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The Week

WHEN Secretary Hughes rang down the curtain on the final scene of the Washington Conference, the delegates were no doubt justified in stepping down into the auditorium and vigorously applauding the happy ending of their play. The Washington Conference and the Irish settlement between them are indicative of a significant political and moral recovery from the anarchy and disorder into which the Great War plunged the world. President Harding and Secretary Hughes have managed to do away with the immediate causes of international friction between the United States and both Japan and Great Britain, to limit naval armaments by agreement and somewhat to improve the position of China. They and their associates in the Conference are entitled to congratulations for these substantial achievements. But congratulations should not provide any excuse for complacency. These achievements are only beginnings. They are admirable if they are followed up. But if they are not followed up, if they are treated as a settlement rather than as a significant advance in a promising direction their benefits will prove to be in the end illusory.

IN our opinion the treaties framed by the Conference deserve to be ratified without any reservations or modifications. They all form part of a complicated bargain which brings with it certain immediate advantages. But in ratifying this bargain neither the Senate nor the American people should deceive themselves as to its effect. The treaties leave Japan in complete and practically unassailable naval and military control of the Far Eastern waters, islands and maritime provinces. Japan has made certain concessions to China of which the most important is the withdrawal from Shantung, but the Shantung withdrawal has a string attached to it for five years and in other respects she retains all her existing possessions and privileges. She is perfectly frank about her intention of dominating China in the future. As Ambassador Shidehara said: "With hundreds of thousands of our nationals resident in China, with enormous amounts of our capital invested there, and with our national existence largely dependent on that of our neighbor, we are naturally interested in that country to a greater extent than the countries more remotely situated." This is a perfectly clear announcement that the Japanese consider themselves entitled as a matter of "national existence" to be as much interested in China as are not only the Americans but as are the Chinese themselves. It means that the Japanese government proposes to use the naval and military domination of the Far East which it obtains under the new treaties for the purpose of the economic and political subjection of China.

IF this interpretation of Ambassador Shidehara's words is correct, the naval agreement may seem equivalent to an abandonment of China by the United States. It may look as if through an aperture in the screen of fine phrases of the last plenary session, an observer could detect the grinning mouth and the gleaming teeth of the victorious dragon of Japanese imperialism. But it would be premature to jump from the interpretation to the

conclusion. No doubt the Japanese imperialists are congratulating themselves upon the winning of a great victory in Washington. They hope that they have cleared the way for Japanese economic penetration and subjugation of China. But they are counting upon a continuation in the future of two important conditions which have favored them in the past. They expect China to persist in being incapable of resistance, and they expect the prevalence of a standard of international financial and political behavior, sympathetic to their enterprise. Neither expectation will, we believe, be fulfilled. Chinese national resistance will increase, and Japan will find herself increasingly isolated in a world which will cease to connive at the economic and political exploitation of one people by another.

IN the negotiations between France and England over their proposed defensive compact, the French asked that the Rhineland be included in the compact and that Britain should bind herself to military action in certain eventualities. If, for instance, Germany were to dispatch troops into the Rhineland, that would constitute an act of war against both France and Britain, under the proposed compact. This arrangement the British refused to undertake, for two reasons. One was that under it Britain might find herself automatically at war over matters where a reasonable interpretation of the facts would offer a peaceable solution. Suppose that a condition of disorder developed in the Rhine valley which the German government could cope with only through the use of an armed gendarmerie. If the German government sent such armed forces into the region, she would have committed an act which under the proposed compact would justify France in demanding that England join her in making war on Germany. The second reason the British offer for rejecting the proposal is of more direct interest to America. If they were to accept it, they point out, Britain alone would assume an obligation that under the Treaty of Versailles rested on all the Allies. Does that mean that if we had ratified the Treaty we might have been dragged into war automatically, over matters quite susceptible of a peaceable solution? It does. It is specifically stated in the Treaty that certain acts of Germany in the Rhineland would constitute acts of war against all the Allied and Associated powers. And if Germany did things that, however innocuous in themselves, were defined in a treaty to which America was a party, as acts of war against America, should we not be at war with Germany? Thanks to our failure to ratify, the dangerous and imperialistic Rhine policy of the

French will have to be modified, at least so far as may be necessary to insure British support.

THE account which Mr. George Glasgow gives in another column of the objects which Mr. Lloyd George had in mind when he proposed the Genoa Conference is peculiarly interesting in relation to the future international organization of Europe. The Lloyd George proposal involves, according to Mr. Glasgow, "the virtual end of the Supreme Council as the deciding executive authority in post-war Europe and the abdication of its authority to a European Conference at which Germans and Russians will sit as equals among equals." If this is true, if the Genoa Conference is really intended to become a better substitute for the Supreme Council and the forerunner of a European Concert, its importance in European history may be analogous to that of the Congress which framed the Treaty of Westphalia. The Supreme Council has since the signature of the Treaty of Versailles acted as the government of Europe, but it was a government forced on the vanquished by the victors for the victors' benefit. The addition of Germany and Russia to the Supreme Council will do more than enlarge the membership of that body. The enlargement will be equivalent to a new birth. The purpose of the new government will necessarily be the resettlement of Europe on a foundation not of arbitrary force and exclusive interest but on a foundation of consent and mutual adjustment.

EXTREMELY interesting in this connection is Mr. Glasgow's account of why Mr. Lloyd George ignored the League of Nations in planning the Genoa Conference. That he acted from persuasive reasons in so doing is indicated by the significant attitude of the French government towards this aspect of the Lloyd George plan. The French Foreign Office, it seems, is aggrieved because the League of Nations was not placed in charge of the Genoa Conference and has decided not to consent to any organization of the Conference which by ignoring the League will tend to diminish its prestige. The motive for this touching faith and interest in the League of Nations on the part of that eminent internationalist M. Poincaré is revealed by a correspondent of the New York Times. As he understands it, "the very fact that the Conference was being held under the aegis of the League would provide in the French opinion a guarantee that existing treaties would be respected and that the discussion would be kept strictly to the agenda and not allowed to degenerate into what the French constantly fear—an attempt by Germany and Rus-

sia to revise the Treaty of Versailles." Or in the words of M. Viviani "Are we (the French) going to subscribe to an insult to the only democratic international assembly? Have we forgotten that the League solved the problem of Upper Silesia and is the guardian of the peace treaties?" No, neither M. Poincaré nor M. Viviani have forgotten this important function of the League. They have divined that Mr. Lloyd George proposes "to kill the League because it seems to him completely animated by the Latin spirit."

SURELY this attempt of M. Poincaré to use the League of Nations as an excuse to emasculate the Genoa Conference is one of the most ironical enterprises in the history of diplomacy. Mr. Lloyd George proposed a conference to which Russia and Germany should be invited as equals for the purpose of substituting conference and consent for force as the instrument of European international government. He did not use the League of Nations for the purpose because the League, omitting as it did Russia and Germany, placed unnecessary obstacles in the way of the formation of an immediate or an early European Concert. But political opponents at home, such as Viscount Grey, denounce him for ignoring the League on the ground that he is discrediting the only existing agency of international government, and this denunciation is echoed by the very people in France who form the most malignant and irreconcilable obstacles to internationalism which now exists in the world. It follows, we think, that statesmen like Viscount Grey are making a grave mistake in trying to discredit the Genoa Conference in the interest of the League of Nations. They are showing more solicitude for the League as an institution than they are for the objects which the League was intended to serve. At present it is clear that a conference which is not bound by the constitution of the League and which cannot be praised as the guardian of the peace treaties and as an embodiment of the "Latin spirit" can make more headway towards international appeasement and readjustment than can the existing League.

THE passage of the bill for the refunding of the Allied debts brings us no nearer to a solution of the problem. These debts, Congress has declared, must bear not less than four and one-half percent interest and must be paid within twenty-five years. And a commission is to negotiate with the debtor nations on the ways of getting this done. Now, the bald fact is that these debts will not be paid off in twenty-five years. Interest at four and

one-half percent will not be paid, currently, and if it is made to accumulate on the books, it will presently amount to a sum so huge that it could never be paid in any circumstances. Secretary Mellon estimates that eighty percent of the debt can be paid. That is to admit at least twenty percent water in the Allied debt assets, twenty percent that will never be paid, although Congress says it must be. Besides, one half of the remaining eighty percent represents our claims upon France and Italy, whose payment is conditioned upon an improvement in fiscal conditions which no intelligent man expects to see in his life time. Does Congress propose to unload these bogus assets upon the innocent American investor? And shall we have a grand "Save till it hurts" campaign, with a new sedition bill to stop the mouths of those who would tell the truth, that most of these refunding bonds will be entirely worthless?

IT appears highly probable that the soldiers' bonus will be forced through Congress, in spite of the open disapproval of the administration and, we believe, the secret disapproval of most of the members of Congress. A determined minority, well distributed through the doubtful election districts, can get about anything it wants under our form of government. And the ex-service men constitute just such a determined minority. They feel that they are demanding what is plainly their right. While they were in the service they lost valuable opportunities for earning money and establishing themselves in their jobs. Their military pay was inadequate compensation for such losses. What they are demanding now is nothing more than simple indemnification of losses, such as anyone would demand if his property had been appropriated to government uses without adequate payment. Where is the flaw in the argument? If there is any, it must lie in the fact that there is no close analogy between military service and the furnishing of supplies to the government. There is a closer analogy between military service and the payment of taxes. The position of the ex-service man is less favorable than it would have been if there had been no war. The same thing is true of the position of the taxpayer. The government cannot indemnify everybody for his war losses, for the simple reason that the losses are there to be borne. Is it anything more than sentimentalism that insists that the ex-service men, although restored to civil life in good health and fitness for life superior to the average, should be treated as a class apart, to be indemnified for war costs no heavier than those which other citizens are expected to bear without flinching?

IF the claims of the ex-service men are just, there is little force in the plea that they should not be pressed at the present time, when it is hard for the Treasury to make ends meet. We should not have the face the urge the railways, for example, to refrain from pressing just claims for services furnished to the government. Say that the bonus will cost a billion and a half; America can find the sum, if it must. These are hard times, but the private incomes of the American people must amount to something like fifty billions. More of that is taken in taxes than is easily borne, but if an additional three percent of our incomes were taken, we should still be less heavily burdened than the citizens of any other great nation. There remains a good deal to be said as to the form of the tax. Shall we raise the billion and a half by a tax on goods sold for consumption? It is doubtful that any tax law could be so administered as to reach more than twenty billions of our national expenditure, and this volume would have to pay a tax of seven and one-half percent to raise the required sum. The cost of living would be forced up in even greater measure; something the public would not take kindly to, at the present juncture. Shall we try a lighter tax on the turnover? That would affect the cost of living still more seriously. So far as we can see the only scheme of taxation that will meet the bonus requirement without producing great political discontent is a combination of profits and luxury taxes. Restore the excess profits tax, the taxes on amusements, soft drinks, tobacco. These will not be popular taxes, but they will cost fewer votes than any others.

THE President, by appointing Senator Kenyon judge in one of the Circuit Courts, has kidnapped the leader of the agricultural "bloc" in the Senate. Feelings about this skilful raid vary. They range from accusations, by the Democrats, of cunning administration plots against the "bloc," from resentment at Senator Kenyon's readiness to accept the job, to the greeting of Senator Borah with "Good morning, Judge." Yet why blame the President for scuttling the farmer's ship, since Senator Kenyon, as its skipper, has gone ashore of his own free will? But the fight for the farmers is by no means over. Why then did he abandon it? There are a number of explanations: because he knows how rare are good judges, and how needed, and is keen to be added to their small number; because he thought as much has been done for the farmer as could be; because of a not unnatural distaste and weariness with a body so cynical as to let in

Newberry. Altogether it is disappointing. The kind of Republican who votes against Newberry can ill be spared from the Senate.

WHO is to succeed Senator Kenyon? Just now the betting seems to be on Mr. J. R. Howard, President of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Last week we reported the current suspicion that this Federation aims at the organization of a rural privileged class which could be counted on to work with Chambers of Commerce, manufacturers and business men in fighting, not only the genuine farmers' movements but labor as well. This suspicion seems to have been well-founded. Senator La Follette has brought to the notice of the Senate a memorandum of a private conference, held in Washington on December 9th, 1921, between railroad executives and the representatives of such bodies as the National Coal Association, United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. The Farm Bureau Federation was there in force, including Mr. J. R. Howard. A resolution was adopted to the effect that "the shippers present pledge themselves to energetically support the carriers in obtaining an adjustment of wages to the economic level of wages prevailing in other lines of industry. . . ." Mr. Howard suggested that it be made a public offense for a strike order (on the railroads) to be issued before the dispute had been heard and decided upon—not by the Railway Labor Board—but by the Interstate Commerce Commission. And at the end of the conference Mr. Howard found himself, as the representative of "agriculture," on a committee along with representatives of lumber, building construction, steel, fuel, and manufacture. It is evident that the interests of the farmer are scarcely identical with those of "agriculture" and that Mr. Howard can claim to represent the latter only.

Genoa: Conditions of American Participation

AMERICANS, in the great majority, wish Europe well. They would like to see peace firmly established, production revived, order restored. With due allowance for the survival of war passion and war myths, the attitude of Americans is impartial. They do not wish British ambitions to prosper at the expense of France. They do not wish Germany to be destroyed or held in eternal bondage. Reconciliation after the war between the states is the achievement in history in which