

The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOLUME XXX

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 1922

NUMBER 390

Contents

The Week	352
Editorials	
Good Titles to Poor Property.....	354
Mexico: Why Not Recognition?.....	356
Curse Me This History.....	358
Questions for Coal Barons.....	360
General Articles	
German Standards of Living..Werner Sombart	362
Movies for Statesmen.....Alvin Johnson	365
Boston, IV.....Bruce Bliven	367
Genoa at the Crossroads.....H. N. Brailsford	369
The Antioch Idea at Work.....Arthur Ruhl	372
Correspondence	375
The Bandwagon	376
The Tragic Goose-Step.....Stark Young	376
Epitaph (Verse).....Elinor Wylie	377
Harvest Dust (Verse).....Winifred Welles	377
Books and Things.....P. L.	378
Reviews of Books	
The Twilight of the Moralists....H. M. Kallen	379
A Satire on the Movies.....Robert Littell	382
A Drama of Race Relations.....A. J.	383

The Week

AS the New Republic goes to press, it looks as if the Genoa Conference would adjourn by May 20th, and as if the only possible definite result of its labors would be a commission of experts to report on Russia, a self-denying ordinance with respect to concessions pending the report and a political truce for the same period. These are meagre achievements—less than might have been reasonably expected. They are so meagre that measured in terms of positive and effective agreements among the participating nations, the Conference is undoubtedly a failure. They have decided upon the commission not with any expectation that it will be more successful in reaching an agreement than the Genoa Conference, but merely to keep the Conference nominally alive during the next few months for domestic political purposes. The stage of the conflict will now be transferred from Genoa to London or Paris, and the scenery will be entirely shifted. Mr. Lloyd George will find himself confronted with the double task of keeping his government intact and operative in spite of his failure at Genoa and of negoti-

ating with M. Poincaré about the German default in reparation payments. June, 1922, may well turn out to be an important month in the history of Europe. If the Genoa Conference fails, said Lord Birkenhead recently, the world will be confronted with "one of the blackest moments since the Middle Ages."

ASSUMING that the Genoa Conference is from the point of view of definite achievements appraised as a failure, the critical question now is: what result will the failure have upon the future standing at home and abroad of the several governments which have either brought it about or have been unable to prevent it from occurring? The answer to this question depends to a very considerable extent upon the choice which Mr. Lloyd George himself makes in assigning responsibility for the disagreement. The French plan, as the New York Times correspondent pointed out, was to insist upon inserting in the memorandum terms which the Soviet leaders could not accept without imperilling their own position in Russia, and then, when the Russians balked at the provisions, to impute the "official blame" for the breakdown of the negotiations to the Russians. The plan did not work perfectly because the English and the Italians were not so uncompromising in drawing up the memorandum as the French desired and the document as actually presented was not accepted by M. Poincaré himself. But even so the Russians refused it. Mr. Lloyd George knows better than anyone else whether as a matter of fact Russia or France is chiefly to blame. If he attaches most of the blame to France, the Franco-British Entente, such as it is, will come to an end. If he attaches most of the blame to Russia, the result of his condemnation of the Soviet government will be to increase considerably the difficulties of any future traffic with the present Russian government. In any event serious negotiations will have to await changes in the balance of political power in Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Russia. For

it is evident that the present governments cannot both reach an agreement about Russia one with another and survive the opposition at home which an agreement would provoke. Neither in all probability can they survive for long the opposition and the practical difficulties which the present disagreement will provoke.

THERE seems to be a tendency among some Americans to attribute the failure of the Conference at Genoa to the refusal of the American government to send representatives. But in what way the presence of an American delegation would have improved the chance of an agreement we are unable to see. The American representatives, if they acted on Mr. Hughes' formula, would have joined with France and Belgium in protesting against the Anglo-Italian memorandum. The formula prohibits the recognition of the Russian government unless it officially abjures communism. It calls for another Russian revolution as a condition of Russian and European reconstruction. The American policy, that is, is the polar opposite of the policy of Mr. Lloyd George which seeks to assimilate the Russian economic and social system to that of the rest of the world, not by the agony and distress of another revolution, but by a gradual process of modification under the influence of the practical necessities of financial and commercial intercourse. The presence of American delegates at Genoa, instead of tending to mitigate the failure would have rendered it more complete. They would have assisted the French government in obstructing the economic and political reunion of Europe.

WHY was the United States invited to join in the proposed conference on Russia to be convened next month? What powers desired our presence, and what did they expect to get out of us? These are questions that every American must answer to his own satisfaction before he can make up his mind as to whether Secretary Hughes' rejection was fortunate or not. If the question to be discussed is that of recognizing Russia under a communistic régime, with no matter how many concessions to practical exigencies, America's vote would be in the negative. If the question is that of granting credits to the present Russian régime, no matter what equivalent Russia offered in the way of assumption of debts and compensation for foreign property interests, America's vote would be still more emphatically in the negative. The United States government will grant no credits to the Soviet government, nor to any government that succeeds it, whatever that government professes. As a nation we are out of the money lending business. If the question is one

of binding all countries to make no separate treaties with Russia, America's vote would be in the affirmative. No official relations with Russia until the Soviet government rots and drops off; that would be the meaning of our vote. Now, what powers wanted us to come and vote in that sense? France and Belgium, of course. England did not want us there, nor did Italy and Germany. They could expect nothing from our participation except the maintenance of the status quo, which is ruinous to them. But it would have been highly tactless for them to protest against the proposal to invite us.

A CONFERENCE on Russia which merely arrived at the negative conclusion that there can be no dealings with Russia until the Russian government officially abandons the principles of communism would be a complete failure. There is nothing that can be offered the present government of Russia that would induce it to abjure its principles. The power of the present governing group rests upon the loyal support of the five or six hundred thousand active members of the communist party. If the present governing group abjured communism, the party would dissolve and the governing group would very soon be presented with the alternative of suicide or execution. Rather than accept such a condition they would take their chances with a restored blockade or even war. They would be beaten in the end, but not before they had pulled down a good part of the tottering European structure. American diplomacy may chant virtuously, "Let justice be done though the skies tumble in," but it doesn't happen to be our skies that are in jeopardy, but those of Poland, Germany, Rumania, Italy. That is why there can be no hope of securing a general agreement of all the European nations to abstain from forming relations with communistic Russia. Those countries which feel most keenly the necessity of avoiding extreme measures will make their separate agreements after the conference, as they would if no conference were convened.

THE creation of a National Council for the building industry, with Franklin Roosevelt as a sort of arbiter, looks like a step in advance. If the industry is to prosper and perform the service the public has a right to demand of it, continuous interchange of information as to the facts of the industry is necessary. Moreover, in critical periods like the one we are now going through there is a pressing need for cooperation in working out general policies that may give a sound tone to the industry. The danger inherent in associations with-

in an industry is that they may turn to the ways of monopoly. But an association coextensive with the industry, especially when it is inaugurated under the initiative of men like Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt, may be expected to look out for the permanent interests of the whole industry, which cannot drift far away from the public interest. Whatever effect the association may have may then be expected to be beneficial. It remains for experience to demonstrate whether the industry will grant the association sufficient powers to enable it to do effective work.

BONUS legislation is still probable, but to judge from the lagging activity of Congress and the lack of interest in the press, it is less probable than it was four weeks ago. One reason why the bonus is losing ground is that no satisfactory revenue for financing it has been found. It is admitted on all sides that no sales tax law can be passed. Neither can the party in power revive the excess profits tax. The proposal to assign the customs duties to the bonus, thus sweetening both measures, has failed to evoke enthusiasm anywhere. The customs duties are needed for other purposes. The certificate plan of bonus financing is too badly enmeshed in complicated details to be popular. But perhaps the chief reason is that the political panic which pressed bonus measures forward is subsiding. The soldier vote is still ardently desired, but the unsteady behavior of the electorate in recent test elections is something to remind Congressmen that there are other classes of voters who need to be conciliated, and who might not take in good part the saddling of new burdens upon the treasury.

OF the millions of American boys who have been charmed by Mary Pickford, some four or five will become President, when enough decades have gone by. And one of them, grateful for the pleasant hours she gave him, will appoint her a special commissioner to report on European banking or potash production or some other appropriate subject. For the precedent has been set by President Harding in sending Lillian Russell abroad to study the immigration problem. As a result of what she discovered abroad, she concludes that we ought to require nine years residence instead of five before granting citizenship papers, and tax every alien who doesn't announce his intention of becoming a citizen two dollars a month to pay for the education of those who wish to become citizens. Aliens are rather shrewd about money matters, and we suspect that such a provision would bring in many announcements but little cash. Then, the immigrant should be subjected to rigid medical tests

abroad. No doubt, Lillian Russell would have every consul as well provided with a medical staff as our immigration service on Ellis Island. There should be several entry ports such as Ellis Island, she thinks. There are, but that is a detail. Mary Pickford will have to prime herself betimes on banking or potash, if she is to maintain Lillian Russell's standard of sapience.

THE House Committee on Labor has made a sensible report on the coal industry. It recommends what everyone who has been in touch with the situation has for long been urging: a "fact-finding agency." According to the report, the Geological Survey sometimes covers as many as 2,000 out of the country's 11,000 mines, but secures important information—not always complete at that—from only 200 mines. Operators who have appeared before the committee have given the cost of coal as \$2.94 per ton, of which \$1.99 was for labor, but their averages were based on figures for some 650 mines only, excluding expensive and unprofitable ones. The committee should give this part of its statement the widest publicity: "There is approximately one-third too many coal mines and one-third too many miners for the proper economical operation and development of the industry." The public may well hope and expect that the House will follow up its committee's statement, that no present government agency has the legal right to get necessary information about coal, with action drastic enough to cure this condition.

Good Titles to Poor Property

AS a result of the breakdown of the negotiations at Genoa the likelihood in the near future of any general economic agreement between Russia and the other European powers becomes so slight as to be almost negligible. The establishment of an international commission to investigate the productive possibilities of Russia and to pave the way, perhaps, for some future agreement has the merit of keeping the negotiations alive, but the agreements for which the commission may prepare will in all probability run not between Russia and the rest of Europe, but between Russia and particular nations or groups of nations, or between Russia and particular groups of capitalists. Agreements of this kind, if and when they are reached, will furnish to Russia the same kind of assistance which the Conference offered in the abortive memorandum; but the Russian communist government will not have to pay for the credits by concessions both in form and in substance which would in its opinion fatally compromise both its own