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The Week

ON May 23rd many of the leading newspapers of the country printed an Associated Press dispatch from Washington which claimed to outline in an authoritative manner the policy which the State Department proposed to use in dealing with Mexico. The dispatch declared that Mr. George T. Summerlin, counsellor for the American Embassy in Mexico City, was starting for his post and that he was taking with him a memorandum defining the conditions with which the Obregon government would have to comply in order to obtain recognition. The conditions were drastic and included a number of changes in the Mexican constitution proposed by Senator Fall's sub-committee. Some days later the same papers carried an Associated Press dispatch from Mexico City, dated May 27th, stating that Mr. Summerlin would confer with President Obregon the next day and discuss with him the question of the recognition of the new Mexican government by the United States. It then declared categorically that Mr. Summerlin was not presenting an ultimatum to the Mexican government which called for an agreement between the two governments as to the conditions upon which recognition might be extended. There

was nothing in the memorandum to offend the susceptibilities of the Mexican nation and it did not embody the terms proposed by Senator Fall's sub-committee. If the first of these dispatches was true the second was false. Which of the Associated Press correspondents was deceiving the American public?

THE falsification of the news is in this case sufficiently flagrant and sufficiently serious to demand an investigation by the State Department and the publication of a report. It is particularly flagrant and serious if, as seems probable, the first dispatch from Washington was not true. For in that event the Associated Press did not merely communicate false information to the American newspapers about a very important matter of public policy, but it increased enormously the difficulty of the delicate and momentous negotiation which the State Department is now undertaking in Mexico City. It is essential for the renewal of good relations between the two countries and for the future security of the Mexican government that Obregon be recognized by the United States. It is also essential that recognition be preceded by an understanding between the two governments which would pledge Obregon to treat Americans somewhat better than they were treated by Carranza. But both the form and the substance of such an understanding offer many opportunities and even many temptations to disagree. Mexican public opinion is sensitive and suspicious and would resent concessions on the part of its government which involved any abatement of its independence or any compromise of its sovereign dignity. The publication of the first dispatch has aroused its sensitiveness and it will scrutinize any agreement between its own government and that of the United States with an apprehensive and unfriendly eye. In this case, consequently, the false news, if it were false, was a grave embarrassment to American diplomacy. Assuming, as we have every reason to assume, that the State Department is seeking an

amicable arrangement with Mexico, the false announcement raises formidable barriers in the way and this in all probability is precisely the result it was intended to produce.

SENATOR BORAH is entitled to immense credit for the persistence and the ability with which he has forced from reluctant officials a conference among the three chief naval Powers on joint disarmament. Considering the state of public opinion in two of the three countries the conference is likely to result in some reduction of expenditure on new construction. For if the conferees fail to agree upon a reduction it will be most embarrassing for the governments to explain their failure. They can only do so by alleging reasons which will not under the circumstances bear inspection. The announcement of the date of the conference will be eagerly awaited, and it is not unreasonable to expect either that an agreement will be reached or that the government which prevents an agreement will be exposed in an unfavorable light.

WHEN a plebiscite is employed to determine the nationality, not of a province as a whole, but of the several divisions of a province, the tendency to gerrymander is very nearly irresistible. By making the units larger or smaller, of one shape or another, the results may be materially changed. That is the reason why French policy, which seeks to give Poland as much of Silesia as possible, is opposed to the British plan of giving the indisputably Polish sections to Poland and the indisputably German sections to Germany, leaving the fate of the doubtful territory for later determination. The French would like to stretch the influence of the heavy Polish majorities of the southeast by including as much disputable territory as can be included while still preserving a slight Polish majority. Of course they are against applying the same principle in favor of the Germans in the territory where they predominate heavily. The fact is that if the Germans were given the benefit of this principle the whole of Silesia would go to them.

INDUSTRIAL Silesia, where neither the Poles nor the Germans have an outstanding majority, is essentially cosmopolitan both in population and in function. It is the point where the Polish, Ruthenian, Czecho-Slovakian and German populations converge. Any extensive industrial development would draw workers from all four peoples, besides attracting Rumanians and Magyars from the near hinterland. The natural markets for Silesian industry lie also in a half-dozen countries. If the Silesian question were to be solved on broad prin-

ciples of European interest, neither Germany nor Poland would be permitted to use Silesian coal and industry for nationalistic purposes. Industrial Silesia would be neutralized, with the neighboring states pledged to a moderate customs régime and enjoying equal treatment in the supply of Silesian products. That, of course, is something that neither Poland nor Germany wants. Each country wants Silesia as an instrument of economic strategy. A division of the industrial territory which will render each nation fairly independent of the policy of the other is probably the best solution that can be arrived at, with European statecraft at its present low ebb. But that is not the solution that promises the highest development of Silesian resources, nor the greatest benefits to Central Europe.

WHEN the New Republic recently expressed the hope that the Soviet government would release the Americans now imprisoned in Russia it was relying on a certain reasonableness hitherto discernible in the attitude of the Soviets, and recognizing at the same time the unreasonableness of the position of our government. According to the newspapers the State Department has again asserted the release of American prisoners in Russia as a condition precedent to recognition of the Soviet government and to "friendship" between the two countries. It does not state that this is the only condition. It does not promise any result from such action. It does not say anything about citizens of Russia in this country subjected to brutal outrage, imprisonment, and deportation by agents of the Department of Justice. Among the seven Americans actually imprisoned in Russia it does not make any distinction, in the cases of Mrs. Harrison and Mr. Kalamatiano, who are accused of being implicated in counter-revolutionary movements and espionage, or of Captain Kilpatrick, who was a combatant on the Baltic front, later captured in Red Cross uniform with Wrangel. It does not make any concession in view of the fact that apart from the seven, the other hundred and twenty-odd "prisoners" are in most cases free from all restraint except in the matter of leaving Russia, that their sufferings from undernourishment are merely those of everyone in Russia and are partly the result of the United States blockade. No, the attitude of the United States government in using the American prisoners to maintain prejudice against Russia and as an excuse to postpone decision in the matter of trade relations is so utterly indefensible that it would be wasting time to argue about it. Accordingly we place our hope in the good sense and magnanimity of the Soviets.

ONE thing which will be remembered to the honor of the English race when the long chapter of the Irish horror is ended is the personal protest of English officers against their hangman's work. After the Dublin Insurrection of 1916 Sir Francis Vane of Hutton, second in command of the royal forces in Ireland, went without instructions to London to warn Mr. Asquith of the results of the assassination in prison of Irish soldiers who had surrendered and Irish civilians like Mr. Skeffington who had not fought. Since his resignation or dismissal from the army Sir Francis has made frequent contributions to the press on the Irish question marked by the qualities in which the English administration is so sadly deficient, honesty, intelligence, and goodwill. Now Sir Francis Vane is joined by General Crozier who lately resigned the command of the auxiliary division of the R. I. C. when deprived of the power to enforce discipline by dismissing subordinates for crime or inefficiency.

GENERAL Crozier, like Sir Francis Vane, is prepared to put his information at the service of his government. He has the facts of the looting of the post-office at Kilkenny by auxiliaries disguised in the uniform of the Irish Republican Army; he has the confession of the cadet who murdered Father Griffin; he was present at the rehearsal of evidence intended to frame the acquittal of the officers responsible for the murder of two prisoners at Drumcondra; he has information with reference to the murder of Michael O'Callaghan, Lord Mayor of Limerick. If a constructive policy is conceivable on the part of England in Ireland it would seem as if suppression of crime among the British forces were a good place to begin, and that General Crozier's disclosures furnished a basis for it. A soldier who breaks through the caste system in which he is trained and acts on his own initiative in a matter of public conscience and private honor serves nobly his country—and finds his reward in ostracism. We may expect General Crozier to join Sir Francis Vane of Hutton in exile.

MAY 23rd was the day selected for the commencement exercises of the administration. Naturally chief interest centred in the pronouncements of head-of-the-class Harding, but second-boy Coolidge had a "part." Since he chose as his subject Radicalism we looked in the Times for a full report of his address, but were disappointed. Perhaps the Times blushed. From the World a few gems can be gleaned which show Master Coolidge's precosity.

It is true that we hold to the theory of equality, not of character or possession, but equality of opportunity and equality before the law. This does not mean the government guarantees any standard of achievement to its citizens, but that in its dealings with them it will grant to all an opportunity to be heard and the right to a decision based on the evidence and the law, without favor and without prejudice. It is the belief of an American that he creates opportunity, that his achievement, his destiny, his greatness, lies not in others, but in himself.

There are those who speak of overthrowing the government. In America this reduces itself to the absurdity of overthrowing the people, for here the people are the government.

These are sufficient to illustrate Master Coolidge's faithful attendance upon a school in which the platitude is nourished as a figure of speech. His style is not as Corinthian as present taste demands, but a sentence which immediately follows marks his control of a useful artifice which may be called the rhetorical glissade.

Administrations and offices may change, have changed, as at the last election when the people entrusted their destinies to a wise and clear-visioned man from Ohio, who in their service toils on from day to day, seeking not his own, but the public welfare.

No one will dispute Master Coolidge's claim to a diploma.

ECONOMY is just now the best club with which to beat off any desirable measure of social legislation. It is being used on the Smith-Towner Maternity bill, which is now on the Senate Calendar, but is being held up in the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce by the Honorable Samuel E. Winslow, Chairman. Mr. Winslow has opposed this measure in earlier sessions, chiefly as now by playing delay against it. Now he wants more hearings, though he and every member of the committee must surely have heard enough to realize that in respect to the public concern over mothers and children the United States holds a most discreditable rank among the enlightened nations. If the bill were passed, the hard-pressed Treasury would have another financial burden thrust upon it; that is the most cogent official reason for going slow. Yes, an additional burden amounting annually to less than the sum the government spends every two hours. An honest zeal for economy would apply the shears elsewhere.

THE coolness of the Attorney-General on May Day was in agreeable contrast to the fury of his predecessor, and now the Postmaster General has followed his example. After the Masses had been re-baptized as the Liberator, Mr. Burleson crippled its circulation by the strange device of ignoring its application for second-class mailing privi-

leges but allowing it the much more expensive distribution as third-class matter. Mr. Hays has no patience with this form of censorship: either suppress such publications entirely, he says, or give them full mailing rights. And he restores full second-class rights to the *Liberator*, with these words, which we recommend as an epitaph for the political tombstone of Mr. Burleson:

The war is over. We must return to the ordered freedom. Our method of safeguarding the public welfare, while at the same time maintaining freedom of the press, has been found through a long period of stable civil liberty better for the public welfare and personal security of citizens than to establish a bureaucratic censorship, which in its nature becomes a matter of individual opinion, prejudice or caprice.

These are no empty phrases: they already have a meaning in dollars and cents. For the Postoffice Department is prepared to refund to the *Liberator* the loss it suffered while without second-class privileges—no less than \$11,277.

BY its proposed amendments to certain sections of the Seamen's Act, the Scott bill now before Congress would strike at the safety and efficiency of steamship service on the Great Lakes. One amendment would put the firemen, who now work fifty-six hours a week, back on the old eighty-four schedule. Another would substitute "certificated life-boat men," that is men who would be required to know nothing more than how to row a boat, for experienced "able seamen." But the worst feature of the bill is its proposal to allow lake passenger steamers to carry lifeboats enough for only twenty-five per cent of their passenger and crew capacity, instead of the fifty per cent now required. Substantially this means that shipowners who now have a legal right to drown half their passengers and crew may—unless the Scott bill receives the opposition it deserves—be granted the legal right to drown three-quarters of them.

AS we go to press, the shipping strike has reached a state of partial and disordered armistice. Secretary Davis induced Admiral Benson to reduce his terms a little and the striking engineers were asked to accept a 15 per cent reduction—as before; the elimination of overtime, some modifications in the working rules, an annual ten days' vacation—frankly described in one newspaper as a "sop" to the men, and an agreement with the Shipping Board to run for a year. The engineers are divided in their opinion, the other unions will hear nothing of such terms, and the shipowners—whose association on May 18th swore that it "would not hereafter have any signed agreement with any sea-going labor organization," are not pleased at the Shipping Board's year-long contract with the men, since it would prevent any further wage reductions within that time.

Briand's Moderation

SINCE the collapse of the German military machine the gravest menace to the peace of the world has been the determination of the French militarists to exploit Allied victory to the imperial aggrandizement of France. With Germany disarmed, economically enslaved, threatened on every frontier by hostile peoples, did not France stand forth as the greatest military power on the continent? If, further, Germany could be dismembered, with the south backed by French influence against the north, would not French military preponderance become permanent? The argument seemed plausible to the militarists, who now, as in times past, inevitably overestimate the value of force and underestimate the recuperative capacity of conquered peoples. What made this play of the military fancy so dangerous was that under the panic of Bolshevism the nation had elected Chambers easily controlled by the militarists. Without their approval, it has appeared, no French government could stand. Therefore Briand, though representing the groups farthest away from the militarists, was forced to adopt a tone of menace and provocation that would have been appropriate to Poincaré or Tardieu.

But now has not Briand come out for a moderate policy, a policy of peace and European reconciliation? And have not the Chambers sustained him by a vote of 403 to 163, and the press fallen into line behind him? That at least is the impression given by the dispatches from Paris for the last week of May. If the government of France has actually had a change of heart, the event is of the greatest significance. We should have a right to hope that the tangles of the peace settlement had at last begun to dissolve. It is worth inquiring more precisely into just what has happened.

Let us recall that French policy and British have for months been divided over the question of indemnity and the question of Silesia. The French have exhibited a desire to make the indemnity as heavy as possible, with the ill-concealed hope that Germany would refuse to pay and so justify the seizure of the Ruhr basin and the economic throttling of Germany. British policy has sought to fix reparations at a figure which would not justify German resistance. In the London ultimatum, with its limitations upon the amount of the indemnity on which interest should accrue from the outset, British policy was in the main victorious. On the question of Silesia, French policy has sought to give Poland the benefit of every doubt. British policy has been much less hostile to Ger-