

THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW

BY SIDNEY BALLOU

PUT the Conference back some twenty-five years. Assume that England and Germany, instead of embarking on their career of naval competition, had decided that it would be more sensible to limit naval armaments. They call a conference of the leading naval Powers (England, Germany, France, and Russia) and the lesser naval Powers (the United States and Japan). A ratio of capital ships for the four leading Powers is proposed, it not being considered necessary to consult America and Japan at this stage of the proceedings. The Big Four thresh out their difficulties among themselves, agreeing upon something like 6-5-3-3. They then announce that they consider that existing strength would call for about 1.75 for America and Japan.

Suppressing a slight feeling of resentment at having been handed our ratio by an inner council to which we were not invited, we first demand the minimum of strength accorded to others, but finally accept the proportion suggested for us. We are then reminded that the prescribed ratio is to run through all forms of naval strength, both offensive and defensive, and that in a class of vessels which we consider wholly defensive we are to be limited to the same proportion in respect to those Powers which have just assured themselves of complete command of the sea.

What would America do? To say nothing of the intemperate remarks of those who saw only an attempt by foreign nations to relegate us permanently to the rank of a third-class naval Power, would not those who really believed in the principle of such an agreement have cause to hesitate? Would they not think that the same argument which, in the interests of world peace, would forbid a nation to be dominant both on sea and on land would discountenance a marked supremacy in both offensive and defensive craft? Would the insistence on the same yardstick to measure capital ships and submarines strike us as more logical than the theory that those possessing superiority in offense should concede at least equality in defensive naval power?

Would it improve matters if one of our chief competitors told us that the type of ship which we believed to be defensive was without military value at all and that the real objection to our possessing it was the fear that in stress of war we would use it in an inhuman and barbarous manner lately under condemnation by practically the entire world?

If France is not precisely in this situation, it is not because the analogy is less favorable to her. Twenty-five years

ago a crystallization of the existing status would have left the United States in an inferior position, it is true, but in no worse relative position than she had occupied for many years. The present Conference finds France at the lowest level as regards naval armament that she has occupied for fifty years.

Before the war France had a naval policy which had existed in principle since 1880. This programme called for the maintenance of four squadrons of six capital ships each, for thirty cruisers, and proportionate lighter craft. At the date of the declaration of war she was working upon a specific programme, voted in 1912, which, added to her existing tonnage, would have given her in 1921 a total of 700,000 tons of capital ships.

Allied with the sea power of Great Britain, France stopped all naval construction during the war in order to devote the full activities of her navy yards and arsenals to the manufacture of war material for herself and her allies. After the armistice her financial situation and the necessities of reconstruction compelled the abandonment of the 1912 programme, including the scrapping of four dreadnoughts on the stocks and the conversion of a fifth. The United States, Japan, and, later, Great Britain resumed their interrupted programmes forthwith.

Upon the calling of the Conference France took stock of her national needs, and brought a carefully prepared programme calling for 420,000 tons of capital ships, 450,000 tons of light cruisers and destroyers, and 130,000 tons of submarines. At this time, it will be remembered, the "built, building, and authorized" plans of Great Britain and the United States totaled well over a million tons each of capital ships, and that of Japan over 900,000.

The Conference opened with the drastic cuts proposed by Secretary Hughes, and the three chief competitors went into committee to settle their differences. When these had been adjusted, France and Italy were called in. Still unconscious that she was expected to abrogate the naval rank held for the centuries from the destruction of the Spanish Armada until the rise of German sea power, France now proposed to reduce her capital ship programme to 350,000 tons, or a little over the 315,000 allotted to Japan.

This proposal was published from the secrecy of the committee room by the British, accompanied by a blare of denunciation and talk of the "bombshell" which threatened to wreck the entire Conference. Secretary Hughes wrote a firm letter, reminding France that it

was in the power of her competitors to make the ratio 6 to 1 if they wished. France thereupon accepted the 175,000 tons suggested for her, which on the increase due to the Mutsu settlement became about a 1.66 ratio.

In so far as the war had left France the dominant military power, a substantial reduction in her comparative naval strength accorded with the fitness of things. One does not have to be a Frenchman, however, to appreciate the little heartburn at finding that the combination of circumstances had left her at the critical moment to be accorded a strength in capital ships but little more than half that of Japan. Those five dreadnoughts, completed instead of scrapped, would have spelled substantial equality.

The Hughes proposal, however, was not based on national needs nor on national aspirations. It was based on the hard logic of existing facts. If naval armaments were to be limited, the time to begin was now. If the expensive competition was to be maintained, those now in the lead were in position not only to maintain but to increase the ratio. It was to this argument, frankly stated, that France yielded on the question of capital ships.

As a corollary, however, the Hughes programme proposed that the ratio for capital ships, once fixed, should run through all forms of naval craft, including light cruisers and submarines. It is to this limitation that France has refused to assent, reserving the right to build the same 90,000 tons of submarines as that fixed for the United States and Great Britain, together with 330,000 tons of light cruisers and destroyers, as against the 450,000 tons of the leading Powers. Although M. Sarraut stated explicitly that France would observe these limits without regard to the action of the other Powers as to these types, this has been generally referred to in the American press as France's demand for "unlimited submarine tonnage."

It will be observed at the outset that the same arguments which prevailed as to capital ships were not applicable to cruisers and submarines. Nobody proposed to take an immediate naval holiday as to these. On the contrary, the United States would probably start immediately, and could keep busy many years, building its inadequate cruiser force up to its quota. Capital ships are built to fight capital ships, and there is no appreciable difference whether you have twenty against your opponent's ten or have ten against his five. Submarines are not built to fight submarines. For fighting capital ships and cruisers

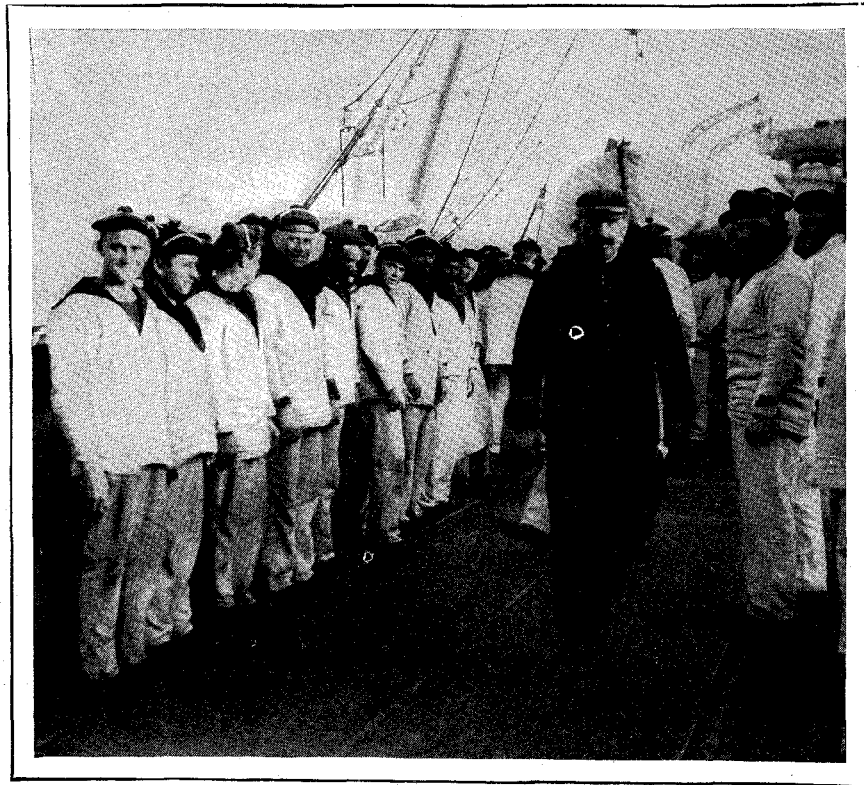
and for preventing close blockade of your own ports there is a vast difference between having twenty submarines and having fifty, which is not at all affected by an increase of your opponent's submarines in the same ratio. Moreover, unless there is some inherent reason why those Powers which through a superiority of capital ships have practical command of the sea should also have undisputed command, it would seem that a proper system of checks and balances should rather encourage the use of defensive arms by the weaker naval Powers.

Although the discussion has been largely colored by the unpopularity of the submarine and by British insistence that it is impossible to use it effectively in a proper manner, it must be conceded that the submarine is a legitimate defensive weapon. This was settled by the Conference against the contention of Great Britain, so that it must be considered as part of the hypothesis on which the action of France was based. Any discussion based upon the premise that the submarine is necessarily a barbarous and piratical weapon is not directed against France alone, but would prove the United States, Japan, and Italy equally guilty in refusing to abolish it. It is not fair to take the British arguments on this point and direct them against France alone because she has insisted on having the same number as the United States.

Equally unfair is the focusing against France of the argument that under the stress of war, in spite of the Root limitations, she will repeat the crime of Germany. Asking only to possess the same tonnage of submarines as that allotted to any other nation, why should France be called upon to refer to her untarnished record of honor? If, again, there is something in the submarine to tempt the possessor into violation of international law, that fact should have been weighed in determining whether there should be any submarines.

To tell the truth, if the next European war is not fought upon honor, or under fear of overwhelming reprisals on those who would violate honor, any ravages by submarines will sink into insignificance beside the hell which the development of chemical warfare has placed within reach of the unscrupulous. To make the point that a nation will outlaw itself by the illegal use of one particular weapon, the submarine, is again to direct public opinion toward a particular point for a particular object.

The airplane, with its load of poisonous chemicals, is a weapon potentially capable of far more barbarity than the submarine. Not only is it impracticable to limit it, which we may concede, but the sea Powers are planning to build airplane carriers to carry it to the utmost ends of the earth. We hear no hue and cry about its possible misuse. The airplane itself, with its limited radius of action, is primarily a defensive weapon, giving added security from in-



Paul Thompson

INSPECTION ON BOARD A FRENCH CRUISER

vasion. The airplane carrier makes it an offensive weapon, carrying its power to the coasts of the enemy. We hear no suggestion of scrapping existing carriers, but, instead, the authorization of expensive building programmes of 27,000-ton ships. These vessels are going to cost not less than \$20,000,000 apiece, but no resolutions have been introduced in Congress asking Great Britain to pay her war debt before embarking on the construction of her allotment of five. All of which indicates that it makes a difference whose ox is being gored.

France is the second colonial Power of the world. Sixty million people live in her possessions. Against a superiority in battleships the only colony with which she could hope to maintain communication and from which she could transport men and supplies would be Algeria, and that only by rendering the narrow seas untenable with submarines. Across the broad oceans, as demonstrated by the last as well as every other war, reliable communication is possible only to the Power whose cruisers are backed by capital ships competent to seize and hold the strategic positions and ready to stand and fight.

We do not hear so much of France's insistence on 330,000 tons of light cruisers and destroyers. The weapons themselves not being unpopular, there is not so much chance to work up public feeling. The principle, however, is the same. The fact that France is sincere in classing these with submarines as the proper defensive arms of a weaker Power is shown by her acceptance of the reduced ratio as applicable to airplane

carriers, which in speed, tonnage, and offensive power are akin to capital ships.

Neither light cruisers nor submarines when opposed by like forces backed by battleships can keep open long lines of communication for men and supplies, nor carry real war to the coasts of the enemy. With capital ships and airplane carriers a naval Power can do both. The nation which concedes this power to another may fairly ask some consideration in return.

Sea power is for the time being in the hands of the three nations which are separated by water from practically all possible enemies. Of the Continental Powers, Germany, Russia, and Austria have been eliminated and France and Italy have become the leading land Powers at the expense of their naval strength. The overseas Powers, if Great Britain, Japan, and the United States may be so called, not only need sea power most, but, with no vulnerable land frontiers, can afford it best. Their peoples have shown a determination to keep it, even at excessive cost. To avoid ruinous competition, with consequent misunderstandings or worse, the Conference was called. It was never proposed nor expected that their sea power was to be surrendered, any more than it was proposed that the land power of France be surrendered. Nevertheless they do not want to seem to be creating a permanent aristocracy of naval Powers to hold supremacy of the seas, and the best way to avoid the imputation would be a considerate regard for the defensive strength of the Continental Powers.



PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE PHILADELPHIA DELAWARE RIVER FRONT AT ABOUT THE TIME OF KIPLING'S STORY

The steeple in the middle of the picture is that of Christ Church (the church of Washington and Franklin), on North Second Street, near Toby Hirte's lodgings. The presence of the steamboat in this picture, printed at the end of the eighteenth century, is accounted for by the fact that John Fitch began to operate steamships on the Delaware in 1788. The approaches of the new bridge across the Delaware, with the longest span in the United States (1,750 feet), will pass directly by the site of Toby Hirte's house.

KIPLING IN PHILADELPHIA

BY FULLERTON WALDO

IN The Outlook's "By the Way" column for December 14, 1921, I find: "Another successful author, the 'Writer' says, once vainly tried to sell some of his best East Indian tales for \$50 apiece. Now he can command \$5,000 for the American rights of a short story. Needless to say, this is Rudyard Kipling."

The statement about the East Indian tales is entirely accurate. There was a time when Kipling on his way home from India would have been glad to get the indicated price, and peddled his wares in vain in Philadelphia. (About that time Philadelphia could have bought Whistler's portrait of his mother for its Academy of the Fine Arts for \$500 and boggled at the sum.)

In Kipling's "Rewards and Fairies" are two Philadelphia stories. Between them is a poem called "Philadelphia," and two of its lines are:

Toby Hirte can't be seen at One Hundred and Eighteen
North Second Street—no matter
when you call.

I took up the challenge. Putting the volume in my pocket, I went to 118 North Second Street. I found there the modern brick building of a paper and twine factory. An Irishman was unloading rolls of paper from a dray. I accosted him and read him the lines.

He jerked his thumb toward the interior of the shop, and there I found three partners, arms and cigars akimbo, discussing the falling price of paper.

Into their cold-sober discussion I thrust my "Rewards and Fairies." They sent me to the owner of the building, who had title deeds of the neighborhood that went back to the time of Penn. From him I learned that in 1794 (the time of the story) the number 118 was on the other side of Race Street—which figures in the tale as the place where gentlemen tried out their trotting horses.

And in the Philadelphia Directory for 1795 I found the two characters of Kipling's story—Conrad Gerhart and Tobias Hirte, the latter set down as "Seneca Oil Merchant and traveling Apothecary," just as in the story.

I wondered how Kipling came upon these old-timers. I sought out Joseph Rogers, of the Philadelphia "Inquirer," and he told me what follows.

In the spring of 1890 a young man unknown to fame, Joseph Rudyard Kipling, crossing the States on his way back from the Orient to England, stopped off in Philadelphia, and as he strolled about the town drifted into the "Inquirer" office. He met Editor Rogers.

"I have here ten stories," said the young Anglo-Indian, diffidently. "You may have them for fifty dollars apiece."

"We're not in the market for fiction," replied Mr. Rogers. "Better try the McClure syndicate."

"Thanks very much," said Kipling, stuffing the immortal stories back into his pocket. "I'm fond of newspapers. I was on one in India at Lahore. Mind if I look about your shop a bit?"

"Certainly not," said Rogers, and resumed his writing, while Kipling made the tour of the mechanical departments. On his return from the composing-room Kipling politely inquired, "Is there any one you know who could show me the town?"

Rogers got Harry McIntyre, a *bon vivant* of the day, to take the visitor about. Kipling cared little for Independence Hall or Christ Church or the things sought out most eagerly by pilgrims. But he waxed enthusiastic over every place where sailors congregated on the Delaware water-front—notably the Mariners' Bethel, where he came upon East Indians, and a ship in whose crew there were eighteen nationalities.

When he came back to the office, he covered six or seven foolscap sheets with a description of "things to see in Japan" for Mr. Rogers, who planned a visit to that country. That manuscript went up in smoke six years later, when part of the editor's house was burned.

When Kipling's "Rewards and Fairies" was published, Abram R. Beck, of Lancaster County (uncle of our present Solicitor-General, James M. Beck), wrote Kipling to tell him of Toby Hirte's summer trips to Lancaster County and Hirte's orchestra, which played worldly selections that greatly disturbed the pious Moravians. The author wrote Mr. Beck an appreciative acknowledgment.

Kipling had upturned many of his data about the Moravians in Abraham