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The Week

RARELY have we read in a daily newspaper a more disingenuous and misleading article than the dispatch from Washington which the New York Times of March 10 carried on the last column of its first page. This article is supposed to give an account of the attitude of "public sentiment" towards "the prevailing tendency to tear down honorable reputations." According to this account "visitors to the Capitol testify that the people back home are disgusted with the conditions of affairs here as disclosed by the evidence before the Teapot Dome Committee and the mass of unofficial accusation and rumor that has accompanied these revelations. They feel, it is said, that official Washington is not merely impregnated with corruption but saturated with it. They have little respect for public men generally, classing them all as selfish and corrupt politicians. They have lost confidence in the integrity of Congress and have a low opinion of the intelligence of the people's representatives in Senate and House" but particularly in the Senate. "At the same time this lack of con-

fidence does not apply to President Coolidge. Although "the titular chief of a party of some of whose leaders the people are suspicious" the President is generally considered to be "the bulwark of the interests of the people." The politicians who attack him for his relationship with McLean inspire only "resentment," and this resentment increases "the lack of confidence in the Senate."

THE article from which the foregoing extracts are borrowed is a perfect example of the tendentious and misleading treatment of the news which is becoming the great fault of contemporary American journalism. While pretending to give an account of how public opinion feels towards the Washington exposures, and while pretending to deplore the disposition to tear down honorable reputations, it is really pro-Coolidge propaganda disguised as news, and it really seeks to increase and to turn against the senatorial investigators the suspicious and credulous state of mind which it deplores in the case of other "honorable reputations." The purpose of this propaganda is only too clear. It is intended to discredit those senators who are conducting the investigation. Its authors apparently expect that, by making people suspicious of Senator Walsh and his associates, the President will be relieved from the criticism and the suspicions caused by his own acts.

THE friends of the President are in our opinion doing him a doubtful service when they disparage the actions of the Public Lands Committee of the Senate as part of an effort to promote the Coolidge candidacy. Such propaganda is almost a confession that the Walsh investigation is disquieting, repellent and probably injurious to the administration. But that is not the point. If the Times really believes that official life in Washington under a Republican administration is "saturated" with corruption and that from this state of facts it can derive a valid argument in favor of a continuation of a Republican President in power and against the investigators of official Republican corruption, there is no reason, except a respect for its own reputation for common sense, why it should not say as much in its editorial columns.

But there is every reason why as an honest newspaper it should not impute this pernicious nonsense to "public sentiment."

MORE congressional investigations are now in progress or planned than would ordinarily be expected in a decade. The New York World listed eleven the other day which are now being conducted by the Senate alone. They are: One, the oil scandal, two, the investigation of Daugherty and the Department of Justice, three, the Borah inquiry into Hughes's allegations of Russian revolutionary propaganda, four, the Reed investigation of propaganda in general, five, the Veterans' Bureau inquiry, six, the report on the Ku Klux Klan-controlled election in Texas, seven, the study of the Shipping Board's activities, eight, the investigation of land frauds in the Rio Grande valley, nine, investigation of the Foulke fur seal contract, ten, a study of rent profiteering in the District of Columbia, and eleven, the Copeland inquiry into "fake diploma mills." Other investigations are being urged in the cases of the railroad administration, federal prohibition enforcement, the cost of bread and flour, the economic effects of the bonus, and the income taxes paid by the principals in the oil scandal.

A SINGLE one of these investigations, that of the Brookhart Committee into the affairs of Daugherty, will have no less than four important aspects. First is the charge that the Doheny and Sinclair oil interests and former Secretary Fall aided, if they did not instigate, the *de la Huerta* revolution in Mexico. Second comes the allegation that Department of Justice agents on the Mexican border were ordered by Washington not to halt illegal gun-running across the border. Third is the story that oil interests in Oklahoma offered their support to General Leonard Wood in the 1920 campaign if he would make Jake Hamon (afterward murdered by Clara Hamon) Secretary of the Interior. This is also to be the subject of a separate investigation by representatives of President Coolidge. Fourth is the story of attempted bribery of Daugherty and other federal officials, made public in connection with recent indictments of Gaston B. Means, former Agent of the Department of Justice, and Thomas B. Felder. If the public is able to keep all these various investigations straight, to sift the evidence as reported, and to act upon the conclusions implicit in that evidence, then the unkind words of the intelligence testers about our average mental age will be forever set at naught.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL DAUGHERTY has remained in office for weeks after it was apparent that every leader of his party wished him to retire. President Coolidge, in fact, by his failure to rid himself of the incubus, may even have lost

the nomination which was so certainly his a few weeks ago. Mr. Daugherty bases his refusal to retire on a demand for fair play, asserting that his private honor is incompatible with a resignation which would be interpreted as a confession of guilt. If his connection with the oil scandal were the one count in the indictment against Mr. Daugherty, the New Republic would admit the justification for his plea and would join the protest against "lynch law." But the oil scandal is only the latest of a long series of events which in our judgment have demonstrated his unfitness for office.

AT the time of his selection we recorded our belief that by personality and experience he was unfit for the task; and every day of his tenure in office has confirmed that belief. His use of the injunction to aid employers in labor disputes, his utter failure to take effective action in the Veterans' Bureau cases and the Shipping Board and surplus war material scandals, his clumsy failure in the sugar profiteering cases, have all stamped him as unfit. He should have resigned as soon as President Coolidge took office; he ought even now to resign at once, and spare himself the humiliation, with which he is threatened as we go to press, of being ejected from office. His private honor can be as triumphantly vindicated by a Senate investigation of him as a private citizen as of a man clinging desperately to a place which he never should have filled and from which the whole nation agrees he should at once retire.

THE spectacular decline in the franc has revived old fears that the franc would go the way of the mark, the Austrian crown and the ruble. While everything seems to be possible in finance, the probabilities are against such an outcome. East of the Rhine indemnities and revolution made anything like a sound financial system impossible. The maximum taxes that could be collected fell far short of meeting the necessary drains upon the treasury. Paper money was resorted to simply as a form of taxation which did not require bayonets for collection. France today is economically sound. Her citizens are quite able to pay taxes enough to cover the necessary expenses of government, provided the burden of debt is sufficiently lightened. A lightening goes on automatically with the depreciation of the franc. With the franc at four cents the domestic debt is under \$12,000,000,000 in gold, at three cents, under \$9,000,000,000. Before the war the French debt was \$6,000,000,000 in gold, and at that time the value of gold was fifty percent higher than it is today. Accordingly, if the franc were to be stabilized at three cents France would have relieved herself practically of her entire war debt. Plainly there is no fundamental financial reason why the franc should remain long at so low a level as that.

YET fundamental factors count only in the long run. For any short period of time the course of an unsecured currency like the French is unpredictable. The fall of the franc by more than a fifth of its value in a single week was bound to produce a serious currency shortage. It takes more currency to do business in the higher prices resulting from the fall in the standard. The banks, therefore, are under pressure to issue more currency, with the result of a further depreciation and the need of still more currency. This process, if unchecked, can carry a currency to almost any depths. In a country like France, however, where the whole population, practically, invests in government bonds, no political regime can stand which permits the government credit to go entirely to smash. A financial dictator is pretty sure to appear long before people begin to count their small change in trillions of francs.

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE'S letter to the Filipinos on the subject of independence combines some good sense with some particularly cruel and unwise nonsense. He asserts that "a very large proportion and possibly a majority of the substantial citizenry" of the islands are not seeking independence. He declares that our "protectorate" increases the financial and economic strength of the Philippines. He believes the islands are not ready for independence, points out the cost of a diplomatic service, an army and a navy, and solemnly assures the Filipinos that if they had been free during the World War their country would have been gobbled up. He whitewashes General Leonard Wood as completely as possible and says bluntly that until the Filipinos learn to get along with him, they may expect neither complete independence nor any further steps in that direction. There will be plenty of good Americans who may agree with the President about the impracticability of complete independence for the Philippines at this moment who will regard this insistence on forcing General Wood down the islanders' throats as being as unwise as it is monstrously unjust.

BY the President's proclamation the duty on wheat has been raised from thirty cents to forty-two cents a bushel. The ground for this action is that, according to the Tariff Commission, it costs forty-two cents more to produce wheat in the United States than in Canada, the chief competing country. This may be true, although it is a difficult problem to determine the cost of an agricultural product part of which comes from good land and part from bad; part from lands skimmed with the minimum expenditure and part from lands cultivated intensively at great expense per unit of production. But this is a difficulty the Tariff Commission must encounter every time it tries to determine the difference between domestic costs and for-

eign costs. It is an unworkable basis for the rational regulation of trade. No matter whether lowest costs, average costs or highest costs are taken as a basis of comparison, the results are fluctuating and obscure. The objective of protection, the establishing of a scale of domestic prices under which a well managed concern can live and do business, may be attained much more easily by simply watching the domestic price level and making the necessary adjustments to it.

IN the case of wheat there is an additional absurdity in attempting to apply the principle of comparative costs. Canada is the chief competing country, but her competition makes itself felt not in our market but in the European markets, which are entirely out of reach of our customs. The price of wheat goes up or down for Canada and the United States alike according to the condition of European demand. On the day when the twelve cent increase in duty was proclaimed wheat actually rose on the Chicago market by about half a cent. It rose, however, not because of the President's action, but because Great Britain and Italy bought 2,000,000 bushels. As it happened, they bought, not United States wheat, but Canadian. Wheat is wheat, and the farmers of Canada and of the United States must prosper or starve together, so long as both countries are heavy exporters. It may be that some farmers are sufficiently obtuse to believe that the customs line between the two countries makes a difference. But the majority of them must have become wiser, by this time.

WHEN the government offers amnesty to political prisoners, does it mean what it says? The question is a fair one in view of the plight of seventeen members of the I. W. W. who are about to be deported after having received "executive clemency." All these men were convicted during the war for expression of belief and opinion; none of them was convicted for any act of violence against person or property. Eminent jurists who have looked into their cases believe that they never should have been sentenced at all. Being aliens, they are to be deported though all of them have lived in the United States for many years. Secretary Davis alone has the power to suspend the deportation order. We earnestly hope that he will live up to the opportunity for justice which is here presented to him.

IN 1873 Anthony Comstock sought and secured from Congress legislation preventing the dissemination through the mails and otherwise of obscene matter. Through an inadvertence, so the Voluntary Parenthood League maintains, the statute when drawn included as obscene all information regarding birth control. A bill has now been introduced in the Senate by Albert B. Cummins of

Iowa, and in the House by William N. Vaile, of Colorado, repairing Mr. Comstock's error and removing the Federal ban on literature describing such birth control methods as are endorsed by reputable physicians. Passage of the Cummins-Vaile bill would permit the free transmission of birth control information in twenty-four states which are without legislation of their own; and would greatly aid the effort to secure the repeal of mediaeval legislation on this subject in the other twenty-four. We take it for granted that no intelligent American any longer needs to have the merits of this question argued at length. If you believe in the right of children to be well born into happy homes where they can be properly reared, you can help to realize this ideal by writing to your congressmen and senators, and particularly to the members of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, in support of the measure.

POLITICS and religion are conflicting, with a vengeance, in the Mohammedan world. Mustapha Kemal's Angora government has overthrown Abdul Medjid as Caliph and exiled him. His temporal powers had already been taken away, when the Sultanate was abolished in November, 1922, and Abdul was raised to the post of spiritual leader of the Mohammedan world. The new action means that the westernized Turks at Angora, weary of the reactionary plots which have centred about the Caliphate, intend to put into that office an individual more amenable to their own desires. These plans, of course, may miscarry. Already there are several non-Turkish contenders for the position who, cynical Near Eastern observers declare, represent the British and French governments, jockeying for a position of advantage in the Mohammedan world. King Hussein, of the British-controlled Hedjaz, a lineal descendent of Mohammed, and ruler of Mecca and Medina, the sacred cities, has already been declared Caliph by his two sons. A "French" candidate is the Sultan of Morocco. King Faud of Egypt, the Amir of Afghanistan and Aga Khan, of the Sunni of India are also on the list. While the selection of King Hussein would suit British policy in the Near East very well, the fact that other candidates are also from British-controlled territory makes it likely that the traditional imperial policy of "hands off" in religious matters will be maintained.

IF newspapers and magazines employed no staffs of professional writers, but depended on volunteer contributions from the public, you would have a situation in journalism like that which afflicts radio broadcasting today. The material which is put "on the air" now comes almost entirely from persons with an axe to grind—musicians and speakers who are seeking publicity for themselves, or paid propagandists, commercial and political. That is the chief reason why the great mass of what the

radio listener hears is stuff on which no intelligent person can care to waste his time. At best it is inane; at worst it consists of the political and economic doctrines of those hundred-percenters who are the natural allies of big corporations such as rule in this field today. A better example of the evils of unaided private enterprise could hardly be sought. Here is a potential means of education and entertainment of the highest possible value, which is given over to fourth-rate minds because no one, generally speaking, now supports broadcasting except the manufacturers of receiving apparatus. Even they, it is expected, will withdraw if their market reaches a not improbable saturation point. On the whole, such a development would be desirable; for the way would then be clear for radio to attain the real usefulness to which its series of remarkable inventions opened the door.

THE road of progress, however, is certainly not that which the American Telephone and Telegraph Company is now pursuing in its effort to control all broadcasting through its patents on the necessary apparatus—action which would dismantle ninety percent of the present broadcasting stations. Secretary Hoover properly points out that its success would be comparable to control of the entire press of the country by a single corporation. Judging by its own present policy, the plan of the A. T. and T. appears to be to supplant present propaganda with plain advertising where the air will be owned successively by those able to pay for it at the rate of ten dollars a minute. This is already being done in the cases of some individuals broadcasting through the powerful A. T. and T. station, WEAf. Such a development, of course, would be even more ruinous to the industry than a continuation of the present chaos. It would "close the air" definitely to every statement of a political or economic nature not of an ultra-conservative character, unless made by an individual who could afford to pay for his time at \$600 an hour.

THE killing of the joint resolution cutting twenty-five percent off the income tax for 1923 will occasion considerable extra bookkeeping for the Treasury Department and some inconvenience for the taxpayers. Nevertheless the action was wise. The immediate reduction is one of the most popular features of the revenue law as passed in the House. It adds materially to the chance that the bill will go through the Senate and receive the President's signature. The proposal to strip it off from the bill and pass it separately looked too much like politics. With so much of a reduction assured, the irreconcilable Mellonites could safely have gone in for obstructionist tactics, and might perhaps have succeeded in putting over further revenue legislation until after the election, when it will be safer to ignore public opinion. This seems to be generally understood by the public—a proof that we are advancing in political sophistication.

President Coolidge and Edward McLean

RECENTLY Senator Harrison of Mississippi criticized President Coolidge for continuing to consult and correspond intimately with a man like Edward McLean after the latter was more than suspected of having deliberately deceived a committee of the Senate about facts of great public importance. Later during the same session Senator Lodge accused Mr. Harrison of gross impropriety for his criticism of Mr. Coolidge's relation to Mr. McLean. "I think," he said, "it is little short of an outrage to bring the President's name into this matter as some have attempted to do today." "He is entitled to consideration in debate. It is important not to impair the faith of the people in high officials. Such a procedure lowers the character of the Senate in the opinion of the people." "The President should be lifted above rumor and the whisper of the corridor."

Many of the Democratic Senators replied to Mr. Lodge, but for the most part they confined themselves to insisting that President Coolidge was receiving a much fairer treatment at the hands of his political opponents than had the late Mr. Wilson. The retort was obvious and apt, but it ignored the merits of Mr. Lodge's contention. Is it an "outrage" to criticize a president for behaving as the record indicates Mr. Coolidge has behaved with respect to Mr. McLean?

Surely the sound answer to this question is a sharp and emphatic negative. On the contrary if the Democrats in and out of the Senate had not criticized the President for the dubious aspects of the relation between McLean and the White House and for the President's apparent lack of candor in explaining what the relationship was, they would have conspired with the Republicans to conceal from the American public information which it was entitled to possess. Criticism of even the highest public officers is justified in so far as it sheds some additional light upon the acts of government which the public is not likely to understand without interpretation.

Considered from this point of view the "attacks" of the Democratic senators, with the exception of Senator Heflin, have served a clear and a desirable public service. They have directed public attention to the dubious aspects of Mr. Coolidge's behavior. The Chairman of the Republican National Committee and its official organ of publicity have exhibited far more partisanship, intemperance and recklessness in denouncing Senator Walsh and Senator Wheeler than the Democrats have in criticizing President Coolidge.

The President's behavior, since the evidence of fraud in the oil leases was first produced, has not been above suspicion or above criticism. No fair-

minded person suspects him, of course, of being directly implicated in the fraudulent transactions. No fair-minded person suspects him of a share in any conspiracy to conceal from the Senate Public Lands Committee information about the frauds which would contribute to the exposure and the conviction of directly guilty individuals. But he can be reasonably suspected of a relationship with at least one of the guilty individuals which was, under the circumstances, improper. Nor is this all. Since the evidence of that relationship came to the surface, he has done nothing or said nothing to clear up its more suspicious aspects. He is not behaving like a man who is anxious to reveal all the facts of the connection between Edward McLean and the White House. He is rather behaving as if there was something about that connection which it was advantageous for him to conceal.

Consider what the evidence of this connection is. Just about the time when the Senate investigation into the oil leases was getting warm and dangerous, the President's Private Secretary went to Florida for a vacation and during that vacation passed two weeks in daily conversation and consultation with Messrs. Fall and McLean. The account which Mr. Sleppe gave of these meetings was not, to say the least, entirely convincing. According to his testimony Messrs. Fall, McLean and himself were merely a small group of intimate friends who were forgetting for a few days their share of responsibility for the government of the nation in the sunshine of a winter resort in Florida. Mr. Sleppe did, indeed, incidentally advise his friend McLean to make a clean breast to the Senate Committee of the real facts about his relations with Fall, for Mr. Sleppe apparently had some reason to suspect McLean's attempt at deceit.

But it is difficult to believe that Sleppe in his own testimony behaved as candidly as he advised McLean to behave. During these weeks of golf and innocent conversation there was at least one occasion on which the President used McLean as a means of communication with his private secretary and when he called in McLean as a political adviser after McLean's exposure as a deliberate conspirator against the successful prosecution of an enterprise of great importance undertaken by another branch of the government.

In the meantime and thereafter McLean was pulling all his wires to prevent the investigation from being pushed any further in his direction and he was assisted in this effort by at least three members of the White House staff—a telegrapher, a door keeper and a secret service officer. One of Mr. McLean's representatives expected to accomplish something most advantageous for his chief by opening a wire direct to the White House. Another, Mr. Bennett, had an interview with the "principal" who assures him that there will be no resignations and no rocking of the boat. This