

Of course the whole case of China lies in its refusal to admit the validity of these earlier treaties. The grounds of their refusal are threefold. First, they were made under duress; second, Germany's title forbade alienation to a third power; and, thirdly, when China entered the war as an ally her whole status was changed. The latter claim was admitted by implication in Japan's efforts to prevent China's entering the war until after she had made her secret agreements with France and Great Britain to support her seizure of Shantung. Quite aside then from popular sentiment, for China to have entered into negotiations on the only basis proposed by Japan would be to stultify her recent diplomacy, and to surrender all hope of a rectification of the conditions growing out of the Twenty-one Demands. And the latter include much more than the Shantung question. For example, public opinion in the world seems as yet hardly awake to the fact that the original lease of Port Arthur and surrounding country to Russia expires in 1924, and that Japan's case for retention of its Manchurian possessions rests upon the validity of the treaties in which the Twenty-one Demands are embodied.

It is not surprising that the hopes and fears of China now centre about the Pacific conference, and that it is the chief topic of conversation among intelligent Shantungese. It is hardly too much to say that its crucial issue is whether or not the treaties which embody the Twenty-one Demands are faits accomplis. If the conference regularizes Japan's position, one chapter in the fate of China is sealed. If it refuses to do so, the conference will doubtless be broken up unless Japan is willing to go further in compromise than now appears likely. The attempt was well worth making. But too great optimism about its outcome would be childish. It hardly requires Versailles to remind us that a peace conference may be as dangerous as war.

JOHN DEWEY.

"It's a Temperamental Job!"

IT was recently my privilege and pleasure—mixed with a due amount of landlubberly terror—to fly from Salt Lake City to San Francisco with the United States Mail. We left Salt Lake at seven in the morning, alighted for a few moments at Elko and at Reno, in Nevada, crossed the Sierra at about 13,600 feet, and at two o'clock in the afternoon, Pacific time, slid down to the field at San Francisco, seven hundred miles away.

It is unfashionable, of course, nowadays, not to take the airplane for granted. Anybody with five

dollars can have a flight. Planes have crossed the Atlantic and flown to Australia. Young ladies who would be frightened at a grasshopper, will tell you that they were disappointed in the air, and really felt just as if they were sitting at home in an easy chair. I am free to confess, nevertheless, that, to me, this trip over the mountains was nothing short of tremendous.

Merely to stick your face into a 100-mile-an-hour gale for seven hours, in a roar that drowns out everything, even to the voice in your own throat, and stifles down the everyday sentient and more or less articulate human into a sort of huddled, flying eye—merely this, together with the climbs and drops through all sorts of altitudes and air pressures from sea-level to fourteen thousand feet, that leave you deaf as a post for hours—gives one a borrowed sense of physical accomplishment at least equivalent to that of doing an average Marathon run.

And then the Jove-like gazing down on the earth and man's microscopic works; on river systems, with all their towns, seen from source to mouth, almost as mere twisting scratches in the land; on mountains lying a mile beneath like warty brown toads sleeping on the sand; the jagged edge of the Sierras and Alpine lakes and patches of perpetual snow, yawning as far below one's feet as they usually lift above them—all this, continued for the better part of a day, so takes one out of life as it is usually lived, that for hours a city's streets seem diminutive and far away, and one wanders like a stranger in one's own world.

And yet the mail is carried to San Francisco every day. In the three days that I waited at Salt Lake, the flying-times between Salt Lake and Elko—about two hundred and four miles—varied only about two minutes. The Air Mail Service is three years old. It is included in the Civil Service and it is not easy to dismiss a mechanician, whether his work is satisfactory or not. A pilot is subject to the rules and red tape of the Post Office Department just as if he were a regular postman on a city route.

This conventionality, on the one hand, and the entirely unconventional feelings which a single flight gave me, on the other, together with the gossip of the flying men, themselves, as I heard it for several days, leads me to the point which I wish to suggest here—that in incorporating the air mail in the regular postal service (a thoroughly desirable aim) we are likely to take too much for granted. There is a danger of forgetting that flying is not yet walking; that the dash, determination, and sensitive "feel" which make a successful flyer are qualities not immediately translatable

into bureaucratic conformity by the mere act of putting their possessors in the Civil Service; that risking one's life every day is a different job from lugging a mail pouch along a city street, and that the men who do it must, in some sort or other, be treated accordingly.

I put this suggestion gently and with a certain diffidence. The problem presented to the Post Office officials is a real and difficult one, as anybody can see for himself. I have neither the facts nor the wish to criticize the Department; still less to suggest that the willing and plucky band of pilots sit round growling all the time. What I wish to record here is a personal impression, although a rather definite one, that the morale of the service is not what it should be and that the handling of the men at the dangerous end of the game still leaves something to be desired.

Put yourself, for a moment, on one of the flying fields. You are at Salt Lake, for instance. It is four o'clock in the afternoon and the mail from Rock Springs is due. Rock Springs is one hundred and fifty miles away—a flight over mountains and canyons. Landings are not impossible, and forced landings have actually been made, but it is about as easy to make them as to sleep on a picket fence.

The hot desert day has suddenly darkened, the west and south are black with thunder clouds, and all at once, across the salt flats, sweeps a desert wind with whirling columns of sand. You are watching a lower shoulder of the mountains, which hereabouts rise to twelve or thirteen thousand feet, and even now, in midsummer, are spotted with snow. "That's the place where he ought to come through."

Half an hour passes, an hour. Suddenly, from behind, quarter of the way round the sky's circle, comes the drone of a plane. It dips, slides down to the field, and scuds across it in a cloud of dust. The pilot whirls about, drums back to the hangar, climbs out of his nest and hurries to make his report, for he had an engagement with a man at the bank at four-twenty, and is nearly an hour late.

"Had to dodge about a dozen big thunderstorms!" is his explanation of being off his course.

"What happens to a plane in a thunder storm? Does the metal attract lightning, like a lightning-rod?"

"Well, there's all sorts of theories about that. Of course the lightning-rod is attached to the ground and the plane isn't. Maybe it's like a Leyden jar—you know how the sparks jump from one knob to the other and just prick a little hole in a piece of paper. Of course if the spark happened to go through your gas tank, you'd be out of luck!"

Somebody volunteers the suggestion that he has

heard of planes getting struck by lightning and "Blooley! There was nothing left!"

"You'll see that lightning run along a cloud clear across the sky. It seems to make for the place where the rain is thickest and to run down on that. So you strike for the place where the rain is thinnest. If there's a blue spot or a hole in the clouds you climb or dive for that. Sometimes there's no way out and you simply have to bore through it. But it always scares the hell out o' me, I'll say."

They talk of flying in blizzards on the Cheyenne run, and fighting the wind for hours until the gas tank goes dry and there's nothing for it but a landing. One man got lost in a fog somewhere in the mountains, had to come down with engine trouble, and landed on the edge of a canyon several hundred feet deep. Going over the mountains to San Francisco you must expect to hit "bumps" and run into air-pockets. Even when there are no fogs or storms, the cold air flows down from the summits into the valleys, like water over a waterfall, and makes the air "thin."

"The last time I went over as a passenger," says one of the pilots, "I had a suit-case on my lap. We struck an air-pocket and dropped about three hundred feet like a shot. I just caught that suit-case as it was bouncing over the side of the cockpit and I might have followed, if it hadn't been for the strap. You'd better be strapped in good and tight."

The pilot, who flew with me to San Francisco carried a six-shooter. What for? Well, the last time he made a forced landing was in the desert and he walked about fifteen miles with coyotes skulking along behind him and thought with a gun it would be less lonesome. Every morning at this time of year the fog is thick in San Francisco and it doesn't burn away until well after breakfast time, but the mail starts for Salt Lake at six o'clock, fog or no fog, and the pilots feel their way through it and climb up above the city and the islands to the upper air as best they can. And so on.

Running an air mail service across a continent like ours is a very different thing from doing it in little England or France. The Rocky Mountain and Pacific coast region is a continent in itself and not an easy one to fly over. During the past year the air mail carriers flew 1,313,379 miles with mail. They carried 1,015,053 pounds of it. Their flying "practice," as the engineers say, with its daily flights of hundreds of miles over all sorts of country in all sorts of weather, including prairie blizzards and mountain storms, is higher, one supposes, than that developed in the more casual flying of either army or navy pilots.

In saying that the morale of the service is not what it might be, it is not altogether easy to put

one's finger on the concrete difficulty. It is not equipment, although the planes are of the old De Haviland type which used to be spoken of in France as "flying coffins." Their main weakness—a frail fabric fuselage which was unstable in the air and easily smashed in a rough landing—has been done away with. That the gas tank is dangerously placed and more likely than in other planes to break and catch fire in case of a fall, does not seem to have been proved. The plane in which we flew to San Francisco, a De Haviland, remade at the Reno field, with a stout wooden body, seemed thoroughly satisfactory. If the type is not ideal, it seems, at any rate, to suit the pilots well enough.

Nor do they complain of pay. They receive a guaranteed salary with an addition for flying mileage and some of the men are earning more than one hundred dollars a week. There is a normal amount of growling over careless mechanics, and repairs and inspections superficially made, but this is not the real trouble. The real trouble is psychological rather than material and is inherent in the facts of the case—the obvious difficulty of harmonizing two inharmonious things, the dash and daring of the flying men themselves and the sort of reward such qualities crave, with the impersonal and often stupidly clumsy grinding of departmental Washington. This is precisely the thing that hundreds of thousands of men ran up against in war time and took more or less for granted. But peace is another matter, and these men are taking the risks of war, often, without war's stimulus or excitement. It is precisely the thing which men run up against all the time in any government service,

but there is a difference, after all, in the unanswered cables and ignored reports which discourage a minister or consul, and bureaucratic indifference toward a man who is risking his life.

I was told of a recent order directing the managers of flying fields to pay particular attention to the age limit of their flyers. When the regulations were hunted up it was found that no men "over seventy-four years old" were eligible as pilots! The postal regulations had been transferred bodily, apparently, to the Air Mail. I have had no opportunity to check up the accuracy of this anecdote but it suggests the sort of thing that might happen, and which the pilots themselves evidently believe does happen. They feel that too many of the officials of the service are regulation Post Office employees, without any understanding of flying or particular interest in it and that there is a corresponding lack of response to suggestions sent in from the field and lack of personal interest in and support of the flying work done.

"It all comes down to this," said one of the field managers. "*This is a temperamental job* and there's no getting round it. Ten years from now an Air Mail pilot may be a mere chauffeur but he isn't so yet, and you can't treat him as such."

With this observation, that flying is still "a temperamental job" the suggestion which I wished to make is sufficiently stated. Tact and a little personal interest are perhaps all that are needed. And doubtless Mr. Will Hays, in his efforts to humanize the Post Office Department may, in due time, be counted on for that.

ARTHUR RUHL.

Calvin the Silent

THE elections of 1920 imported into the City of Conversation, as one of its necessary consequences, perhaps the oddest and most singular apparition this vocal and articulate settlement has ever known: A politician who does not, who will not, who seemingly cannot talk. A well of silence. A centre of stillness.

Moreover, it appears from the meagre record that he thinks of himself as Peter Pan, the boy who never grew up to be a man.

We had, of course, all heard of Calvin Coolidge; that he had been City Councilman, City Solicitor, Court Clerk, State Representative, Mayor, State Senator, Lieutenant-Governor and Governor one after another virtually continuously since 1899;

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that being in place and in politics was with him both a vocation and an avocation. But the man himself as a social human being was not known at all. There was a bright curiosity to be satisfied.

Presiding over the Senate is the least of the duties of the Vice-President of the United States in the Washington scheme of things. What time he spends at the Capitol saying: "Does the Senator from South Dakota yield to the Senator from Mississippi?" or "The Senator from New Hampshire suggests the absence of a quorum. The clerk will call the roll," or when the calendar is being called, "The bill will be passed over"—is his period of reflection and digestion. His day's work really begins when he gets to his hotel in the evening and finds his dress clothes laid out on the bed and Mrs. Coolidge tells him, "We are dining with Senator Whosis tonight and you must be dressed and