

BREAKING THE WORLD'S WORST TRAFFIC JAM

BY ALFRED E. SMITH

EX-GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

IT costs as much to pass a ton of freight through New York City terminals as it does to haul it from Buffalo, according to a statement made by an officer of the Erie Railroad and borne out by the investigations of the New York and New Jersey Port and Harbor Development Commission.

Another investigator reports that the expense involved between the arrival of a car in New York City and the placing of goods on the ship frequently amounts to as much as the cost of the haul from points as far West as Chicago, and that congestion and excessive costs at the Port of New York are not new conditions, but have prevailed for many years.

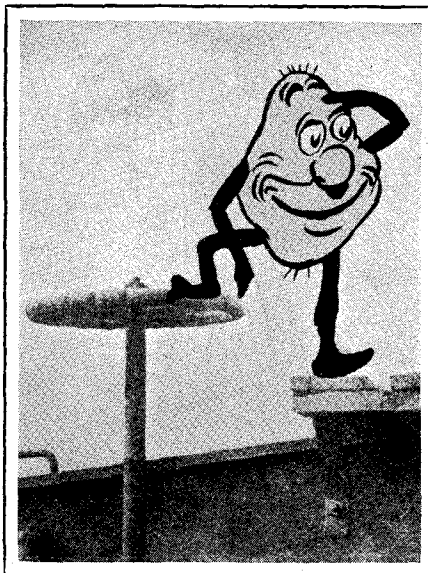
It is agreed by terminal engineers and transportation experts generally that standard railway freight cars cannot be brought on to the island of Manhattan. I think it can be agreed in any gathering of people who understand the geography of Manhattan Island that you cannot make a freight yard out of any part of it. Therefore it is to be served by an underground electric system with a break-up yard in New Jersey, where the freight is to be taken on tractors and placed in electric cars and delivered at inland points along the North River, providing a constantly moving shuttle service between the island of Manhattan and the New Jersey break-up yards.

In plain language, the underlying principle of the Port Plan is to connect the railways from the West with the railways from the East by all-rail routes and to bring standard freight cars without floating them to the outlying boroughs of New York along belt-line rail routes intended to serve the commerce and the industry of these sections.

So far as exchange freight between the New England lines and the lines from the Pacific coast are concerned, New York is to-day a way station. The only difference is that, instead of sending the freight along under a tunnel and keeping it continually with the wheels moving, it is carted across the bay on car-floats, which is the big element of delay and a great big element of cost and the big element of expense.

WAR OF THE PORTS

The port problem directly affects the business interests of the port, and the cost of living in the metropolitan districts of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans, which have been active competitors for the business now done at the Port of New York. They have inserted in the newspapers whole-page advertisements and used in their advertising matter the figures gathered by our own Commission to show the cost of doing business at our own port. Speaking before the Port Authority, United States Shipping Commissioner



"MR. POTATO"

This festive figure represents the farmers' crops on their journey through the intricate maze of the traffic jam of New York Harbor. A moving picture of the adventures of Mr. Potato is being used to create public interest in the port treaty

Love, among other things, made the statement:

You have lost the cotton trade.
You have lost the tobacco trade, and
you are fast losing the grain trade.

Arguments set forth for the St. Lawrence Waterway, which, if ever built, will not only interfere with the business of the Port of New York, but will tend to destroy the effectiveness of our great canal system, built at a cost of over \$150,000,000, are based largely upon the cost of doing business and the congestion at the Port of New York. A group of Mid-Western States have joined together in a federation and are urging upon Congress that a waterway be opened along the St. Lawrence River between the Great Lakes and the ocean. The Hon. A. P. Nelson, Member of Congress, urging the St. Lawrence Waterway in a speech made in the House of Representatives on December 5, 1921, said:

Other and more drastic remedies should be applied to effect a better distribution of commerce through the ports of the country, to the end that we may be freed in part at least from the tremendous burdens that have been placed upon our commerce because we have permitted the continuance of conditions which have forced the foreign business of the country largely through the archaic Port of New York.

The following day Congressman Brennan had this to say:

We cannot close our eyes to the almost intolerable congestion which has existed for years past in the vicinity of New York City, and which

is particularly emphasized on the lower end of Manhattan Island. Can we be criticised for asking a transportation relief which would divert a part of our shipments through another route which would be interrupted and unhampered by the necessary rehandling and breaking of bulk which now attend shipments through Buffalo and New York City?

To relieve this congestion without diverting traffic from this, the world's greatest harbor, there has been created a body known as the Port of New York Authority.

TWO STATES AT ODDS

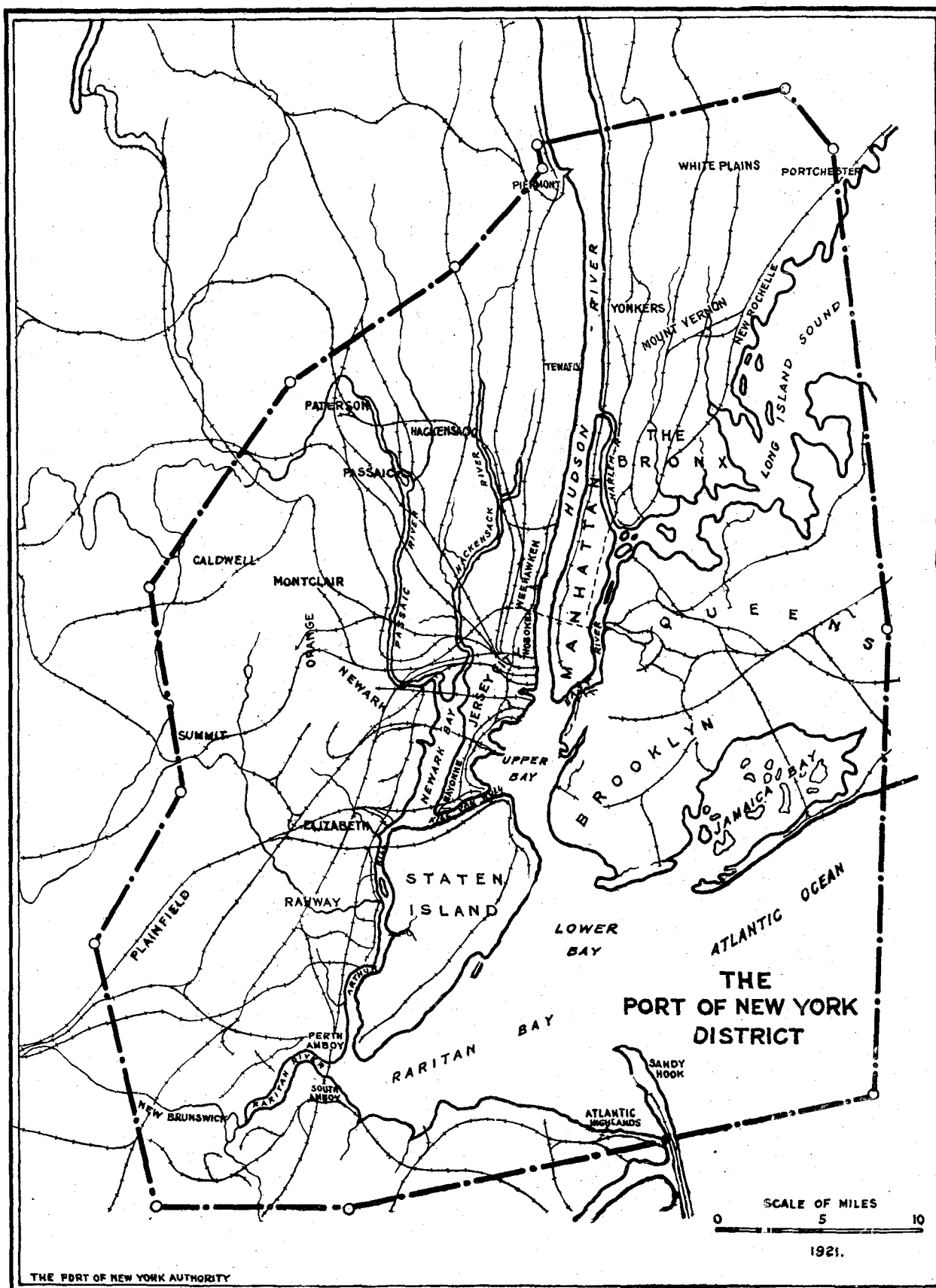
In order that we may have a thorough understanding of what the Port Authority means, what its functions are to be, and why and how it was created, it is necessary to go back a few years.

In 1917 Representatives of the State of New Jersey petitioned the Inter-State Commerce Commission for a rate on freight from the West in favor of the State of New Jersey, on the theory that the nine large trunk lines terminated really on the New Jersey shore. New York commercial bodies got together and went down to Washington and fought for the preservation of the status of New York, because a decision in favor of New Jersey in the Federal Rate Case would have meant 3 cents a hundred pounds preferential to the manufacturer in New Jersey, or 60 cents a ton.

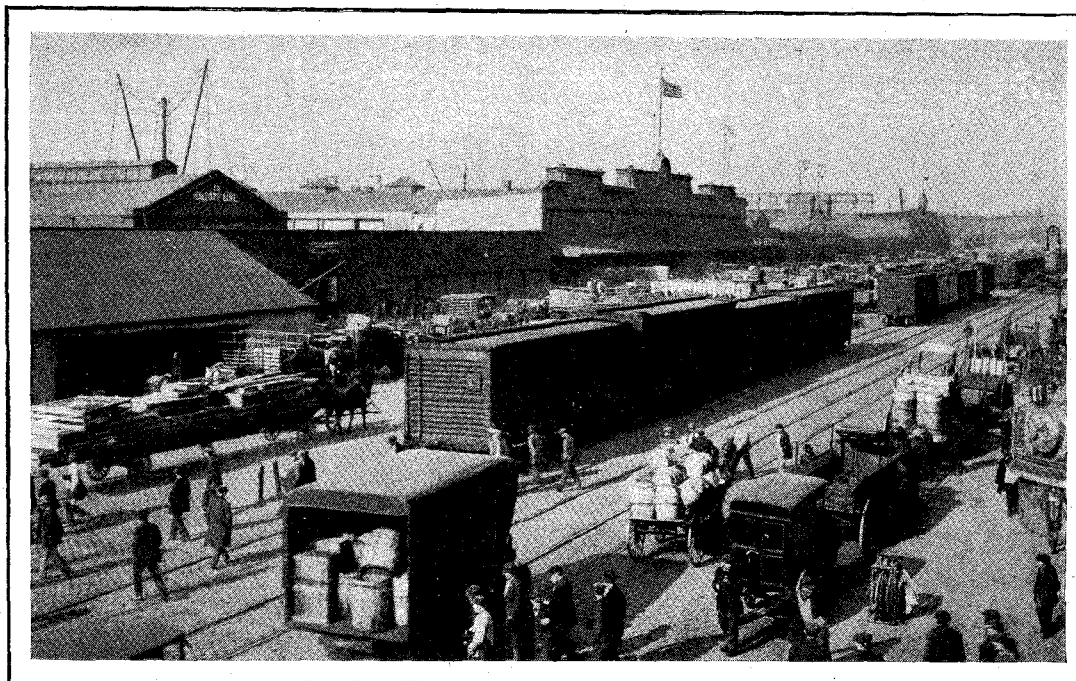
I do not think we need spend any time figuring on what that would have meant to the commerce of New York City. The man who established his factory in New Jersey would have that advantage over the man doing his business in New York. The Inter-State Commerce Commission did not, however, grant the petition of the New Jersey interests, but at the same time it did not deny it for all time. It gave New Jersey permission to reopen its case at any time. In its opinion the Inter-State Commerce Commission said that historically and geographically the Port of New York comprehended both States. It advised that the States get together and jointly develop the port so that there might be no future rivalry as between the States, and terminal costs might be reduced so as to leave the great Port of New York in a position to compete successfully with the other ports of entry on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

CENTER OF VAST SHIPMENTS

Following this experience, the two States created a Bi-State Commission, known as the New York and New Jersey Port and Harbor Development Commission, consisting of three men from New Jersey and three from New York, and in 1918 this Commission began an ex-



MANHATTAN ISLAND HANGS LIKE A TONGUE IN THE MOUTH OF THE MAGNIFICENT PORT OF NEW YORK. THIS MAP OF THE TERRITORY COVERED BY THE PORT TREATY CLEARLY INDICATES THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM OF THE METROPOLIS AND THE SURROUNDING REGION. THE WESTERN FARMER WHO WONDERS WHY IT COSTS SO MUCH TO HANDLE HIS PRODUCTS AS THEY PASS THROUGH NEW YORK WILL FIND SOME OF THE REASONS SHOWN HERE



ONE CAUSE OF CONGESTION IN NEW YORK CITY—THE OCCUPANCY OF THE WEST SIDE MARGINAL STREET BY RAILWAY TRACKS AND FREIGHT CARS

haustive study of all terminal operations in the Port of New York.

After thorough investigation, the Bi-State Commission made final report to the Legislature of 1921, which recommended the creation of a port district to be defined by law and to include one hundred and five organized municipalities, embracing a population of about 8,000,000 people. At present it is served by twelve trunk-line railways, which bring to or take out of or through the port over 75,000,000 tons of freight per annum. An immense number of foreign and domestic steamships, not less than 8,000, equally bring to or take out of the port over 45,000,000 additional tons of freight per annum. Within the port district there is more manufacturing output than in any similar area in the world, with a variety of products and commodities to be handled unparalleled anywhere else. Four million tons of foodstuffs alone are annually required by the people of the port district.

The Bi-State Commission recommended a treaty between the two States calling for comprehensive development of the port which would effectuate a compact binding them, and establishing a port district and a Port of New York Authority over it. The Port Authority is composed of three members from New York and three members from New Jersey, and is a body corporate and politic. It is charged with the supervision and carrying out of comprehensive plans after they have received the approval of the Legislatures of both States.

On August 23, 1921, President Harding approved the action of Congress ratifying the treaty and affixed his signature. There were appropriate ceremonies to mark so important an occasion.

The Port Authority was directed by statute to study the plan of the Bi-State Commission, and any other plan that

might be placed before it for consideration. This it did, working night and day during the summer and fall of 1921, and on January 1 of this year submitted to the Legislatures of both States a comprehensive plan.

MANY INTERESTS CO-OPERATE

As an approach to the great task of preparing the plan, provision was made for the formation of an Advisory Council made up of representatives of chambers of commerce, boards of trades, and civic societies, of which there are one hundred and three within the port district. The several agencies engaged in transportation, such as the twelve trunk-line railways, the steamship companies, lighterage companies, warehouses and trucking interests, and various specialized industries, were all invited to organize co-operating committees in order that points of contact might be immediately established for the necessary conferences.

Inasmuch as this whole problem is one that not only affects the business interests as far as the cost of business at the port is concerned, but also vitally affects the household and the cost of living, an Educational Council was organized to inform the public on the subject and to lend its active assistance. In this Council individuals as well as representatives of all organizations within the port found membership.

After long hours of conference with steamship companies, railway engineers, and terminal operators, all the facts set forth as to cost and method in the Bi-State Commission were substantially admitted and certain fundamental conditions were laid down as tending to provide a proper solution of the problem and to guide the Commission in setting forth the physical plans, and, so far as can be shown to be economically prac-

tical, the following definite fundamental principles were adopted:

That terminal operations within the port district, so far as practicable, should be unified;

That there should be consolidation of shipments at proper classification points, so as to eliminate duplication of effort, inefficient loading of equipment, and reduction in expenses;

That there should be the most direct routing of all commodities, so as to avoid centers of congestion, conflicting currents, and long truck hauls;

That terminal stations established under the comprehensive plan should be union stations, so far as practicable;

That the process of co-ordinating facilities should so far as practicable adapt existing facilities as integral parts of the new system, so as to avoid needless destruction of existing capital investment and reduce so far as possible the requirements for new capital; and endeavor should be made to obtain the consent of the States and local municipalities within the port district for the co-ordination of their present and contemplated port and terminal facilities with the whole plan;

That freight from all railroads must be brought to all parts of the port wherever practicable without cars breaking bulk, and this necessitates tunnel connection between New Jersey and Long Island, and tunnel or bridge connections between other parts of the port;

That there should be urged upon the Federal authorities improvement of channels so as to give access for that type of water-borne commerce adapted to the various forms of development which the respective shore-fronts and adjacent lands of the port would best lend themselves to;

Highways for motor-truck traffic should be laid out so as to permit the most efficient inter-relation between terminals, piers, and industrial establishments not equipped with railroad

sidings, and for the distribution of building materials and many other commodities which must be handled by trucks; these highways to connect with existing or projected bridges, tunnels, and ferries;

Definite methods for prompt relief must be devised that can be applied for the better co-ordination and operation of existing facilities while larger and more comprehensive plans for future development are being carried out.

The present old-time method of car-floating freight is the most expensive that can be imagined. The cost of upkeep on floating equipment is enormous. It has been set forth that after one winter such as we experienced in 1918, when the harbor was choked with ice, the floating property of the railways deteriorated some thirty-five per cent.

NO PROPERTY TO BE ARBITRARILY TAKEN OVER

The inauguration of the Port Plan does not mean that the entire new plan is to be effective at once. It does mean that it will be undertaken and extended as the needs of industry require. It has for its most salutary feature the prevention of haphazard, hit-and-miss improvements conducted by various independent agencies to meet temporary conditions, a practice that in the past has interfered with intelligent development of the port. It does not, however, interfere in the slightest degree with the power of any of the municipalities within the port to develop their own facilities, and their home-rule powers are safeguarded not only in the plan, but in the treaty itself, of which Article 6 says:

No property now or hereafter vested in or held by either State, or by any County, City, Borough, Village, Township, or other Municipality, shall be taken by the Port Authority without the authority or consent of such State, County, City, Borough, Village, Township, or other Municipality.

NO PUBLIC MONEY REQUIRED

To correct some false impressions, let me therefore say that under no conditions can the property of any municipality be touched for the improvement without its consent. Further, no public money is required to finance the project. The Port Authority is a body corporate and politic and must by the sale of bonds raise the necessary money to carry out its projects, and necessarily these must be self-sustaining in order that the interest and amortization payments on the bonds can be met from the profits of operation.

The plan, among other things, recognizes the fundamental business principle that as much as possible of existing property and equipment already built and in operation should be used. Accordingly the plan takes full advantage of the great classification and break-up yards already built and in operation on the New Jersey side. The next step is to connect them with the New York side of the port. That is proposed to be done by a tunnel under the bay from the so-

called Greenville Yards in New Jersey to a point in South Brooklyn where direct rail connection can be made with the New York Connecting Railroad, already built through Brooklyn, for transfer to the New England lines, with proper spurs along the water-front and to Jamaica Bay to meet the needs of that section. It also provides for proper spurs from the New York Connecting Railway to the Brooklyn water-front and into the Bronx, so that sections of the Bronx not adapted to residential purposes may be hereafter developed for industrial uses, enjoying the benefits of direct rail connection with the twelve great trunk lines of the country entering the Port of New York.

The island of Manhattan presents the most difficult part of the problem.

The Borough of Richmond is taken care of by the extension of the inner belt line in New Jersey down and across the Arthur Kill by enlarging the existing bridge and widening the tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Aside from its physical aspect, the plan has for its purpose the unification of present terminal facilities. During the war, when the management of the railways was in the hands of the Government and they were used as an agency to win the war, they were compelled by Executive edict to unify their existing terminal facilities in the interest of speed and economy. Had it not been for such unification, it is extremely doubtful that the Port of New York would have been able to stand up under the pressure put upon it. As it was, congestion and delays incident to the old-time methods of doing business very materially added to the terminal costs.

RAILWAY COMPETITION A MISTAKE

The argument has been made, and made without understanding of the subject, that there must be competition. That is not so. Competition in railway operation is the one competition that works against the public, and not for them, because it adds to the cost of the operation, and that is exactly what the Inter-State Commerce Commission had in its mind a short time ago when it declared for a policy of unifying the railways, so that there would not be more than sixteen or eighteen of them in the whole United States.

Under the present competitive system, do the people of New York get the benefit of that competition? They certainly do not, because the rates are fixed by the Inter-State Commerce Commission. The competition is not one calculated to be healthy for the public, but it is one for particular lines of business as between particular railways. The railway that can get an advantageous position on the water-front—the East River water-front of New York—can control certain commodities that are coming from the West. That is the kind of competition that the declaration of fundamental principles in the Port Plan is endeavoring to do away with, to the

end that the costs may be reduced, so that New York, through any agency it may select, can go down before the Inter-State Commerce Commission in Washington and say: "Here, we have unified our costs. We have cut down the cost of doing business there, and we want our rates. We want that reflected in the cost of doing business, and of living in the metropolitan district that is encircled by this line called 'the New York Port District.'"

STRIKES AT ROOT OF HIGH COST OF LIVING

The business interests of the port should be encouraged and every unnecessary burden should be lifted from their shoulders. There is no reason why old-fashioned methods of handling freight should add to the cost of everything manufactured at this port. If not given relief, there will naturally be a tendency to move where costs of doing business will give a fair start and a square chance in the great game of competition.

Public agencies of every kind have talked at great length in the last few years upon this important question of the cost of living. Here is an opportunity to remedy one of the evils that lie at the root. Because of delay and congestion and rehandling it has been scientifically figured out that it costs almost twice as much to take a sack of potatoes from the break-up yards in New Jersey to the retail grocer in the Bronx as it does to haul that sack of potatoes from the State of Michigan to the State of New Jersey. The housewife as well as the merchant should therefore be interested in any project that has for its purpose the reduction of terminal costs.

There is no disagreement anywhere on the facts set forth about the present condition. It has been recognized by even those who have not been in accord with the creation of the Port Authority or the development of the port by joint action between the States.

The plan set forth for the development of the port is the result of intensive study on the part of the best engineers and terminal experts that could be gathered together in this country. Advising with them were the experts and engineers of the great trunk lines, the representatives of the great steamship companies, and traffic managers of great industrial plants, and it is entirely deserving of approval by the Legislatures of both States and without delay.

Delay is dangerous if competition with our canal system and our port by the St. Lawrence Waterway is to be avoided. If the port is to stand in healthy competition with the other ports of the country, and if the people themselves in the great metropolitan district are to reap the full benefits and blessings that should flow to us from the greatest natural harbor in the world—a gift of Almighty God himself and fashioned with his own hands—the work should immediately be begun.

THE BOOK TABLE

AFTER THE WAR JOTTINGS

IT was certainly a busy and crowded wander-year that the famous English war writer, Colonel Repington, took in order to acquaint himself with the new personalities and the new ideas thrown up in Europe and America after the great war storm. His idea of a restful vacation seems to be to rush about with incredible agility and rapidity. The sub-title of his diary mentions some of the places visited—namely, London, Paris, Rome, Athens, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest, Berlin, Sofia, Coblenz, New York, Washington. But this by no means includes the full list of places visited, while a list of the men talked with would be surprising, not only from their number, but from their importance.

Colonel Repington's book "After the War"¹ has been criticised as scrappy and disjointed, and also as indiscreet or scandalous. As to the first charge, the very plan of a diary involves a rapid fire of notes, impressions, and talks; but one rarely finds this method wearisome, for mingled with many minor details the reader constantly comes across anecdotes and readable passages. As to the second charge, the word indiscreet is more apt than the word scandalous. There is not much in the book that appeals to the lover of gossip, but there are many reports of conversations which might well annoy the persons reported and make them wish that they had been less frank. All the world knows that Colonel Repington is a newspaper man and that discretion is not his most noted quality; so that those who talked to him have only themselves to blame if they talked too freely. Yet one doubts whether Clemenceau would be particularly pleased when he is reported as saying of Foch that "on several occasions he had had to speak to Foch, who owed him a grudge for it and had shown it." Nor with the ascription to him of the *bon mot* (after Clemenceau's recovery from appendicitis): "There are only two perfectly useless things in the world—the appendix and Poincaré." Such remarks are quite out of keeping with the report of Clemenceau's feeling as to discussing the past. That passage is indeed so striking that we quote it at some length:

No, said C., he had said nothing, had written nothing, and was not going to. He took no interest in controversies about the past, which was over. He had lived through the greatest period and had done his best. It was enough to contemplate in silence the grandeur of it all. He took pleasure in his disdain of all discussion over the past. He had been too deeply concerned in these events, and the events had been too tremendous, for him not to feel it unworthy of him to waste his remaining years in

sterile discussions. He did not care what people thought or said. It was all one to him. He had succeeded, and all those who had failed owed him a grudge for succeeding. Yes, he could destroy many reputations by a word. But that was no service to France. If he said what he thought of X, he would make bad blood be-



(C) Paul Thompson
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHARLES A COURT
REPINGTON

tween England and France, and that was of no service to either. Let them talk.

The author saw General Pétain just after the occupation of Düsseldorf, and reports his talk with him as follows:

Pétain sarcastic about the whole proceeding. He expected nothing from the occupation. He thought that we had all been wasting our time in interminable discussions and that the desire to please the English had always held the French back. We should be made fools of, as usual. If the Boches said "yes" we should go back, and when we were gone the Boches would say "no." Pétain would prefer to occupy the territory necessary to bring the Boches to reason, would administer it and take its revenues, and would tell the Boches that he would stay there till all the debt was paid. He did not care whether it was five years, or thirty years, or fifty years. The Boches would have to pay before he left.

So the diarist moved about hither and thither in Europe, talking with everybody about the League, about the occupation of the Ruhr district, about the situations in Rumania and Czechoslovakia and Upper Silesia, always bringing out from those with whom he talked salient facts and observations. Interspersed with all this are amusing anecdotes, such as this of Jules Ferry:

C. told us of Jules Ferry's shooting exploits. He fired at anything any-

where, and generally hit somebody. One day Waldeck Rousseau was the next gun. Ferry fired, and W. R. fell into a ditch, nothing being visible but his boots. People ran up. "Qu'as tu donc?" . . . "Mais je n'ai rien." . . . "Alors pourquoi . . . ?" "Oui! mais ce malheureux a un second coup à tirer!"

In Germany Repington found everybody talking about Hugo Stinnes. He reports General Degoutte as saying: "Stinnes seemed to him a type of dominator much more dangerous than Napoleon. He was a Napoleon of commerce and economics, and bent, or tried to bend, all the world to his will. It was a type that the world could not permit to endure, and a type likely to be the cause of future wars if it did. One man should not be allowed to possess such infinite powers for mischief."

Inquiring from a French ex-War Minister, M. André Lefèvre, about Germany's military position, the author drew out the opinion that a renewal of war might come within five years unless the Allies adopted more drastic courses.

The poorest passages in the book are those in which Colonel Repington brags about the popularity and sale of his own writings and asks, "If my contemporaries cannot refute me, how can history do so? A few old cats have squalled privately." At times also he bursts into quite unnecessary explosions of personal feeling or opinion, such as that in which, after looking at an ancient statue of Gutenberg, he declares:

Nobody knows who invented printing nor ever will know. If we knew we should posthumously burn him at the stake. He has been responsible for all the heresies, illusions, troubles, and wars of five centuries. He still perpetuates enmities by permitting every hasty word of some overwrought politician to be placed next day before all the people outraged by it, and far from aiding or promoting civilization he has debased it.

Perhaps the most dramatic passage in the volume is the story of Stamboulisky, who alone of all the Ministers of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria opposed Bulgaria's entrance into the war on the side of Germany. Stamboulisky told the King to beware, he might be risking his crown. "And you might be risking your head," replied the King. In point of fact, Ferdinand did throw this brave Minister into jail and planned to have him executed. Word came to the prisoner from the King, says the author, "that if he would recant and send a message to the Bulgarian army that it should march unitedly under F. in the good cause, his life should be spared. He took an agonizing half-hour to weigh his reply. He was young and loved life and activity intensely. On the other hand was his personal and political honor. He decided to refuse, but came back into the dock with a pistol concealed about him, determined to

¹After the War. By Lieutenant-Colonel Charles A. Court Repington. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. \$5.