

The Outlook

JANUARY 25, 1922

ORGANIZING THE IRISH FREE STATE

THERE is a good deal of political red tape to be gone through before the Irish Free State becomes an actuality, but the right steps are being taken and apparently the way is clear. The Parliament of Southern Ireland met on January 14 and chose Michael Collins as the head of the Provisional Government. This, under the agreement reached at the London Conference, is to be the link between the old order of things and the new "Free State." The choice of Collins rather than Arthur Griffith was a surprise, but it has been explained that Griffith, as the head of the Dail Eireann, which is the Parliament of the old Sinn Fein so-called Irish Republic, had better not be acting in a double capacity. Dublin Castle, for the first time in history, is in the hands of an Irish Government.

All of this seems a little complicated to those who have not followed the history of recent events in Ireland. The Parliament which has just set up the new Provisional Government was elected long ago under the Home Rule Act, but its members have refused to meet as a Home Rule parliament. Most of them have actually been members of the Dail Eireann. It will be remembered that under the Home Rule Act Ulster and Southern Ireland were each directed to hold an election for members of separate Parliaments. Both sections held the election and Ulster set up its new Parliament, and with it a Cabinet and Prime Minister. Southern Ireland, on the other hand, held the election solely to demonstrate (as it decidedly did) that the Sinn Fein voters were in the majority. It now for the first time comes into existence as the only proper medium for establishing the Provisional Government.

All the indications are favorable that fair play will be given to the new plan. Arthur Griffith states that the Dail Eireann will remain in existence until the treaty has been executed and a general election held in Ireland.

There is no doubt that Mr. De Valera and his followers will do all they can to arouse the old feeling against any kind of connection with England, but it is not generally believed that their contest will renew the war conditions that existed before the London Conference met. Griffith, Collins, and other trusted patriots bear more weight with the



International

ARTHUR GRIFFITH, NEW HEAD OF THE DAIL EIREANN

masses in Ireland than those who insist on extreme views and continued hatred.

BRIAND FALLS

ONCE more Poincaré is Premier of France. Sixty-two years old, a border Lorrainer, a man of notable ability, integrity, and square dealing, a lawyer by profession, he has been a politician and statesman for a generation. He has been Minister of Finance, Foreign Minister, Prime Minister, President.

After his term as President of the Republic Raymond Poincaré became head of the Reparation Commission, charged with collecting the sums due to the Allies from Germany. He resigned when he discovered, as he alleged, that the Commission was unwarrantably influenced by the Supreme Council, composed of the Allied Premiers.

Last spring Germany accepted the Commission's reparation ultimatum, but this winter Germany claims that she cannot meet her payments. In session at the same time with the recent meeting of the Supreme Council at Cannes, the Reparation Commission agreed not to abate this winter's payments, but to spread them in ten-day installments over a longer period.

Instantly the Poincarists demanded the resignation of Aristide Briand, who as Premier had appeared to yield in

some degree to Germany. They insisted that Germany, before her appeals be considered, must first raise her per capita taxes to the level of those in France, practice economies, and stop promoting official distress despite private prosperity. The Poincarists, moreover, declared that Germany was bent on showing her Treasury insolvent, but that she was a willful bankrupt. If she were really a bankrupt, they added, her creditors should expropriate her property and march their troops across the Rhine. This view is not necessarily militaristic or indefensibly aggressive, though even many French citizens regard it as an extreme way of standing up for their nation's just rights.

Furthermore, there was the demand for Briand's head because at the recent meeting of the Supreme Council at Cannes the question of reparations payment was apparently subordinated to that of general European reconstruction. The Poincarists angrily asserted that the resumption of normal trade relations throughout Europe should not be determined before the devastated regions in France were indemnified.

A weighty argument of the Poincarists for Briand's resignation was found in the fact that at Cannes he had seemingly agreed to meet representatives of the Russian Bolshevik Government at Genoa on equal terms.

Finally, M. Briand had accepted an Anglo-French compact by which English support to France was promised in case of another unprovoked German attack. But this proposed protection, declared the Poincarists, was bought at too dear a price—France would practically become a vassal state. France must remain an equal and promise her protection to England, instead of agreeing to concessions which would make it possible for England to "open up" Germany and Russia. This allegation of Briand's subserviency to England was another cause for Briand's resignation.

The Poincarists called the able and long-suffering Briand to come at once from Cannes to Paris. He came. He found abundant evidences of non-support, not only in the legislative but in the executive branch of the Government. Though his explanation to Parliament was apparently satisfactory to a majority of members, the strength of the minority, backed by the doubting members in his Cabinet, and, it is said, by the

President himself, constrained him to resign.

Weary as he was of the task of governing, he was, it is believed, not ill pleased to see the responsibility of power placed on the shoulders of the Poincarists long enough to prove the futility of their extreme policies as opposed to his more moderate course.

POINCARÉ RISES

THOUGH Poincaré's Cabinet was ready for office in three days, it did not prove to be the wide national union first attempted by the new Premier. But, in any event, it would probably have been what it is, a Ministry like our Wilson Cabinet, one composed mostly of lieutenants, not of its leader's peers. Doubtless that is what Poincaré wants, for he has this trait in common with ex-President Wilson, of wishing to make it evident that he is the source of authority and power. Poincaré has also revealed two other qualities in common with his contemporary, ex-President Wilson; first, a felicity of speech, but also a detachment which sometimes repels those who would be his friends.

True, the Cabinet includes, under the title of Vice-Premier, Louis Barthou, ex-Prime Minister and ex-member of the Briand Cabinet; it includes from that Cabinet Albert Sarraut, Colonial Minister and present head of the French delegation at Washington; it also includes Count Charles de Lastryrie, one of the leading French economists. But the other ten Ministers do not belong to the first rank; indeed, all together would hardly form a counterweight to the weight of the new Premier.

The effect of this overturn upon the future of France is regarded by friends of France from various angles. Some regard it as a move away from sympathetic understanding with America and England. Others regard it as a needed warning to those both in America and in England who in the pursuit of commercial advantage have ignored the rightful claims of France to consideration as a Power and to safety as a nation.

FROM THE MAILS TO THE MOVIES

FROM the point of view of post-office efficiency it is impossible not to regret Postmaster-General Hays's resignation. His wise and advanced ideas as to the relation of the postal service to the public have already done much to improve the relations of the United States Post Office organization in its dealings with the people at large. His attitude toward the employees of the



WILL HAYS. HIS RESIGNATION OF THE POSTMASTER-GENEALSHIP HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY PRESIDENT HARDING.

service also has been notably human and sympathetic. We are all sorry to lose Will Hays as an administrator, but we may hope that what he has accomplished may be a model and inspiration to his successor. The President, in tentatively accepting Mr. Hays's resignation, declares that it is "too great an opportunity for a helpful public service for him to refuse."

If the details of Mr. Hays's agreement with the nine large moving-picture producing companies which have asked him to act as an arbitrator and consolidator of their combined interests are satisfactorily concluded, he will find that the distribution of pictures as well as the distribution of mails has opportunities for public service.

The purpose of the film magnates is expressed in one newspaper statement as follows:

Unity of action will be established in developing the possibilities and the appreciation of moving pictures as instruments for education, moral uplift, and Americanization. The desire of the moving-picture men is to raise the standard of the industry, eliminate the evils and objections, and create a self-imposed censorship which will attract the confidence of the people.

Some fear has been expressed lest the new consolidation may prove to be in the nature of a "movie trust." We feel sure that Mr. Hays will recognize the fact that the improvement of the industry in the direction of better taste and better art requires that the exhibitors of pictures should have such freedom of choice as should enable them to respond to the demands of better-class audiences for sound art as well as good morals. It is equally true that individual screen dramatists and producers should have a chance to show originality. Consolidation should not mean factory methods or the exclusion of genius and variety in the "canned product."

THE AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE

AT the call of the President there assembled in Washington on January 23 a National Agricultural Conference. Delegates to this Conference will include representatives of direct agricultural interests and also representatives of labor, agencies of transportation, and general industry.

Some of the matters which may be discussed at the Conference include crop insurance, methods of adjusting production to the expected demands of consumption, a more accurate system of crop surveys, the problem of price-fixing, and the extension of the co-operative movement.

Whether or not this Conference will result in a direct benefit to American agriculture will depend largely upon the vision and sense of reality of its leaders. The danger to all conferences lies in the fact that human beings all too frequently mistake discussion and resolution for accomplishment. The outstanding feature of the recent Conference on Unemployment was the fact that Secretary Hoover did not lose sight of the need for immediate achievement in his search for a constructive programme for future action. Perhaps the Agricultural Conference can do little more than search for a rational programme for a National farm policy, but its leaders will do well if they keep the example of the former Conference in mind.

THE WEEKS LAW

THE principle of the budget should be maintained. There is therefore a disposition in Congress not to restore the appropriation for the continuance of the activities of forest acquisition under the Weeks Law which was omitted from the budget as submitted by the Budget Director. It is felt that, especially at this time when every economy should be exercised, the usual appropriation should go over until another year.

At the same time, the matter serves to draw public attention to what has already been accomplished under the Weeks Law. It has proved to be one of the great measures in our country's history. Enacted for the purchase of forest lands at the head-waters of navigable streams, it has not only materially helped to safeguard those streams from disastrous erosion; it has also provided a timber supply in the regions where it was most rapidly vanishing, and, last, not least, has also provided desirable recreation grounds.

As the West is well supplied with National Forests, the first appropriations under the act have been applied exclusively to the mountain regions of the East. The result has been that vital