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The Week

NOW that the election is imminent, it is time to call the attention of liberal and disinterested citizens to one consideration which many of them overlook. The campaign, as it has progressed, has increasingly posed the question of what values for American life the voter proposed to affirm by his vote. Many liberals are supporting Mr. Davis because he has declared himself in favor of immediate coöperation with Europe and are opposing Mr. La Follette because they are justifiably sceptical of some of the specific proposals in his platform. But reasons of this kind which might properly determine a choice among candidates who were divided only about policies fade into insignificance when the several candidates are asserting different conceptions of the meaning of American nationality. The Republicans have insisted that whatever is in America is on the whole right. The American nation is to seek the fulfillment of its collective life by preserving its existing institutions, practices and social classifications substantially intact. The Democrats through their mouthpiece, Mr. Davis, are more willing than the Republicans to reconsider the existing conduct of American government, but they

do not admit that the tendency of the existing system raises any question of ultimate values. They reaffirm that the meaning of American nationality was correctly formulated at the end of the eighteenth century by Thomas Jefferson. They are now exhibiting a significant disposition derived from their Jeffersonian tradition to treat the economic issue as their predecessors treated the issue of slavery, viz., as chiefly a local affair, about which a national government or a national party should remain indifferent or irresponsible. Finally Mr. La Follette has consistently proclaimed that the Progressives are the modern spokesmen of the ideals which the Fathers of the Republic labored to embody in the institutions and practices of their countrymen. They hoped to found a commonwealth of free, self-respecting and socially equal citizens, whose individual independence was the expression of a wide diffusion among the people of economic and political power. That is not the kind of commonwealth which the United States has come to be, and the Progressives' proposals to modify American laws, institutions and practices are intended to effect its revival. A vote for Mr. Coolidge affirms and for the most part consciously affirms the ideal of an arrested America. A vote for Mr. Davis, no matter what the intentions of the voter, affirms an irresponsible and drifting America. A vote for Mr. La Follette affirms a progressive America, which is fully aware of its inherited national purpose and is not afraid to demand those changes in conduct, institutions and ideas which are necessary to redeem it.

WITH the political campaign closing, the broad outlines of the policy pursued by each party in it also become clearly visible in review. The Republican program has been from the beginning to try to frighten the country into hysterics by its bogey of Bolshevism. The Democrats' main argument has been based on the corruption of the Harding régime—"turn the rascals out and put us in." The La Follette campaign has of course centred about economic issues, emphasizing the necessity for "breaking the grip of private monopoly." In none of these policies is there any element of surprise.

The La Follette campaign has been fought on the issue which to the Senator from Wisconsin and his supporters seems the paramount one in American life today. The Democrats have attacked Republican corruption because it was about the only point on which they were able to make a vigorous campaign. As for the Republicans, they were undoubtedly correct in believing from the first that the real menace to a Coolidge victory was Senator La Follette. La Follette's strength is nearly all in states which the Republicans in a "normal" year would either be sure of carrying or have a good chance to carry, and without some of these states Coolidge cannot hope for a majority in the Electoral College.

THE Coolidge campaign has been chiefly remarkable for two things: the contempt for the voters' intelligence with which false issues have been created, and the effrontery of the appeals to tariff-protected manufacturers to pay over part of their spoils to the Republican campaign chest. Not in a generation has there been a campaign like this one, in which the G. O. P. has relied exclusively upon straw men of its own creation in appealing to the people, and has not come to grips with any of the really vital questions of the day. The Republicans have said that La Follettism means Bolshevism, that the proposal that Congress should consider submitting to the states a constitutional amendment limiting the power of the Supreme Court to override federal legislation, means the destruction of the Constitution, and that Progressives and Democrats are in a plot to deadlock the election and make Charles W. Bryan President. Our readers do not need to be told how remote from reality such accusations are.

WHILE they talk long and loud about these perils of their own invention, they have not a word to say about the unparalleled waste and corruption of the Harding régime; not a word about their failure to bring relief to the distressed farmers; not a word about their official foreign policy, which has been, "not a policy but a predicament;" not a word about the Ku Klux Klan and its appeal to ignorant bigotry; not a word about the huge burden which the tariff lays on all consumers in order to line the pocketbooks of a few capitalists—of whom the Secretary of the Treasury is not the least; not a word about the extraordinary change of front as to the personal character of Mr. Coolidge who, until the death of Harding, was voted by the leading politicians to be such a failure that he had no chance of being renominated as vice-president.

THE Treasury officials may shout themselves black in the face: they will never convince anyone with eyes in his head that political motives had nothing to do with the choice of the time for opening the income tax returns to public inspection. Coolidge and Mellon and the conservative wing of

the Republican party were bitterly opposed to the publicity provision of the revenue act. La Follette and the Progressives inside the party and outside of it forced it through. The publicity provision reads obscurely; no ordinary citizen would have concluded that it authorized the press to publish his name in a list to be examined with eager interest by everybody. The Treasury department has given a rude jolt to the taxpayer's indifference. Its action says, in effect: "This is what the radical crowd has done to you. How do you like it?" A large proportion of the income tax payers won't like it at all. They are less likely to stay at home on election day, or to keep their contributions to the Republican campaign fund down to a minimum. Their indignation is not going to focus itself on the Treasury for giving them a jolt at this time, but on the political groups responsible for the publicity provision in the law. And they will set it down to the credit of the administration that it knows how to club them out of their somnolence.

ELECTION eve boomerangs are, however, tricky things to handle. The income tax payers are after all a rather inconsiderable minority, and not a very popular minority. Their violent denunciation of the principle of publicity will seem to hosts of people like an admission that they have something in their tax returns they need to conceal. The class which does not pay income taxes may also have been jolted into a resolution to go to the polls this year. Secretary Mellon obviously assumes that the radicals will not wake up so promptly as the conservatives, and that the net effect of making the tax returns public will be beneficial to Coolidge. But Secretary Mellon interprets upper middle class public opinion much more successfully than general public opinion. We may recall his conviction that the whole country was behind his famous plan for detaxing the rich. Only the upper middle class was for it, as he has probably learned by this time.

AS to the substance of the question whether income tax returns should be made public, we are for publicity. We recognize that occasionally it is an inconvenience, or even a grave disadvantage for an individual to have the facts of his income known to the public. We also recognize and respect the wish of many persons for privacy in this part of their lives. But we hold that the distribution of income among the several classes of the population, and among the members of each class, is a matter of great public concern. The rate at which private fortunes multiply is not a private matter. Every historian will admit that it has had much to do with the rise and decline of states in the past. It has a definite bearing on the future of our own nation. Our American democracy has not only tolerated, but approved, the successful individual who rises to fortune. It has assumed that great services are elicited by great rewards. There appears, however,

to be no good reason why the individual who is permitted to rise into an exceptional position should feel aggrieved if he is required to show exactly what he is getting for the services he is supposed to perform. It is true that the income tax returns, as now compiled, do not show this. That is, however, a defect that could easily be remedied by making accessible to the public the record of all the tax payer's income, both taxable and exempt.

THE British Labor government appears to have handled the alleged Zinoviev letter with unpardonable ineptitude. In the first place, they did nothing about it until their enemies pressed them to action under threat of publicity. In the second place, they treated it as purely a foreign office matter, not a matter for the whole government to discuss and agree upon, although it vitally concerned the government as a whole. Finally, the action taken, a sharp note to the Russian government, could only have been justified after the authenticity of the letter had been established. Knowing as much as they do about the activity of Russian forgers, the Labor government should have been wary at a time like this when their enemies are making the most of the Red peril as an electioneering device. Apparently the foreign office assumed that Zinoviev was just the kind of pernicious fool to write such a letter as this, and acted on the assumption. Zinoviev, so far as we can ascertain, is in fact something of a pernicious fool. He would, we believe, be quite capable of blundering into a delicate situation and of giving aid and comfort to the reactionaries, expecting thereby to advance, somehow, the world revolution. He does not, however, have the reputation for cheap lying; neither has the Soviet government. And when both Zinoviev and the Soviet government brand the letter as a forgery and demand an impartial inquiry to determine its origin, the Labor government stands convicted of amateurish precipitateness, at the very least.

S. STANWOOD MENKEN has been guilty of many howling stupidities, but he has never sunk to such a profound depth of ignorance and folly as in his attack on the Countess Karolyi. What he charges her with is complicity in the policies of her husband, Count Karolyi, who, Americans ought to know, stands out as the finest, bravest figure in contemporary European history. All his life Count Karolyi has fought valiantly against the clique of Hungarian magnates whose oppression of the subject nationalities and dreams of conquest played a far greater part in making the World War inevitable than the German Kaiser or Poincaré or the militarists surrounding the Tsar. Throughout the War Count Karolyi resisted the insane ambitions of the Austrian and German militarists. When the War was definitely turning against the Central powers he was called to form a government, and did his best to bring about a settlement of the nationality ques-

tion in the Dual Monarchy under which the economic advantages of the old union might have been reconciled with the aspirations of the nationalities. He also sought to effect a redistribution of the great landed estates which make the Hungarian magnates a menace to European peace, and, as proof of his profound good faith, voluntarily distributed his own immense estates, making himself a poor man. But he had come into power too late. The Bela Kun revolution drove him into exile, and the Horthy counter-revolution, which restored the oligarchy of Hungarian militarists to power, was as hostile to Karolyi as the Communists had been. Karolyi in exile has, however, never despaired, and to this day is working courageously for peace and democracy in Central Europe. We think that Mr. Hughes, who knows what Karolyi has done and suffered in a cause which commands the sympathy of every honest American, ought to apologize publicly to the Countess Karolyi for the indecent ravings of S. Stanwood Menken. He disgraces not only himself but his country.

THE Chinese war has experienced one of those reversals which are not uncommon in military operations in the Orient. General Wu Pei-fu, overlord of the Peking government, while busily engaged in meeting the attack of Chang Tso-lin from Manchuria, has found himself stabbed in the back by General Feng Yu-hsiang. The latter, whose lack of enthusiasm for General Wu has been suspected for some time, suddenly rose against his master, forced the latter's henchman, President Tsao Kun, to sign a mandate declaring the war at an end, and then deposed him. Naturally, General Feng is strongly suspected of having been bribed or persuaded by Marshal Chang. He insists that this is not so, and that he has acted solely in the interest of peace and a desire to bring to an end a fratricidal war, which was ruining the country. Whatever explanation is the correct one, General Wu, caught between two fires, is in a precarious position. If General Feng was sincere in wishing to bring the war to an end, he may have accomplished that purpose, though at the heavy price of dominance by the Manchurian dictator over all China except the Canton government.

WHEN the present campaign is ended, a good many daily newspapers will have little reason to be proud of the part they have played in it. Partisan lines have been drawn with unusual strictness this year. The leading newspapers of the important cities have, as a rule, given generous space to all three presidential candidates and have reported them fairly; but the exceptions to this standard, particularly in the smaller communities, have been numerous and painful. Particularly has the La Follette movement suffered misrepresentation and unmerited abuse at the hands of editors who seem to be so badly frightened that all notion of what is de-

manded in the way of fairness by the ethics of the profession leaves their heads. An example more or less characteristic is the reception given to the very serious charge against General Dawes in connection with the Lorimer bank scandal. Most of the Republican newspapers carefully refrained from printing a line about these charges when they were first made. Not until John Barton Payne produced his famous "defense" did the Republican press rush to the fray, printing in detail the justification of something their readers supposedly had never heard of. Whatever may be said of such procedure as politics, it is bad journalism. We hope it will prove to be bad politics as well.

THE parsimonious view of the proposal of a federal subsidy to needy public schools is, of course, that it is just another raid on the treasury. But the simplicity of this verdict is obtained at the expense of limitation; under this rule the federal treasury is conceived only in terms of disbursements. The facts of this particular case, however, turn upon the power of the federal government to collect. The National Educational Association has just issued a chart, prepared by its division of research, which puts the emphasis where it belongs. A contrast of the expenditures per child upon education in the five richest and in the five poorest states gives a ratio of about five to one. Education thrives where wealth abounds. Furthermore, and obviously, the federal government is the only possible equalizing agency for discrepancies between the states. The N. E. A. summarizes the situation thus: "Equality of educational opportunity is possible only when school money is collected where wealth exists and expended where children live." The argument is incontrovertible. A contrary view is parsimonious not so much of public funds as of ordinary good sense.

THE National Educational Association has also just issued a research bulletin, "Facts on the Public School for American Education Week," for the use of school authorities and others in the observance of the week of November 17. The charts and discussions which it contains are definitely focussed upon education and the public schools. That is to the Association's credit, though, of course, no less could have been expected. But no amount of statistics upon the growth or value of public school education can offset the disproportion of the week's program as it was worked out by the American Legion, the federal Bureau of Education and the Association, acting jointly. Out of seven days just one has been devoted to the schools in their character as patrons of intelligence and disseminators of information. Six other "civic functions" compete with this one on equal terms. Any one who takes the exercises of the week seriously will be led to suppose that American schools are six parts public and one part school. The N. E. A. is an organization of school people. If it does not subscribe to this ratio it ought not merely to let its light shine

under the bushel of a research monograph but to issue a candid challenge to the official program of the week.

THE American press is exhibiting only the slightest interest in the Franco-German negotiations for a commercial treaty. Yet this treaty may have an important bearing on our own commercial relations. Before the War we enjoyed the privileges implied in the European interpretation of the most-favored-nation principle. Germany might induce France to cut duties on steel. Immediately we gained the benefit of the reduction, without making any concession of our own, by virtue of the most-favored-nation clause in our treaty with France. It now appears that France means to place her commercial relations on another basis. She refuses to make a most-favored-nation treaty with Germany, but proposes instead to cut duties on specific German goods in return for corresponding concessions by Germany on specific French goods. We cannot expect either country to continue long to give us the benefit of reductions that have been thus bought and paid for. Moreover, if such a commercial policy were adopted by Germany and France it would soon be followed by other countries, not only in Europe, but in Asia and America. And unless we prove more adroit at commercial diplomacy than we have been in the past we shall find ourselves generally in a least-favored-nation position.

PERHAPS we shall not mind if our trade suffers from discriminations. Americans who travel in Europe are now discriminated against, and not only take it, but take it lying down. Before an American can enter any European country except Switzerland and Belgium he is taxed ten dollars for having his passport viséd. An Englishman goes where he pleases, paying nothing whatever for the examination of his passport. An American entering Italy from a country in which cholera or the plague appears sporadically becomes subject to sanitary control. It takes twenty-one days before the suspicion of disease is lifted. Within that period the American is required under pain of a fine of five hundred lire and of imprisonment up to six months, to report to the sanitary authorities within twenty-four hours after arrival at his temporary destination. A British subject encounters no such requirement. He exhibits his passport and goes blithely through, warranted clean of plagues and fluxes by the fact of his nationality. The discrimination in the matter of visa charges is easily explained. America levies a visa charge of ten dollars on the rare traveler to America. Almost all European countries retaliate by levying ten dollars on the frequent American traveler to Europe. It is a fair guess that for every ten dollars our country collects in this way the European countries collect a hundred dollars from Americans. The sanitary discrimination can only be explained on the

ground that experience has shown the European officials that Americans, under the benevolent protection of Mr. Hughes, may be kicked around with impunity.

What Has the Campaign Accomplished?

FROM the point of view of the Progressives the object of the campaign which is now drawing to a close was primarily educational. They sought by nominating Senator La Follette for President to convince the American people that the issue raised by the present distribution of economic power and the present economic class bias of American government should be and was bound to become perennial in American political contests. They hoped to collect and to mobilize a new national party which was fully equipped by its organization, its ideas and its impulse to insist on the reality and the urgency of this issue. In what sense, if any, can they be honestly said to have succeeded?

So far as advertising the economic issue is concerned they have enjoyed a considerable but still limited success. For reasons which we shall consider presently, neither the Republicans nor the Democrats have deigned to discuss the economic issue on its merits and they have by this refusal discouraged public opinion from seeking or obtaining light about its meaning. But they have not succeeded in preventing economic and social questions from hanging like an oppressive cloud over the political landscape and obscuring competitive issues. The Democrats, for instance, sought to concentrate popular attention on the startling and sinister evidences of Republican corruption and ineptitude. They wished to convince the American nation that the really important and the highly practical object of its solicitude should be to substitute government by honest and harmonious Democrats for government by dishonest and discordant Republicans. The raising of the economic issue by Senator La Follette exposed the unreality of this issue and the futility of the proposed alternative. By associating both the corruption and the ineptitude of Republican rule during the past four years with the renewed preponderance in the counsels and the management of the standards and the interests of private business, the Progressives have blunted the edge of the chief Democratic campaign argument. For the same reason the Republicans were unable to make much headway with their attempt to convince voters of their eminence as the party of efficiency and economy. Just in so far as the voters distinguished the economic issue as of major importance they were bound to lose their interest in the sham battles and the less radical and dramatic controversies with which the two older parties have in the past so fre-

quently entertained them and diverted their attention.

The Republicans have by their conduct of the campaign assisted the Progressives in arousing American popular consciousness to the importance if not the meaning of the economic issue. They have proclaimed Progressivism to be an assault on American national security and popular welfare in the hope thereby of bulldozing and scaring doubtful Democratic and other voters into overlooking Republican misconduct and into voting for Coolidge. They have denounced an orderly constitutional agitation which seeks the gradual transformation and the functional improvement of the existing economic and legal system in the same violent language which they might justifiably have used against a party which condemned all property as robbery. By so doing they have committed themselves to the affirmation that all radical agitation looking towards economic reconstruction deserves to be treated as a class conspiracy against American national security. The speeches of the Republican leaders have stimulated the further growth of a thoroughly benighted and Bourbon state of mind among the members of the party. At the same time they have confirmed the Progressives' impression of the hopeless and self-righteous class bias of the Republican party as a whole. It is now demonstrably composed of favored groups and individuals who will not surrender their privileges except as the result of conscious and irresistible economic and political pressure. The attitude of its leaders has justified the necessity for a farmer-labor progressive party which will dedicate itself to the improved distribution of economic and political power in America.

The Republican party, when it assumed its existing intransigent and intractable attitude, played the game of the Progressives. It has helped them to advertise and dramatize the economic issue and to create a determination to resist which will demand a permanent Progressive party for its expression. It looks now as if the large element in American public opinion which wishes to prevent the economic issue from becoming the bone of contention between two dominant political parties will finally be obliged to abandon the middle of the road and drift to one side or the other. Mr. Davis has, of course, represented this element throughout the present campaign. He has treated the Progressive candidate and platform not as if they were dangerous or ominous, but as if they were unimportant and ephemeral. He and his fellow Democrats have avoided any but the most incidental discussion of the economic questions which the Progressives believe to be paramount and irrepressible. Thus by a significant paradox the most effective enemy of the Progressive party is not the Republicans who fulminate against it, but the Democrats who seek to ignore it. The Republican attitude stimulates the coming of a Progressive party into existence and affirms the paramountcy of the economic issue. The