

without reciprocal action on the part of any other nation, it might thus adopt as its permanent policy the ideal of international free trade.

This is something no party has ever done. It is true that some years ago the Democratic party was called by some of its opponents a free-trade party and that President Wilson hinted at international free trade as an ideal in his Fourteen Points. It is also true that the Republican party, led by Blaine, was persuaded to adopt officially a policy of reciprocity which logically would lead to the same thing. In practice, however, no American political party has adopted as a working policy the doctrine of *laissez faire*.

There is another equally simple, definite, fundamental policy which a political party might adopt. It might declare that the Government should erect an impassable tariff barrier against all foreign goods, or at least against all goods which might be manufactured here. This might be called the policy of the Chinese wall. This of course would mean that many things which other countries can manufacture cheaply would be manufactured in this country at a high cost, and would therefore become expensive; but it would make it possible for this country to be virtually self-contained and become a world in itself. It would mean the virtual extinction of all foreign trade except in such exceptional luxuries of an exotic sort that would have no effect on the life or industry of the American people. It would amount to a declaration of absolute commercial independence. This policy has in modern times never been attempted by any nation except Japan; and there it was carried out to an extreme that would be impossible in a nation like the United States. Nevertheless by means of tariff legislation foreign importations could be reduced to a negligible amount. A party might conceivably declare itself committed to this as an ideal, and legislate for the purpose of making the United States commercially independent and isolated.

This, again, is something no party has ever done. It is true that some high-protectionists have urged this as a desirable ideal; and in some cases, for special purposes, schedules have been devised which shut out certain classes of goods. In practice, however, no party has ever attempted to create out of American tariff duties a Chinese wall.

A third policy, which makes an ideal neither of free trade nor of isolation, is equally definite. It is the policy of adjustment or regulation. Its purpose is twofold, and must be twofold. It is designed to provide both revenue and protection. Sometimes the emphasis has

been laid on revenue, sometimes on protection; but it always combines the two. This is the policy of the United States under both political parties. It has never, in fact, been threatened. It is as firmly fixed as an American policy as it ever was. Though the tariff has often figured as a partisan issue in American political campaigns, it has never figured as a fundamental issue, for the simple reason that no party has ever proposed to depart from this simple policy of regulation and adjustment.

Next week we shall consider some of the aspects of this American policy in its recent development.

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN NOVELS

THERE has been lately in the London "Times," the American "Bookman," and other periodicals discussion about American novels in England and English novels in America. It has been petty rather than enlightening, because it has turned on alleged discrimination by publishers and critics from supposedly patriotic prejudice. Thus Mr. Sinclair Lewis is represented as saying in effect that the English writers are an effete crew lacking pep and go and with a supercilious attitude toward American books, and Shane Lewis as retorting that American writers are prone to mutual admiration. This is acrimonious but unconvincing. Not prejudice or patriotic leanings, but literary performance, is what tells in the long run. The best novels in the English language are read on both sides; the weaklings do not, as a rule, survive the passage.

But, if one is to compare the fiction output of the two countries, it must be admitted that firmness of texture and thoroughness of workmanship are more common in the English-made novel than in our own. The test is not the number of copies sold, but the interest shown by cultivated readers who care for the art of fiction writing rather than for temporary amusement or excitement. Of course there have been, and still are, American writers whose work is finished with care, whose characters stand out as solid persons and not sketchy types, whose central situations are vital and commanding. Hawthorne and Howells are examples in the past; to-day Edith Wharton, Winston Churchill, Booth Tarkington, Mrs. Deland, and a few others have just these attributes. But if we look over the American novels of a decade or so and compare them as a whole with what has come from the pens of Galsworthy, Conrad, Wells, Walpole, De Morgan, Locke, Merrick, and a

dozen other recognized English masters of the art, the reader who wants fiction that has quality will find the greater achievement abroad.

And this superiority of finish and leisurely completeness exists in English studies of single characters, and even in sensational novels as well as in those that go deeper into life. Where in American fiction of the last year or two, for instance, shall we find such clever pieces of work as Mrs. Kaye-Smith's "Joanna Godden," or Mr. Hutchinson's "If Winter Comes," or Sabbatini's "Scaramouche," or Mr. Milne's detective stories—the list might be extended indefinitely. The point is that, allowing for exceptions and for divergent tastes, our English friends score in their thoroughness of execution, while too many of our books are scamped, hurried, and sketchy.

Why is this so? Partly because the tradition of English novel-writing has grown up steadily and gradually; that branch of literature has in England been practiced longer and in a more professional way than it has been here. The American novel of to-day is the offspring of the Sunday-school book and the dime novel; some of us can remember the time when a novel without a didactic or moral purpose was looked at askance by truly good people. So our fiction has developed spasmodically and has tended unduly to stories with a purpose or (for the ungodly) tales of pirates, Indians, and the Wild West. Again, English society is more compact, its civilization is more homogeneous; even its class divisions aid the novelist in balancing his major and minor characters. England is small, and London has been its one great literary center from time immemorial. The novel has developed in an orderly, progressive fashion. Standards of workmanship and literary craft have become recognized in novel building. A type of English novel that is neither French nor American has evolved in which situation, character, incident, and humor play freely within a certain unity of design. In short, without being arbitrary or sweeping in judgment, one finds that the English novel is, on the average, more likely to be well thought out and carefully written than its American rival.

After all, however, there is no rigid nationality in genius. Schools of fiction may arise and fall, critics may bicker about the purpose of novel writing and weigh realism against romance, as they will, but once let a work of genius appear and theories are forgotten. The art of story-telling is a gift as well as an accomplishment. From Homer's day to ours he who can wave the enchanted wand will ever find enthralled followers.

SHALL THE GOVERNMENT SEIZE THE RAILWAYS AND COAL MINES?

TELEGRAMS ANSWERING THIS QUESTION FROM GOVERNOR PREUS, OF MINNESOTA; GOVERNOR BLAINE, OF WISCONSIN; GOVERNOR NESTOS, OF NORTH DAKOTA; GEORGE KENNAN; J. R. HOWARD; SENATOR BORAH; ROY D. CHAPIN; E. B. CORNWALL; A. L. GARFORD; SAMUEL GOMPERS; SENATOR LENROOT

OFFICIAL OPINION

PERHAPS the most startling event in the coal and railway crisis (during the week ending August 15, when this issue of The Outlook went to press) was the joint telegram of five Governors in the Northwest to President Harding suggesting that the Federal Government should seize and operate the coal mines and railways for the benefit of the public. Their action, taken on August 10, was briefly reported in the daily papers of August 11. On that day we telegraphed each of the five Governors as follows:

THE TELEGRAM

Have read with interest report of your conference at St. Paul. A telegraphic expression of your reasons for advising Government seizure of railroads and mines, two hundred words, night press rates collect, will greatly aid in forming intelligent public opinion and will oblige The Outlook.

New York, August 11, 1922.

There follow the telegraphic replies of the Governors of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota.

Governor Preus, of Minnesota, is a Republican; thirty-nine years of age; born in Wisconsin; graduate of Luther College, Iowa, and of the University of Minnesota Law School; began his political career as secretary to United States Senator Knute Nelson, who has served over a quarter of a century in the upper house of Congress; has been Insurance Commissioner and Auditor of his State; was elected Governor in 1920; and is looked upon by his party as the probable successor of Senator Nelson.

Governor Blaine, of Wisconsin, is a Republican; forty-seven years of age; born in Wisconsin; educated at Valparaiso University; is a farmer and lawyer; has been in sympathy with Senator La Follette's leadership; formerly Attorney-General of his State, and now serving his first term as Governor.

Governor Nestos, of North Dakota. Independent, in a special recall election supplanted Governor Lynn Frazier, who had been elected in 1920 by the Non-Partisan League aided by Republicans. He represents the return of North Dakota to conservative-liberalism after its disappointment with Non-Partisan radicalism.

GOVERNOR PREUS'S TELEGRAM

The following is the resolution adopted by the five Governors of the Northwest States and presented to the President: "Whereas there exists an acute scarcity of coal due to labor dispute which has suspended the working of many mines and interrupted the functions of the railroads, and whereas this famine in fuel threatens the health and happiness of our people and imperils the prosperity of our business, therefore be it resolved, that we, the Governors of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, do hereby assure the President of the United States that, if from the information at hand he believes it is wise to take over coal-loading carriers as defined in Service Order No. 23, or if he believes it is necessary to take over coal mines in order that the necessities of life of the people during the period of the present emergency may be provided for, such action will have hearty approval of executives of these five States, and we believe of the people whom we represent."

A gradual paralysis is creeping over the industries of the State of Minnesota and entire Northwest due to the lack of coal. The coal operators could have shipped their coal to Lake Superior Dock before the strike was declared on April 1, 1922, for they knew there would be such a strike. They failed to do so. Since the strike has been declared railroads have failed to supply the necessary number of cars to the non-union mines in Kentucky and West Virginia coal fields. The Northwest States have through long usage been accustomed to obtaining their fuel from Eastern coal fields. No coal is being produced in Illinois to supply our needs. The railroads have fallen down in making shipment from non-union mines since the strike was declared. Tremendous hardships face the Northwest, with its Arctic climate and its industries gradually closing down. While I am vigorously opposed to the Nationalization of mines or the Government operation of railroads, nevertheless in this emergency, where the coal operators and the railroad officials have proven their inefficiency, there may be no other remedy than the one referred to in our resolution. Have just received the following telegram from Governor Morgan, of West Virginia, which proves my contention that the railroads between the lower lake docks and the non-union mines are unable

to meet the situation: "Your telegram from St. Paul received. Until railroad strike became acute, affecting locomotive power of railroads, West Virginia was producing coal in excess of her normal production, even exceeding her war-time activities, realizing that the Nation was dependent on her production to prevent domestic suffering and industrial paralysis. While railroad strike has curtailed production, West Virginia, despite coal strike, is in position to increase her output from one-half million to one million tons weekly if car service is provided by railroads. We appreciate your grave situation, and be assured that West Virginia will contribute to the full measure of her man power and resources to assist you."

J. A. O. PREUS,
Governor of Minnesota.

St. Paul, Minnesota, August 12, 1922.

GOVERNOR BLAINE'S DESPATCH

At conference of Governors of Northwest States at St. Paul found that within less than three weeks there would be no coal in Northwest. Our climate is severe in winter. The very life of people at stake, and industries without coal must close, bringing distress to millions and more people. No greater crisis ever existed, and resumption in mining and rapid transportation is the immediate need of the hour to save the people. Government is instituted to promote and protect life and general welfare. This brief statement of the situation constitutes sufficient ground to justify Government operation of mines and coal carriers during emergency.

JOHN J. BLAINE,
Governor of Wisconsin.

Madison, Wisconsin, August 11, 1922.

TELEGRAM FROM GOVERNOR NESTOS

Statements of the press that the Governors' meeting in St. Paul advised the Government seizure of railroads and mines is stronger than warranted by the contents of the telegram sent the President. Governors were convinced that great distress would result unless a supply of coal was furnished the Northwest without delay. It seemed that the only source from which such coal could be secured soon was the non-union field of Kentucky and West Virginia, and the information at hand indicated that the railroad service between that field and the lake ports