

really great question of consolidation up, the large majority of them talk before the Interstate Commerce Commission like men of key-hole vision—these mighty men of mighty enterprise.

What does it all mean? Would Mr. Bryan have been right had he included the mental with the physical man in his observation that the strongest is not much stronger than the weakest? Or is it true that these men are mighty in matters of dollars and cents, and undeveloped in other matters—that the majority of them are incapable of understanding the broader social and economic

aspects of transportation; that while they deal powerfully with material things, their minds halt and falter when brought to bear on the formulation of principles?

And does it mean that the initiative and leadership in the treatment of the transportation question must pass to the Cumminses and the La Follettes in Congress, and to the Ripleys in the colleges, with the practical railroad men, except in two or three instances, relegated to the position of critics and polishers?

JOHN W. OWENS.

Mr. Kahn Would Like to Know

THE other day Mr. Otto H. Kahn delivered an address in which he complained that he had yet to hear an answer to a question which he had repeatedly addressed to advocates of the existing League. He had been asking: "How are you going to get away from the congenital taint of the League, which consists in its being attached to, and made the preserver and guardian of, the war settlements?"

This is a fair question, a searching question, and the only really important question that bears upon America's attitude towards the League. It is, I feel certain, the question which most bothers those readers of the New Republic who would naturally be the strongest supporters of the League of Nations if they did not feel that the League existed, as Mr. Kahn says, "to preserve and perpetuate the structure" of the peace treaties.

Were this the year 1919, and were there no evidence at hand other than the state of mind of the principal peacemakers at Paris, the answer, it seems to me, would be clear. The League in general, Article X in particular, was conceived as a way of preserving and perpetuating the settlements of Paris. There were grave doubts about the permanence of those settlements among the peacemakers themselves, and in Articles XI and XXIV as well as in the Reparation Commission, a rather feeble attempt was made to make the peace elastic to future revision. But in the main the League of 1919 may fairly be said, as Mr. Kahn assumes, to have been conceived as the guardian of the war settlements.

But even if this were not true of the League as such, it was true for any power which entered the League by signing the Paris treaties. Ratification of those treaties certainly implied an obligation as a member of the League to act so as to preserve the treaties. No such obligation, of course, rested upon members of the League like Switzerland or Sweden. But for members who had signed the treaties, Articles XI and XXIV were morally inoperative. Only states which had been neutral in

the war could, therefore, regard the League as a machine for amending these dangerous treaties. But these neutral states are the minor powers. So long as all the major powers in the League were morally committed by the treaties, and beneficiaries under them, there was no political power in the rest of the League great enough to grapple with the treaties.

The League is still impotent to revise the treaties no matter how disturbing they may be to the peace of the world. In this respect the situation has not changed since 1919. But in another respect it has changed radically, and here is the beginning of what I think is the real answer to Mr. Kahn's question. *The League has not in fact been the preserver and guardian of the war settlements.* While the League has failed to revise them, it has also failed to protect them. The Treaty of Sèvres was not, for good or ill, protected by the League. That treaty is at this moment being rewritten at Lausanne. The League has certainly not insisted upon the rigors of the treaty with Austria. It has if anything helped to revise that treaty. The League has not enforced the Treaty of Versailles against Germany in any real sense of the word. It has administered the Saar and it partitioned Upper Silesia, but certainly it is correct to say that in the Franco-German war after the war, the League has been an impotent neutral. The League has proved to be a disappointment both to those who wished to preserve the treaties and to those who wished to revise them.

This means that in the great political struggles of the world today the League, in spite of its original pretensions, plays no decisive rôle. Because they are thinking of the League's pretensions rather than of its history, the enemies of the League sneer at the League one moment because it is impotent and tremble at it the next because it is a devouring superstate. But the truth is that the League is not at the centre of world politics and is therefore powerless to do either the evil or the good usually expected of it.

Yet the League continues to exist. I think the League is increasing in prestige. This is true in the sense that the neutral members, the uncommitted members, are constantly more active and self-assertive in its councils. From Assembly to Assembly you can see, I think, the decline of the influence of the war-time allies, divided amongst themselves, and the rising influence of the old neutrals. It is true in the sense that the men associated with the League are ever so much less the agents of their foreign offices, and ever so much more consciously "League of Nations men." The League is no longer merely a project. It is an institution commanding among influential men in all countries personal loyalties great enough to cause deep divisions within the foreign offices and national parliaments themselves.

This is a subtle thing, but it seems to me one of the great facts in the situation, because it cuts so deeply into the kind of nationalism which would make any sort of world cooperation impossible. And unless a man believes in an international proletarian revolution, which I do not, he will find, I think, in practically every country in Europe, that the individuals and parties most devoted to the League are also the individuals and parties on whom he must count for revision of the treaties at home and abroad. It seems to me a fact that if the war settlements are to be revised by consent and not by force, the revision will be carried out under the pressure or the leadership of the groups who support the League of Nations. Only in America, among the victors in the war, does hostility to the treaties so often involve hostility to the League. In Britain, France, Italy and neutral Europe, a desire to amend the treaties is almost always associated with devotion to the League.

A Strong League and Revised Treaties

This means, unless the unworkable war settlements break down in a revolutionary chaos, that the treaties are most likely to be amended, not by the League, but by the men and parties who support the League. It means the rise to power within the various countries of men who are (1) opposed to reactionary supporters of the treaties and (2) anxious to strengthen the League against the return of the reactionaries. It seems to me, therefore, most probable that the revision of the treaties and the strengthening of the League will be two aspects of the same liberal political victory.

Therefore, my answer to Mr. Kahn's question would be this: (1) In the major politics of Europe today the League is impotent. (2) Being impotent, it has been used by the foreign offices not as guardian of the war settlements, but as a sort of harmless diversion for men who had been bitten by the experiences of the war and had somehow to be placated. (3) These men have taken the League seriously, have kept it going, and have

made it an institution. The League has become not the tool of the international reactionaries, but a tool of the liberal opposition parties.

Therefore, when Senator Borah or Mr. Kahn lists all the calamities the League has failed to prevent, I am not impressed. I remember that Lord Curzon, M. Poincaré, and Signor Mussolini are in power. What impresses me is that whether you look at British Liberalism or British Labor, at the France which is not National Bloc, or at the Italy which is not Fascist, there you find the friends of the League. That the League is impotent for evil is excellent, that the League is not potent for good, when its supporters are on the opposition benches, seems to me inevitable. The forces of the League are not in power, and therefore the principal function of the League at the moment is to continue to exist and to train its personnel for the day when the tide of reaction subsides in Europe.

Why America Should Join

It seems to me important that the United States should be a member of the League early enough to grow up with it. Nothing spectacular should be expected as a result merely of our joining. In this respect both the enemies and friends of the League tend to exaggerate. By joining* as we should join now, *absolutely uncommitted under the Treaty of Versailles*, we should stand like any other neutral, like the League organization itself, outside the main struggle in Europe.

Our coming might give some confidence to the neutrals and the opposition parties by increasing the prestige of the League for which they stand. On this sort of thing it is best not to count, however. The main thing is that the League would be that much nearer a completed League of Nations, that much less under the shadow of the old war alliance. We should acquire some needed experience of a complicated subject, and would be in a better position to play our part and guard our interests when in the future the League comes into power in Europe.

This coming into power of the League seems to me the only visible check upon the formation in Europe of two armed coalitions, one under French leadership and the other under British. I do not feel at all certain that the League can prevent this outcome, but I can think of nothing else that might. But if we have a right to hope, and wish to act even though the hope cannot be guaranteed, it seems to me our best hope lies in

* In its issue of November 10, 1920, following the election of 1920, The New Republic, summing up the long contest over the League said: "It has now been decided by the election campaign that America will not accept the obligations of the European settlement. The New Republic sees no further ground for irreconcilability by American liberals." Cf. also the preceding and subsequent issues.

the coming into power of the League. It lies, that is to say, in the victory of liberal-minded men at home, in the strengthening within the League of the neutral powers of which the United States would be the greatest, and in drawing into the League all the nations that are now excluded.

Considering the peril now threatened by the conflict between a French and an anti-French alliance, it seems to me more than ever important to throw what influence we possess to an organization which in principle and in all sincerity does look in another direction. And this organization is, after all, a remarkable event in the history of mankind. Even after we have written off all false hopes and admitted the League's mistakes and emphasized its

present impotence, one fact remains: fifty sovereign nations have actually organized somehow for peace. They have created a machinery of consultation and conciliation. They have established the first permanent machinery for the impartial investigation of disputes. They have made a Permanent Court. And even though they have agreed to some things they do not mean, have done things they promised not to do, and left almost everything undone we may wish they had done, this fact of union turns the scales in favor of the League decisively. That there is a union in the world seems ever so much more important than the pros and cons of how that union in the first few years of its existence has behaved.

WALTER LIPPMANN.

Meiklejohn of Amherst

THE circumstances surrounding the resignation of President Meiklejohn of Amherst are doubtless more complicated than they would appear to Mr. Upton Sinclair. They reflect all the various aspects of the problem of the American college today, educational, financial, administrative. President Meiklejohn went to Amherst eleven years ago with a special program, that of modernizing the curriculum, of developing courses in history, social science and political economy, while at the same time correcting the tendencies toward desultory variety which accompany the elective system, and emphasizing the unity of the educational process. He was obliged to be both innovator and reactionary. It was a task in educational engineering which President Meiklejohn expounded in his article on *The Unity of the Curriculum* in the educational supplement of the *New Republic* last October. In his view education is not a fixed sum of static information and belief, but rather a means of growth. He defined the difference between himself and his opponents in a valedictory address at the commencement luncheon of the Amherst alumni.

I find two different views with regard to intelligence. Some people believe that intelligence is a thing you can have, that you can get and keep, that it comes down out of the past, that it is handed down by the teacher, that you can find it in a book, that it is there to be taken. It is not. Thinking, or intelligence, is a thing that you must do, it is a function of the human spirit, it is something that men must undertake if they are to have guidance of life.

To secure the acceptance of this qualitative view of education in the face of the quantitative plan, largely in vogue, was the task of an educational statesman. Since it had to be accomplished with human material, students and faculty, alumni and trustees, it called for persuasiveness and tact. With

the students President Meiklejohn has been almost wholly successful. The trustees seem to have been won to the merits of his plan, and to have supported it for a time, retreating at last in the face of opposition. With his faculty he appears to have failed. It is not surprising. President Meiklejohn's effort necessarily interfered with that departmental autonomy which has grown strong under the quantitative system. Every college faculty includes a goodly number of men devotedly loyal to their own interests who resist with the desperation of a struggle for survival any introduction of new blood or new methods. The most besetting problem of any constructive college administration is dealing with the special privilege and vested interests represented in the faculty. As President Meiklejohn ruefully observed on the occasion before mentioned, "The faculty finds it exceedingly difficult to improve themselves and they find it exceedingly objectionable to have anyone else do it for them." It may well be that President Meiklejohn did not exercise the patience and the tact necessary to solve this problem. It speaks well for his sportsmanship, however, that he still confesses his faith in democratic control of colleges by the faculty, and the abolishing of trustees "when the faculty is ready to take their place."

Besides students and faculty there is a force to reckon with in the organized alumni. Of late years the effort to raise endowments has led colleges to appeal to their graduates on a basis of renewed interest in the affairs of the institution. It is superfluous to point out that this interest is a danger. The alumni are as a body conservative as respects their alma mater. They love their college as they remember it in the past. Again, the great number of them are unable to follow closely the developing situation, and allow the power of their organization to be wielded by a few, often those most ardent in their devotion, and most narrow in their out-