdict was to be based, and no amount of investigation into the facts would have helped the board to decide what rule they should select. Assuming even a substantial agreement upon the economic results of an eight-hour day upon wages and railroad expenditures, the upright judge in such a controversy would still have to decide on other grounds whether the eight-hour day was worth what it would cost, and his decision would depend upon the importance attached by him in any hierarchy of social values to the establishment of minimum standards of labor. The solution of this particular controversy did not hinge upon the result of a hearing or an inquiry. It depended upon whether or not the judge shared the belief of the Brotherhoods in favor of the eight-hour day as a desirable minimum of industrial labor, or whether it shared the opinion of the railroad presidents that no social presumption existed in favor of a shortening of the day's work to a minimum of eight hours. Any board of arbitrators, even after the most elaborate investigation, would have been obliged to do as Congress did—that is, to indicate a preference. Its arbitrament would have been an act of discriminate legislation, which attached a greater or a smaller value to the eight-hour day.

No doubt the demand for an eight-hour day was being used as an excuse for an increase in pay, but this fact, although an important one to be considered in the application of the eight-hour rule, does not affect the question raised by Mr. Hughes as to the proper method of social legislation. He ignored one essential consideration. Inasmuch as no authentic code of social principles applicable to