

Athenian, we, the public, are a noble but sleeping steed that needs a gadfly. Why have the facts failed to arouse us? We suggest three reasons.

1. No clear compact summary of the welter of research, leading to action, has been given. Thousands of pages and millions of words await a strong hand to shape them. As a Trenton manufacturer wrote to Senator Calder, "Congressional records while furnishing some relief are rather a poor substitute for coal."

2. Lively dramatic facts, which sting the public to angry attention, have not been forced out at the hearings. The journey of soft coal from the mine head at a price of around \$3.50 a ton to the consumer at a price of \$9, and \$11, a ton has not been traced, with each layer of new charges recorded. A picture of that veiled but triumphant progress would then be added in the public mind to the picture which it carries of a "wicked union."

3. Many facts remain unknown. The Senators in four years of cross-examination failed to ask the searching questions which would have let out the pus. A sharpened mind is needed. This failure of the political intelligence to extract decisive facts will have to be met by the use of experts. The success of the Sankey Commission in revealing the chaos of coal rested in the mental power of such men as Redmayne and Webb. In next week's issue we shall detail some of the essential and as yet undisclosed facts. We further suggest that enough of the needed information was not pried loose at the hearings, simply because no group in our country was sufficiently interested to ask questions.

If we, the public, are too inert ourselves to press for the facts, we must have a deputy. Our need lies in discovering some interested group in the community who will demand publicity on coal, for it has been abundantly proved that we can not get coal without getting the facts.

This implies two things.

A government commission to find the facts.

Growing out of it, a permanent governmental fact-finding agency. (This means an extension of the powers of the existent government agencies—such as the Geological Survey and the Federal Trade Commission).

Will the operators help us by such a bit of public service? Of the operators organized in the National Coal Association, Senator Frelinghuysen has said that they "will agree to nothing which places any obstacle in the way of unrestricted exploitation of the fuel-consuming public. . . . I am disposed to believe they have never been sincere

and have never told the truth regarding the operators' profits."

We believe such a group may come into existence among the miners—a group desirous of a well-ordered industry, where work is regular and the supply of coal steady. If the miners are to act in this public capacity of pressing for the facts, it means their turning from factional fights, the ruthless use of their economic power, and the dogmatic assertion of claims. It means letting facts govern the decision of disputes.

The mere assertion of group power is beginning to lose its persuasive charm over the community. There is a sleeping strength in the public, even when it refuses creative effort. Buyers, consumers, you and I, when finally aroused, can exercise a slow, passive, deadly pressure, which will flatten any single group. The fighting of the future will be done on the basis of facts. We venture to predict that the first group accepting and practicing this—whether miners or owners—will receive a backing from the very public that refused to take the leadership.

## Crusading for the Bonus

TO Americans of the future who may bring to the study of the events of today the detachment and the perspective of history, the successful or the unsuccessful attempt of this Congress to legislate about the bonus will be as difficult as it is necessary to understand. What will make it difficult to understand are the persuasive reasons and the powerful influences which counted in opposition to the proposed legislation without preventing it. The reasons and forces which are arrayed against it seem irresistible. Yet a large majority of the House of Representatives have enthusiastically disregarded them, and probably a smaller majority of the Senate will follow suit. In spite of his frank and vehement opposition it is at least doubtful whether the President will veto the bill, as it ultimately passes. What is the explanation of the ability of the bonus advocates to overcome the prodigious obstacles to their plan?

Consider for a moment the source, the power and the persuasiveness of the reasons which opponents of the bonus can marshal. The American people have recently waged a war which has plunged them in debt for the sum of almost \$30,000,000,000. Their increased indebtedness has brought with it staggering financial problems and ominous social conflicts which strain to the utmost the moral cohesion of the country and its ability to meet its obligations. It will, during the next

few years, have to provide for billions of dollars of accruing debts which it cannot pay and which it cannot renew on favorable terms unless it husbands all its resources. The present administration assumed office pledged to severe economy. The nation was and still is groaning under the weight of taxation. It is enduring a period of business depression which impairs the standard of living and the economic status of millions of farmers and wage-earners. The majority of Americans attribute their privations at least in part to the burden of taxation and to the consequences of necessary deflation; and they are told that the bonus will mean in the end either heavier taxes or more inflation to be subsequently succeeded by more deflation. The desire to decrease taxation has recently persuaded the class of Americans who had favored national armament to abandon the program of naval construction and to scrap many existing ships in order to save at the outside \$200,000,000 a year. There appears to be an overwhelming accumulation of popular sentiment and public policy against any proposal which will increase the liabilities and impair the credit of the government.

Yet the ex-soldiers are now demanding what they call readjusted compensation for their period of service. The proposed bonus will add some billions of dollars to the liabilities of the government, part of which will have to be paid out of the taxation within a few years but most of which will not accrue as a demand for cash until the expiration of twenty years. The economic effect of yielding to this demand is clear and certain. The increase in the government's liabilities will not only intensify the economic privations and disabilities with which the American people are so much concerned, but it will seriously embarrass the government in dealing with its existing burdens. At a time of general depression and financial embarrassment it donates economic resources which, if employed upon public works, would restore business activity and some measure of general prosperity, to one class in the community irrespective of whether its members need assistance or not. Like all gratuities it will do many of its recipients more harm than good. They will treat the money as a windfall and it will tempt them to repeat the demand and to consider themselves entitled to more or less of a living at the expense of the public.

Many of them have a grievance. There were, during the war, in and out of the army, a multitude of American citizens who served their country well and who were poorly paid for their services. There were also many American citizens

who served their country ill or not at all and who took advantage of the war to enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow countrymen. But the government made an honest, if not a very intelligent, attempt to prevent this kind of injustice. There is no way of adequately compensating men who offer or are asked to risk their lives at the bidding of their country, but if a government ever treated its soldiers liberally and spared no expense to provide for their needs, the American government did during the war. It also attempted to prevent profiteering and where it occurred to take away in taxes a large part of the fruits. It did not succeed very well, but the job was in some measure impossible of achievement. The motive power of American economic production derives so largely from profits that if the government had gone much further in restricting the profiteering which is so often indistinguishable from profit-making, it might well have impaired the volume of military supplies needed by the army. When the fighting was over the government neglected to safeguard the interests of the discharged soldier, but it also neglected to safeguard the economic interests of the wage-earners who had served it faithfully and intelligently in civilian capacities. There would have been much justification for an attempt to relieve the post-war privation of all ex-soldiers, but there is no justification for paying the soldiers a gratuity irrespective of need out of the public treasury, particularly when there are so many other Americans who are suffering from want.

If the arguments against the bonus, as a matter of political, financial and social expediency, are so formidable and the arguments in its favor apparently so infirm, why is the plan likely to be adopted by an overwhelming majority of both parties in the House of Representatives? Why is it so much more powerful politically than it is persuasive as a matter of public policy? The reason which is ordinarily given correctly accounts for part of this discrepancy. In every doubtful congressional district the returned soldiers are numerous enough to defeat an anti-bonus candidate either in the primaries or at the polls. They form one of those insistent minorities which under prevailing conditions decide the issue of elections. The voters who are opposed to the bonus will not necessarily support the Congressman who voted against it or knife the Congressman who voted for it, but the voters who are in favor of it will compensate for any inferiority in numbers by more effective unity of political action. The congressional candidate will fear the bonus-advocate just as he formerly feared the cohorts of the Anti-Saloon League. The people whom he fears he obeys.

There is, as we have said, a great deal in this explanation. It accounts for many congressional votes in favor of the bonus and it accounts for the greater strength of the bonus bill in the House than in the Senate. But it does not account for all the votes, and it certainly does not account for the approval of the bill or the lack of opposition to it which characterizes the attitude of so many comparatively public-spirited members of Congress.

The fact is, of course, that the bonus is less unpopular with the American people than it is with the articulate public opinion of the country. Articulate public opinion is expressed through the newspapers, which are published chiefly in the cities and which usually reflect the opinions of American business. Business men of importance are opposed to the bonus. They understand better than farmers and wage-earners what the consequences will be of increasing the nation's liabilities by so many billion dollars. But particularly in the rural districts and the small towns the ordinary voter is usually not opposed. He has more imagination about the needs of his relatives and friends who entered the service and did not earn or save as much as they might have earned as if they had not entered, than he has of the predicament of American finance or the economic tribulations of the country. The men who were asked to risk their lives for the Republic are in his opinion entitled to privileged treatment. The arguments against the bonus seem to him the expression of a niggardly spirit. He conceives the American Republic as a society of small property-owners, occupied primarily in improving their economic position. If they abandon their occupations, sacrifice unusual opportunities for making money and risk the good things of life at the call of their country, their country should compensate them for their losses. It should divide up with them some of the profits which if they had not gone they might have made.

The most significant aspect of the agitation for the bonus is not so much the discrepancy between its strength as a matter of politics and its merits or its deserts as its almost pathetic association of serving the country with increasing one's property. During the war the prevailing propaganda depicted the American soldier as a crusader who was risking his life on behalf of a sacred cause. Now he is depicted as a trader who is outraged because some of his fellow countrymen who did not enlist fared better than he did. Both sketches are drawn for a purpose and are partly false, but both betray the prevailing illusions and infirmities of the ordinary American mind. The bonus advocate cannot imagine any way of compensating Americans who have just fought a successful war to safeguard civ-

ilization except by giving them outright a few hundred dollars. He conceives compensation entirely in terms of possessions which its owners do not share with anybody else and which they use as they please. It was according to this conception of what an American citizen is entitled to that the national domain was divided up; and to this day, although the richest part of the national domain is distributed, the association between property and patriotism, between self-service and public service seems to have lost none of its earlier vitality.

The middle western small town American still thinks of the resources of the American commonwealth as boundless and as divisible among all good citizens. He does not realize that, as things are now, the ex-soldiers will derive their billions from a diminishing surplus, that the bonus will, to a large extent, come finally out of the pockets of poor people who will have to pay by privation for the waste and that it will result in an intensified class conflict. Imagining, as he does, the American Republic to be composed of people who own property and reap profits rather than people who perform services, he does not see that what the returned American soldiers need and should have is not compensation for ungathered profits but the assurance of future opportunities for useful work. If he would turn his attention as a patriotic duty to curing irregularity of employment and to maintaining a level of living wages, he would really do something to remove the economic grievances not only of ex-soldiers but of all faithful social workers. As it is his method of compensating the ex-soldiers will tend to increase unemployment and to lower wages, and its expense will in the end come largely out of the pockets of the class to whom the least prosperous ex-soldiers belong.

*The New*  
**REPUBLIC**  
*A Journal of Opinion*

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1922, IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY THE REPUBLIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 421 WEST TWENTY-FIRST STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. HERBERT CROLY, PRESIDENT; ROBERT HALLOWELL, TREASURER; DANIEL MEBANE, CIRCULATION MANAGER.

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION FIFTY-TWO ISSUES, FIVE DOLLARS IN ADVANCE. SINGLE COPIES FIFTEEN CENTS. CANADIAN SUBSCRIPTION FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS PER YEAR IN ADVANCE. FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTIONS, FOR COUNTRIES IN THE POSTAL UNION, SIX DOLLARS PER YEAR IN ADVANCE; REMITTANCE TO BE MADE BY INTERNATIONAL POSTAL MONEY ORDER.

ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER, NOVEMBER 6, 1914, AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879.



## “Free Speech, But — !”

**T**HE battle for academic freedom in American colleges is so unending that one needs much artificial naïveté to profess astonishment at each fresh renewal of the struggle. We might better be surprised that the conflict emerges into the open so rarely as it does.

But while the clash between the impulse toward free speech and the organized conservative machinery of education is an old story, each new case presents human values worth the attention of the student of social problems. That is to me the most interesting aspect of the fight at Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, which, at the moment of writing, has reached a point where the whole student body is in a state of open and violent revolt against the position taken by the president.

Two sets of facts must be held in mind in seeking to appraise the situation at Clark. The first has to do with President Wallace W. Atwood's action in interrupting a speech by Scott Nearing on “The control of public opinion in the United States,” closing the meeting and dispersing the audience.

Mr. Nearing was addressing the members of the Student Liberal Club and some of the townspeople of Worcester, to the total number of about two hundred. President Atwood did not hear the speech in its entirety, having conducted another meeting that evening in the field of his own specialty, which is geography. He dropped in at the Liberal Club meeting and took a seat at the rear of the hall, at a moment when Mr. Nearing had almost finished his remarks. There is no stenographic transcript of the speech, but I have read an approved summary of it and I agree with the eight or ten students and instructors who have all assured me that there was nothing incendiary or even particularly novel in what he said.

Nearing's peroration contained the statement that the church and the school are both an outgrowth of the present organization of society and are used to support that organization. He quoted from the writings of President Atwood's brother-in-law, Thorstein Veblen, to the effect that “higher learning has come to reflect the philosophy of the present-day business man,” and observed that the “vested interests” through their pecuniary resources are able to “pick off the best brains of the country and enlist them in their service.” In every profession, Mr. Nearing declared, far greater material rewards go to those who engage in business pursuits than to those who devote themselves to reform in either action or thought.

At approximately this point President Atwood, described by all witnesses as in a condition of great excitement, rose, and, moving over to the president of the Liberal Club, a student named Ross Fraser, demanded that the meeting be dismissed at once. Fraser, though astonished and dismayed, saw nothing to do but to obey, went forward and made the announcement. The audience, which had paid an admission fee of twenty-five cents each, seemed reluctant to leave, whereupon President Atwood repeated the declaration that the meeting was dismissed. Nearing and some of the students subsequently went to a fraternity house, where the former concluded his remarks.

The incident naturally threw the student body into a condition of great excitement. Clark University from its founding has prided itself on a tradition of untrammelled freedom of utterance. Under its first president, G. Stanley Hall, the psychologist, who retired and was succeeded by Dr. Atwood about two years ago, there was never the faintest suggestion of censorship within or without the classroom. A first result of the Nearing episode was to more than double the membership of the Liberal Club, which by the way, is not affiliated with similar organizations in other universities.

The students held a mass meeting and delegated a committee to wait upon President Atwood and invite him to address the student body outlining his general policy on free speech. They also issued a beautifully youthful magna charta repudiating the idea that their membership is tainted with radicalism, and endorsing “the incontrovertible right and duty of educators, educational institutions and most especially institutions of higher learning to teach, to discuss and announce the truth in whatever form it may appear, wholly free from coercion by any influence of special interest or insidious propaganda.”

The students further quoted the words of Jonas G. Clark, founder of the university, who wrote in his will that:

it is my earnest desire, will and direction, that the said university in its practical management as well as in theory, may be wholly free from every kind of denominational or sectarian control, bias or limitation, and that its doors may be ever open to all classes and persons, whatsoever may be their religious faith or political sympathies, or to whatever creed, sect or party they may belong, and I especially charge upon my executors and said trustees, and the said mayor [of Worcester] to secure the enforcement of this clause in my will by applications to the court as above provided, or otherwise by every means in their power.