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## The Week

**L**ORD NORTHCLIFFE is the first Englishman of prominence who gives public evidence of understanding why Chinamen and Americans object to the existence and consequently to the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. "A prolongation of the alliance," he declared in a recent interview, "only serves to irritate public and official opinion in the United States, merely humiliates China, and adds nothing to the prestige of Great Britain in Asia." Englishmen who have recognized the existence of this irritation in American opinion misunderstood its significance. They assumed that it would fade away, provided they made perfectly clear the impossibility of partnership between Great Britain and Japan in a war against the United States. But assurances of this kind do not face the major source of the dislike which Americans feel for the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Japan is the restless, disorderly and aggressive power in the Pacific. Her aggression has already mutilated and disorganized China, and if it continues it will threaten the security of free communities with coast lines on the Pacific. The Anglo-Japanese alliance permits the threat to continue. It prevents Great Britain from taking sides against Japan, and

if the British Empire does not take sides against Japan Americans are afraid that nothing will check the Japanese onset except war. Hence the need of denouncing the Alliance as one condition of order and appeasement in the Far East.

**M**ANY Americans realize the impediment which the Anglo-Japanese alliance is to the institution of order in the Far East and the limitation of naval armament. But very few understand the important part which Siberia is entitled to play in a Far East Conference and settlement. Siberia is like Australia—a European community transplanted to the Far East. Its strategic position and resources, if manipulated by an autocratic imperialist government like that of the late Tsar, are capable of being used as a grave threat to the security of China. But if its long frontier and its resources are controlled by a free government, Siberia is capable of becoming a source of security to China and an obstacle to the success of Japanese imperialism on the mainland. For this reason the American government has every reason to cultivate the friendship of Siberia and to undertake its protection in its present disorganized condition against Japan. The New Republic has hoped that the State Department would come to recognize the Far Eastern Republic and to permit it official representation in the Conference. But hitherto the Department has treated Siberia as it has treated Latvia and Esthonia. It has refused recognition. It has, however, visaed the passports of the delegates from the Chita government and that is something to the good. There will be Siberian representatives in Washington who can submit unofficial if not official facts and pleadings.

**M. BRIAND**, since he comes to the Washington Conference with a majority of two hundred in the Chamber of Deputies behind him, can afford to consider with less anxiety the parallel offered by President Wilson's expedition to Paris. To be sure, that majority was swelled by many who

thought it less important that their opponent Briand should be defeated than that France should be represented at the Conference. A man who could not speak for France at the Conference would be of little use, and while there is a minority in France with whose opinions we better agree, M. Briand is, of the majority, best qualified to speak for it. It will be interesting to see how he steers the ambitions of France, for France's position in the Conference is not logically a central one.

**THE** repeal of the excess profits tax illustrates the effectiveness of an interested propaganda among a people who are impatient of abstract thinking. The burden of taxation, which had been borne by a small number of corporations so happily circumstanced as to receive profits above the usual level, is shifted in large part to the corporations that were receiving only modest profits. Taking from those who have not the little that they have is no new thing in taxation. The novelty in the present situation is that those who are to pay the increased burden were induced by propaganda to favor the change. No doubt they were still influenced by the exploded doctrine that the excess profits tax was a cause of high prices. As a fact, the flat corporation tax is much more likely to enter into the cost of production and exert an influence on prices. Nobody was ever forced to close down his shop or restrict his operations by the excess profits tax. Unless he made fairly generous profits he paid no tax at all. Many concerns will have to go out of business, or restrict their operations on account of the new tax, unless they can secure an increase in prices.

**PRESIDENT HARDING'S** scheme for the solution of the race problem in the South has much to recommend it, so far as its spirit is concerned. But how would it work, under conditions as they are in the South today? The idea of social equality, he declares, must be entirely eliminated. Racial amalgamation is a conception too intolerable to be entertained. The true solution implies equal political and economic opportunity for both races; "absolute equality in the paths of knowledge and culture." Now, there are hosts of men in the South and in the North too who would deliberately restrict the Negro's cultural and educational opportunities, with a view to keeping him in what they conceive to be his God given place as a hewer of wood and drawer of water. But this view, we believe, is receding from the minds of the intellectual leaders everywhere. The best thought of the South, as of the North, is sympathetic toward every movement for improving the economic condition of the Negro. But political equality? The

South knows, as President Harding ought to know, that you can't draw a sharp line between politics and social life. The offices of a state are in most parts of America positions of social leadership. With complete political equality the state of Mississippi might easily elect a Negro as governor. Would such a result be accepted by Mississippians as devoid of social significance? The race problem unfortunately is not one that admits of easy general solutions.

**HOW** completely German political life has been disintegrated under foreign pressure is indicated clearly by the fact that no party or group of parties could be found to take up the responsibility resigned by Dr. Wirth. Some government there had to be, if German rights under the Silesian decision were to be protected. Therefore Dr. Wirth was forced to patch up a ministry, as a sort of receivership for the parliamentary government that had failed to function. The new government starts out with most unfavorable auspices, or more correctly with no auspices at all. Once it has completed the formal arrangements for rescuing what can be rescued out of Silesia its mandate practically lapses. It has no assurance whatever of support for any program of internal administration or legislation. And a vigorous program is needed, if head is to be made against the financial forces that are galloping Germany toward a terrible crash.

**IF** an appropriate occasion is needed for the release of the war-time prisoners, the opening of the Conference on Limitation of Armament should furnish it. The men sentenced under the war-acts put themselves in jeopardy primarily because of their hatred of war. Exactly the same motive brings the delegates to Washington. Moreover the delegates come from countries which have long since granted amnesty to prisoners of the type of Eugene Debs and the I. W. W.'s. To call the attention of the representatives of governments which have a more enlightened practice than our own to the plight of our war-time prisoners is a natural and obvious method of appealing to public opinion in a matter as to which the administration has been extremely derelict.

**MR. LAMONT'S** mission to Mexico City to confer with President Obregon and his Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. de la Huerta, in regard to the Mexican foreign loan has apparently ended in failure. This is a disappointment to every friend of President Obregon. It was hoped that he would make use of this opportunity not only to settle one of the outstanding causes of difficulty with the financial world, but also to advance relations with the

United States beyond the present impasse. Negotiations in regard to the debt appear to have been broken off in consequence of the insistence of Mr. de la Huerta on the right of the Mexican government to extinguish its debt by purchasing its bonds at the market price. The bonds are depressed because of the failure to pay interest on them during the last seven years. Obviously by withholding interest and sinking fund payments the Mexican government can keep its bonds below par, and the Mexican treasury can use for redemption the very funds that should have been applied to the regular service of the debt. Such sharp practice will not advance Mexican credit in the financial world with which President Obregon must ultimately make terms. If he is acting, as is generally believed, under the prompting of Americans who have their own reasons for wishing to keep the Mexican waters troubled, it can only be reiterated that he is badly advised. On the other hand, the policy of the United States in withholding recognition until Mexico reforms herself according to our prescription is as short-sighted as it ever was.

BY a majority of approximately 4,000 North Dakota has recalled Governor Frazier and two other chief members of the administration who owed their election to the Nonpartisan League. This is evidence of the swing of public opinion back to "normalcy." During the past year the executive of North Dakota has been deadlocked by a hostile legislature; its only action was to sell the bonds previously authorized and so provide itself with funds for a continuation of its program. In the face of this success the state has recalled it. At present writing the fate of the measures proposed by the opponents of the League for the liquidation of the Bank of North Dakota and the limitation of the issues of bonds to \$7,500,000 is in doubt. If they have carried, the industrial program of the state will be limited to the completion of the mill and elevator at Grand Forks; and it is doubtful if even this enterprise will remain under state management. If they have been defeated, by a whim of the electorate the Nonpartisan program will remain to be carried out by its opponents. In either case it may be safely prophesied that the experiment of a state in business on a large scale, so vigorously initiated by North Dakota, is for the present closed.

THE question as to whether the Wright brothers or Professor Langley invented the first successful aeroplane might well be left to competent scientific bodies to determine were not the good faith of the ranking American body, the Smithsonian Institution, so seriously involved. The recent

lecture of Mr. Griffith Brewer, the text of which has been released by the Royal Aeronautical Society, makes out a damaging case against Mr. Glenn Curtiss and Dr. A. F. Zahm, the Smithsonian's representative. As a result of the Hammondsport tests, conducted by those two men in 1914, with what purported to be the old Langley machine, most Americans today probably believe that the credit for the invention of the aeroplane belongs to Langley. The Hammondsport machine was probably capable of flight. But that the Hammondsport machine was not the original Langley, but a modified machine in which the fundamental structural defects of the latter were eliminated, Mr. Brewer's paper proves conclusively. The action of the Smithsonian in permitting Mr. Curtiss to make the tests when his company had just been adjudged an infringer of the Wright patent, and of appointing Dr. Zahm as its representative when he was known to have been a technical expert witness for the Curtiss company in its former suits, and when he was about to represent that company in another infringement suit, certainly demands explanation.

THIS week New York will see the first birth control conference in America. We are still behind Europe, and what progress we have recently made has been largely due to the extraordinary energy and courage of Mrs. Margaret Sanger, who has found in her path every conceivable obstacle prejudice could place there. Prejudices about sex are perhaps the most violent of any, partly because they have so long lived in the dark. A visitor from some other planet would be at a loss to reconcile man's long past of victories over the chance of nature with his present inability to decide that simplest of things: how many children shall be born to him. Compared with this shrinking from knowledge and science, man's vast skill in the breeding of animals seems indeed absurd.

IT is good news that the Anti-Lynching Bill (H. R. 13) sponsored by Representative Dyer of Missouri, has been revised and approved by the Attorney-General, and reported out favorably by the House Committee on the Judiciary. The bill is justly severe. It threatens any state or municipal officer who neglects to guard any person in his protection from death at the hands of a mob with a heavy fine and imprisonment up to five years. It promises an imprisonment from five years to life for any one taking part in a lynching. Perhaps the most effective clause of the bill is the one which makes any county in which a lynching takes place liable to a federal fine of ten thousand dollars. The purse hurts sooner than the conscience.



## Public Opinion and the Washington Conference

THE Conference on the Limitation of Armaments will meet on November 12th in a shifty and dangerous but not unwholesome atmosphere of public opinion. For the moment the uppermost sentiment about the gathering is not unfavorable. The popular voice credits the administration with good intentions, with trustworthy knowledge of its chosen field of action and with an intelligent specific program. But this sympathetic attitude is subject to many quick and anxious misgivings. The more alert and articulate part of public opinion hoards a vivid recollection of the gross discrepancy between the brave promise and the ignoble performance of the Paris Conference. These people combine a timid and almost tremulous expectancy with a large lively fund of latent apprehension and suspicion. In spite of a superficial show of optimism and approval they do not anticipate very much from the Conference. They rather expect failure, often for widely different reasons, and in so far as it fails they propose, if they can, to give the statesmen responsible for the failure a poor time.

This prevailing atmosphere of public opinion, shifty, disillusioned and exacting as it is, is more alert and wholesome than the atmosphere of public opinion which surrounded the Paris Conference. In the winter and spring of 1918-1919 both the popular and official mind throughout the world was shot through with illusions. There was the illusion of the Wilson liberals, who attributed to Mr. Wilson's war speeches and to his peace program an authority and a practical momentum which, as the event proved, they were far from possessing. There was the illusion of the romantic revolutionists, who believed that the distresses and the destructions of the war had prepared other peoples as well as the Russians for an experiment in communism, and who confidently anticipated the westward march of Bolshevism over the burning ruins of the old social order. Finally, there was the illusion of the reactionaries. As they saw it, the world, as it had conducted itself in 1914, was the best of all possible worlds, and they proposed in relation both to domestic and foreign affairs to carry it back as quickly and as thoroughly as they could.

This third group was much more powerful than either of its two competitors. It dictated and approved the Treaty of Versailles, and then triumphantly returned home to restore as quickly as it could the pre-war domestic political and social conditions. It prided itself, as the Pan-Germans did, on being most realistic, but it was suffering

from an illusion as gross and palpable as that either of the Wilson liberals or the revolutionary socialists—the illusion that “normalcy” in 1924 after the economic and social precipitations of the war could resemble the “normalcy” of 1914.

The existence and the prevalence of these illusions prevented the betrayal in Paris from being used as an opportunity to demonstrate the power of public opinion. If the liberals throughout the world had united in denouncing the Treaty of Versailles as a breach of faith and as an unworkable instrument they would have immediately undermined its credit and vindicated the vitality of their convictions. Instead the majority of them compromised with the Treaty as good enough. By proving that their own convictions possessed small authority over their own minds, they justified, after the event, the action of the authors of the Treaty in treating liberal principles as if they were not true. But little by little the Treaty which they had refused to discredit increasingly discredited itself. The society of nations which it instituted was a society in which the ultimate arbiter was still force and in which conflicts between classes and between peoples were ultimately inevitable. But recent history indicates that this kind of social organization, however reactionaries may believe in it and liberals connive at it, does not work as well as it did. The common people in Europe and America were tired and sick of force and of the social fruits which were derived from the dependence on force. It is proved in many instances—in Russia, in Ireland and on the Rhine—that it is becoming impossible to organize force on a scale which was sufficient to sustain legislation such as that of Versailles.

Because common decent people are sick of the futility and the atrocities of force they are returning to the idea of deliberation and conference—the idea which gave form to the League of Nations but which the Treaty of Peace repudiated. They are conferring in London in the attempt to base the government of Ireland on consent. They are about to confer in Washington chiefly for the purpose of substituting in the Far East a concert of nations for a tyranny of power. This Washington Conference can hardly fail as flagrantly as the Paris Conference failed. Although the reactionaries are still in control, they are not as self-confident and as resolute as they were in 1919. They no longer propose the restoration of the status quo ante as the only sane and realistic course for a statesman to adopt. In spite of their victory over liberal opinion three years ago, they are curiously enough more afraid of it now than they were then. They recognize that the liberal program in foreign affairs which Mr. Wilson preached so eloquently from 1916 to 1918 has received a completer vin-