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The Week

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE'S message has disappointed neither his friends nor his enemies. The former can point out that it is clear, straightforward, and courageous in that it advocates some things which are not popular with the conservative leaders of the Republican party. Hostile critics will argue, and correctly, that on the whole it outlines a program intended only to maintain the status quo, and that if a balance be struck its reactionary passages outweigh its progressive proposals, although the President has obviously attempted to conciliate middle western liberalism as far as he could. On the whole, both friend and foe must agree, it is a well written and intelligent document. It has, undoubtedly, increased the President's already commanding position in the fight for the Republican nomination. A popular catch phrase has at once been made of his remark that we should not have "war taxes in peace times"—a statement which, applied to the excess profits tax, is certainly false, that form of impost being quite as desirable under normal as abnormal conditions.

A PRESIDENT'S message, delivered to a Congress divided as is the present one, becomes no more than the expression of a job-lot of pious hopes. Some of the things Mr. Coolidge urges he knows he cannot see accomplished, and others have only a slim fighting chance. As a matter of record, however, it is worth noting that he favors tax reduction, American participation in the World Court, the abolition of tax-exempt securities, railroad consolidation and a stronger army and navy. He opposes the bonus, cancellation of the Allied debt, the recognition of Russia, any present tariff revision, except under the presidential authority of the existing law, and government price-fixing on wheat. The League of Nations is for him "a closed incident." He approves the St. Lawrence waterway and the super-power project.

HE wants a separate government department of education, with a place in the Cabinet; a constitutional amendment against child labor; a minimum wage law for women "under the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government;" civil service for postmasters and prohibition officers; continued private ownership of coal but better operating conditions and the restriction of profiteering. Immigration he would continue to curtail, either on the basis of "a prior" census, or on the "record of naturalization" of former immigrants from each country. He commends the plan for reorganization of the government departments, except that he does not approve the consolidation of army and navy into a single Department of National Defense. The farmer he would aid by reducing taxes, the cost of fertilizer and, temporarily, freight rates. Reduction of acreage, diversification of crops and coöperative marketing must be agriculture's chief reliance, though the War Finance Corporation may give some temporary aid to exports. He commends a reduced rate of taxation on earned income, wants government operation of ships brought to an end, and approves the plan for having prisoners in federal penitentiaries do useful work and be paid for it. The texture of the President's mind is well illustrated in his remark, apropos of the desirability of education, that "mere

intelligence is not enough. Enlightenment must be accompanied by that moral power which is the product of the home and of religion."

WHEN we turn to the actualities which the President faces in his effort to get his program realized by the present session, the picture is, from his point of view, a profoundly gloomy one. The bonus will probably be voted by Congress, in an endeavor to shift to the President the burden of wrath which will follow rejection. In order to prevent reenactment despite his veto, five or six Old Guard senators, all committed to the bonus, must change their minds. If they don't, the measure will be repassed and Secretary Mellon's highly popular plan for tax reduction will become impossible. On the question of American adherence to the World Court, also, a bitter struggle is in prospect. The irreconcilables will fight harder than ever, since Hiram Johnson is now a presidential candidate on an isolationist platform.

THE railroad men months ago started a propaganda against alteration of the present law under which they are now making extremely handsome profits. Their motto is "Let us alone" and with public interest centred exclusively on reduction of freight rates, it will be difficult to muster support for an amendment looking in the direction of consolidation. Constitutional amendments, such as the President desires in order to check child labor and prevent the issuance of tax-exempt securities are such a long, slow process that the preliminary congressional endorsement, even if he gets it, will add little to Mr. Coolidge's prestige. The farmers, again—or at least, their proclaimed representatives—are disappointed that he refuses them government assistance while endorsing continued protection for our highly prosperous manufactures. Critics are not lacking, also, of his program for coal, regarding his as being a type of regulation which long ago demonstrated its ineffectiveness in any real emergency. In proposing civil service for postmasters and prohibition enforcement agents, he assaults the politicians of his own party in one of their most sacred citadels, and one which they are likely to defend to the death.

A PARIS dispatch to the New York Times avers that France is now experiencing a change of heart as to Germany. The agreement with Stinnes, according to the correspondent, is regarded as a victory no less important than that of 1918. France at last really controls the Ruhr, thereby both reducing the possibility of a new military offensive by her enemy and guaranteeing the payment of regular installments on the reparation account—not much, but something. M. Poincaré, in view of these facts, is willing to allow unoccupied Germany to struggle back to life. She will be aided

in currency restoration and treated in general with moderation. An important motive, we are told, is the desire to restore European prosperity, cut down British unemployment, and thereby keep a labor government or any other that may be formed in the next few months from taking a position hostile to France and dangerous to the Entente.

IF this prediction is sustained by subsequent developments, it will be the strongest vindication for the theory that France has intended from the first to annex the Ruhr and by combining its coal with Lorraine ore, to make herself the most powerful country in Europe, economically as well as in every other way. With the Ruhr in her grasp she has in the long run little to fear from the rest of Germany, whether the Federation survives or not. The calculation suggested by the New York Times, however, seems to overlook some factors of importance. Excluded from the use of the Ruhr, Germany cannot be maintained as a modern industrial state. She must support herself largely by agriculture and this means, as Cassel, the great economist, has recently pointed out, that perhaps twenty million of her population must emigrate or die. That prospect inspires no hope for the restoration of British export trade; and even if it did, neither a labor government nor any other would continue the Entente while watching a ghastly process of starvation for which France would be alone and wholly responsible. If the French government is planning what it seems to be planning, and if the French people by their votes give continued approval to such a course, the policy must be pursued alone. Great Britain perhaps cannot prevent it; but she will not connive in it.

THE policy of reducing the number of Germans by starvation is one about which the French government is apparently losing no time. Thirty-five percent of the entire population of Germany, including men, women and children, is now being supported out of public funds, according to a cablegram a few days ago from the Berlin headquarters of the American Society of Friends (the Quakers). This is a burden which the government cannot possibly maintain unaided in its present financial condition. It wishes, therefore, to float a loan abroad with which to buy foodstuffs; but obviously, no investor will subscribe to such a loan unless there is a reasonable chance that it will be repaid—which means, of course, that it must be given priority over reparations. While no official action has been taken in Paris as we go to press, newspaper correspondents report strong and general opposition to such priority. The French argue that the German harvest is the best in thirty-five years, that the country is not poor but rich, as is evidenced by her purchases of cotton

and copper in America, and that she can pay for her food with the capital she has hidden abroad.

IT is interesting to see a conservative power thus recommend communism to her neighbor; but her advice is, of course, entirely beside the point. The Berlin government has no way to seize either food on the farm or credits in foreign banks. The twenty million German people who are at this moment faced by starvation can only be kept alive by government aid or foreign charity. If France makes the first of these means impossible, the burden laid upon the second becomes all the heavier. Meanwhile, the Quakers report that fifty percent of all children in large towns and industrial districts are dangerously underfed. In forty-six large German cities the death rate from tuberculosis exceeds last year's by twenty percent. In Dresden it is almost double. We remind our readers that the address of The American Committee for Relief of German Children is 19 West Forty-fourth Street, New York City. Contributions may be sent to that address, or in care of the New Republic.

THE favorable reception of President Coolidge's message has caused his campaign managers to seize the present moment to announce his formal candidacy to succeed himself. William M. Butler will manage his campaign, and it is hinted that a formal confirmation of his ambition may be forthcoming from the White House in the near future. At the same time, Cleveland has been awarded the Republican convention next year, over the embittered protest of Chicago. Both these developments have been forced, in all probability, by the Hiram Johnson campaign. Chicago is a hotbed of admirers of the Californian; and while these supporters cannot vote for their favorite, they can create "psychological atmosphere" of a valuable character even in the thimble-rigged convention. The advantage Johnson now derives from being an avowed candidate is obvious; yet from the standpoint of public welfare it is deplorable that Mr. Coolidge should feel it necessary to throw his hat into the ring. The result will be that his every word and act will henceforth be judged only by their political intention and result. The work of the government will thereby be hampered even more than, from the complexion of Congress, already bids fair to be the case.

IN the protracted struggle between the Russian coöperatives and Soviet bureaucracy, the coöperatives, it now appears, are winning out. A decree restoring the principle of voluntary membership in the latter has been officially published by the Soviet government, and will no doubt soon be given the effect of law. The bearing of this

decree is clear. In its original nationalizing policy the Soviet government tried to keep the coöperatives alive, but merely as a commercial agency of the central government. Membership was made compulsory for whole communities, with the result of an apparently enormous increase in coöperative business, at the expense of the real vitality of the movement. The non-Russian world knows too little of what went on inside of the coöperative organization, but it is a safe surmise that it was everywhere interpenetrated with bureaucrats who enforced communistic instead of coöperative policy. The restoration of the voluntary principle is a long step toward the undoing of the mischief thus wrought. With voluntary membership independent management is inevitable. The reform is the more significant in view of the fact that the Soviet government has promised to turn the nationalized industries over to the coöperatives as soon as the latter prove competent to undertake their management.

IN Russia, as in the greater part of the European continent, coöperation is essentially a peasant movement. Communism, on the other hand, is primarily a movement of the industrial, or at least urban proletariat. The peasant, standing on his own acres and drawing most of his sustenance from them, is of no mind to sink his whole individuality in any kind of communal organization. He can see the advantage of common action in buying and selling, in the ownership and operation of auxiliary facilities of production, such as tractors, threshing machinery and creamery plant, and even, on occasion, of greater industrial enterprises supplying his needs or working up his product for sale. Beyond that he does not care to go. The industrial worker, on the other hand, has no independent economic sphere of his own. His job is his whole economic life, and it is not surprising that he should dream of the nationalization of all jobs under workers' control. Russia is primarily a peasant country and is bound to remain such for generations. It follows that peasant coöperation must finally prevail over urban communism in the actual organization of economic life. Whether the peasants will prevail also in political life is less certain. The chances are, however, that they will.

ACCORDING to Secretary Wallace's calculations the aggregate income of the farmers is a billion and a quarter in excess of that of 1922. This is gratifying, but, as the Secretary warns us, we must not assume that this increase in income will of itself end agrarian discontent. The farmers get more money than they did before the war, but money buys so much less than it did, that the farmer's actual position has not been improved,

and relatively to other classes, it has weakened. The causes of this relative loss are complex, as Secretary Wallace points out. The chief cause he does not emphasize—the Treaty of Versailles. Ever since the signing of the Treaty Europe has been in desperate need of our food products. The hungry populations have been eager to work to pay for such products but the imbecilities of statecraft have been an insuperable obstacle. Versailles and the policies of enforcement that followed are the ultimate cause of our agrarian distress, as of British unemployment and German starvation.

THIS is to cry over spilt milk, it may be said. So it would be if statecraft were no longer engaged in active mischief, extending the influence of depression into the future. But it is. An intelligent settlement today would effect an immediate improvement in world economic conditions and go far toward mending our agricultural situation. Such a settlement would give financial practicability to Secretary Wallace's plan of selling our surplus foodstuffs on long term credits to the peoples of Europe. Without a settlement any such sales will be in fact gifts, thinly disguised, and no gift policy can go far enough to bring substantial relief to the farmer. If the administration does not use whatever pressure it can commend to second the movement for settlement now gaining head in Europe, it will miss an opportunity for solving the domestic as well as the international problem.

SIMPLE-MINDED persons who had begun to think of Mexico, because of these recent peaceful years, in Anglo-Saxon terms, have been sharply undeceived: the Latin temperament survives. The election campaign has suddenly turned into a revolution of a serious character. No fundamental policy appears to be involved. Adolfo de la Huerta, long Obregon's close friend, and regarded as one of Mexico's leading statesmen, some time ago resigned as Secretary of the Treasury. His successor, Alberto Pani, after taking office declared that the government was bankrupt, and attributed this condition to de la Huerta's incompetence. The latter responded by charging President Obregon with trying to force General Calles upon the country as his successor, and the revolution followed. De la Huerta and General Sanchez, his military chief, have captured Jalapa, capital of the state of Vera Cruz. The navy and a large part of the army are with the rebels, and the situation for Obregon is admittedly grave. American friends of Mexico must particularly deplore the resort to arms, because, whatever the outcome, relations with this country will be seriously injured just at the moment when the long efforts at reconciliation of the two governments seemed to be crowned with success.

RECENTLY the Pittsburgh conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church appointed a commission to consider some of the most urgent social and political problems. The Commission presented a report which was adopted at a recent session of the conference. The report endorsed the substitution of law for war, the World Court, the preservation intact of civil liberty and the so-called "social creed of the churches." But its most remarkable passage, which deserves the widest possible publicity, runs as follows:

We view with apprehension the conditions which exist in some of the mining and industrial towns of our state as illustrated by the inability of our Methodist Church to secure a clear and unconditioned title to a site for the erection of a Church building. The only available lease prohibits the use of the Church building for any purpose not strictly religious and is subject to cancellation with the allowance of ninety days for the removal of the building. One of our pastors has been forced out of the field simply for having expressed himself as believing in the cause of the employees and another is threatened with ejection for the same reason. This arbitrary position of the companies has resulted in closing towns to the preaching of the Gospel and is a serious evil to all who believe in the fundamentals of free government.

The Rising Tide of British Labor

SUPERFICIALLY the important lesson of the British election is the defeat of the Tory government as a penalty for its general ineptitude. There are, of course, many facts which corroborate this interpretation. The Baldwin Cabinet had failed to handle the critical problems of either foreign or domestic policy in a manner which eased the discomfort or increased the self-esteem of the British people. Considering the completeness of his failure to get the better of his country's problems, Mr. Baldwin's sudden appeal to the voters on the irrelevant issue of protection looked like poor politics and worse statesmanship which the British people have punished as it deserved.

This comment is true, but it is far from being the whole or the most important truth about the British election. Although Mr. Baldwin has suffered a deserved defeat, his defeat may eventually prove to bring many compensations—if not to his country, at least to his party. The Conservatives will certainly turn out to be stronger and more capable in opposing than they have been in conducting the government. A really successful government for Great Britain is just at present difficult almost to the point of impossibility. Mr. Baldwin's successor, whoever he may be, cannot form a government with a united and aggressive English majority opinion behind it; and even if he could the practical impossibility of formulating and