

question?" The President is all solicitude as he returns in a low and balanced voice, "You might try, sir."

Question time is a great developer of *finesse* and discretion. I remember the first meeting of a new President. He seemed to have no past, and no one could think of a question to put. The pause had grown noticeable when one who was both the best heckler and the noisiest member arose. "Mr. President, has **your** presence struck this house with such reverence that I am the only one to venture to ask a question?" The President had an air of perfect command as he replied, "That seems to me the correct definition of reverence;" and it was five seconds before he got his reward.

Oxonians seem to work a spontaneous humor out of their speeches more than we do, just as they deal more in choice language and wayward fancy. Last term at the Union an acid Scot defined democracy as "a government of the fools by the fools for the knaves." On the occasion of the Cambridge visit the Union punster was showering things like this: "Cambridge is not a patch on this ancient seat of learning; since we, having abolished Greek, can make our own breeches with tradition." The eloquent Hindu who described Mr. Lloyd George as a Horatius on the wrong side of the bridge went on to picture the League of Nations in language which was enthusiastically applauded. "It is," he said, "a beautiful beneficent angel beating her wings in a luminous void, while Lord Robert Cecil blows continually into the vacuum in the effort to waft her heavenward."

Real eloquence, founded on conviction and fired with passion, is not absent from the Union, and often prevails. I

recall the debate on British reprisals in Ireland, where Mr. W. B. Yeats, the poet, was to speak fifth. The fourth speaker, a Tory ex-president, with powerful diction and delivery breathed fire and slaughter against the treasonable Irish. When Mr. Yeats arose, the house welcomed the emotional tremor of his voice and broke into cheers as the fine face flashed into ardor and the well-set figure paced down the aisle in an Irish passion of denunciation. I do not remember how large a majority he got. Again, during the debate on American foreign policy, when Mr. Beck, the American Solicitor-General, was to close the debate, an undergraduate from Christ Church made the most moving plea of his Union career. He appealed to the better genius of America for construction and co-operation in language which swept up the whole sympathy of the house, and ended pathetically on the old hope of El Dorado in the West. To vindicate American foreign policy by a majority of 8 in a division of 366 then required all the power and conviction of Mr. Beck.

There is much of the trivial and schoolboyish in these anecdotes, no doubt, and in the Union. It is a students' society. But it does worlds to keep up at Oxford the vein of solid political thinking which we so much lack in our universities. And its great men give it a historic dignity. Over against the wall on the Government side of the house stand three busts of Prime Ministers, ex-officers of the Union. They are Lord Salisbury, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Asquith. Lord Rosebery, also Prime Minister, was a member, but not an officer. The list of distinguished ex-presidents includes Lord Robert Cecil, one of the fathers of the League of Nations;

Lord Bryce, the great apostle of Anglo-American friendship; Lord Birkenhead, present Lord Chancellor and one of the positive figures in British politics; Lord Milner, the constructive Imperialist; Sir John Simon, now perhaps the leader of the English bar; Hilaire Belloc; John Buchan; and many others. These men, whose pictures look down from its walls, are not mere names in relation to the Union. They are solid evidence of its place in English life. Because they have come out of the Union to rule England, and have sent their sons to the Union again, they give its tendencies meaning and make its debates and its training almost a part of politics.

I have tried to convey a little of the atmosphere and tradition of the Oxford Union as I experienced it. Nothing in our universities is so characteristic of us as the Union is of England, nor so colorful, nor so individual. By comparison with our debating methods, it seems more real, more informal, and more sensible in many ways. It does not give equally good technical training; but the problem of the speech in relation to the audience it forces upon the speaker's attention from the outset. For one reason or another, it produces speakers who are more complete and better balanced, who use a finer language and a more subtle humor, than speakers in our colleges. Those who come best out of its training begin and end upon personal belief, making statistics and authority secondary. Great personalities are its true fruit. The brilliant and earnest men graduated from the Oxford Union into English public life are, to one who loves Oxford, a fit crystallization of her spirit. Range and power of mind, individuality of expression, belong both to Oxford and to the Union.

IOWA ON THE RAMPAGE

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WE think of Iowa as one of the conservative States of the Union, much more so than Nebraska or Kansas, for example. Just now there is probably more reasonable as well as unreasonable unrest in Iowa than anywhere else in the central part of the country. Iowa farmers complain, of course, at the great deflation of agricultural prices following the war and charge the Federal Reserve authorities with the blame. There is a rising fury at the alleged speculative activities of Wall Street. The Esch-Cummins Railway Law, which bears the name of one of Iowa's own Senators, is unpopular in the extreme. The demand is State-wide for its absolute repeal, as indeed is the case in Nebraska and elsewhere in the Middle West. Iowa is outraged particu-

larly at the six per cent provision of guaranty to the owners of the roads. Why a guaranty of six per cent to the owners of the roads, they say, when the farmers who furnish the freight and the railway laborers have no guaranty to protect them? The public man who points out that the Esch-Cummins Law has some very good features of Government regulation in the general welfare, and perhaps needs amendment rather than repeal, meets with short shrift. He is a tool of Wall Street. The railway workers have no confidence in the Labor Board provision of the law, which their recent experience leads them to think is calculated to take from them their free rights and privileges. The rail brotherhoods think that they have the capacity to exercise a share of control in the

management of the roads. The farmers would like to restore competition in the railway field.

Iowans think that the Government should have held on to the railways longer after the war. They say that their Senator Cummins, who was once a radical, but has grown conservative with age and time, came before their Legislature in January of the year the bill was passed with a plan for dividing the country into railway zones, eliminating waste, establishing unity and adequate financial control by government. And then, they say, he went down to Washington, and by June he was pressed into being the sponsor for a very different kind of bill of which a very large number of them disapprove.

The fact seems to be that many agri-

cultural Iowans are suffering severely from their own shortcomings. Especially the more enterprising of them prospered mightily during the war. Prosperity seems to have turned the heads of a great number. It is declared by those who should know that no less than two hundred million dollars were lost by the people of Iowa in unwise investment in bad securities. The farmers far and wide were the victims of smooth security salesmen. All this is charged up somewhat illogically against Wall Street. Furthermore, the war prices of agricultural products brought on a great land boom, and the men of Iowa proceeded to lay field to field in their eagerness to take advantage of financial opportunity. Now prices have fallen below the cost of production, the land boom has burst, landed indebtedness seems an intolerable burden—and Iowa blames the Government. Government may be partly to blame, but evidently not altogether. There is one level-headed farmer who is going around to agricultural assemblages telling the truth. He says in his speeches: "I bought land beyond any reason, I bought securities that I didn't know anything about, I bought luxuries, I was a damn fool; and if I lose out, me and the old lady will go back to where we were when we started, and we won't blame the Government!"

An Iowa banker who has gone into the figures told me that there is an automobile in Iowa for every four and one-half people in the State. So, if a great economic flood comes, and the people hear of it in time, everybody in the State can be transported out of it in a motor car. This same banker reckoned that the automobile depreciation and upkeep costs for a year amount to five hundred dollars a car, and eats up in the aggregate two or three hundred million dollars. It has brought a lighter heart and a greater volume of pleasure to the farmers of Iowa and their families than they ever knew, and there is a good deal of pure utility in it besides, but, by and large, it is one of the heavy economic burdens.

The plodders in Iowa appear to be about where they were before the war. The more enterprising of the population have been nipped by the economic frost, and of course the outcry from the more enterprising is very effective in its influence upon public judgment in the State; and yet if the people had not committed the errors which I have enumerated, thoughtful persons in Iowa believe that the State actually would be better off than at any time in its history. The plodder with his eighty acres is as well off as he ever was. The corn crop in Iowa is wonderful at this harvest. And the farmers are feeding the corn to vast quantities of live stock, which they are shipping out at a good profit to Eastern markets. Much to the alleged disgust of the Iowa farmer, the demand from the East is for his lambs and little two-hundred-pound pigs and baby beeves

weighing eight or nine hundred pounds. He raises them and ships them, but he will take you out where the cattle are, and, patting one of the beautiful baby Herefords on the forehead, he says: "There it is, you see; Wall Street is even robbing the cattle cradle for its own luxury, while Iowa fights for a livelihood!"

And this is where Brookhart comes in, the radical Republican candidate for United States Senator to succeed Kenyon, who has become a Federal Judge. Brookhart is a country lawyer, of good average ability, according to all accounts, of tremendous determination and sincerity. He is past fifty, but they say of him that every tooth in his head is as sound as in his boyhood. He is the Middle Western sort who never touched a drop of liquor or an ounce of tobacco in his life. He is dead in earnest. The conservative Cummins was once a radical, but is so no more. Kenyon often spoke radically but was reasonable conservative in action. But the belief about Brookhart is that he means his radicalism as mercilessly as La Follette does. He is probably not as able as La Follette, but he seems to be fully as determined. He has fused both the farmers and the laborers behind him in Iowa, just as La Follette has in Wisconsin. He claims the farmers, the laborers, the drys, the women, and the soldiers. He says that his opponent is welcome to the rest of the electorate. His Democratic opponent is Herring, of Des Moines, the head of the Ford agency for the State, a man of some social cultivation and wealth acquired through energy, foresight, industry, and honesty, according to his neighbors. The discussion between the two men is acrimonious in the extreme. Brookhart maintains that railway attorneys write Herring's speeches, and that his opponent is allied with all the crooked big business of the country. Herring retorts that Brookhart poses as a farmer in overalls when he is not a farmer at all, but a wild-eyed lawyer-politician; that he has his picture taken while feeding the hogs, and that his hypocrisy should be held up to scorn.

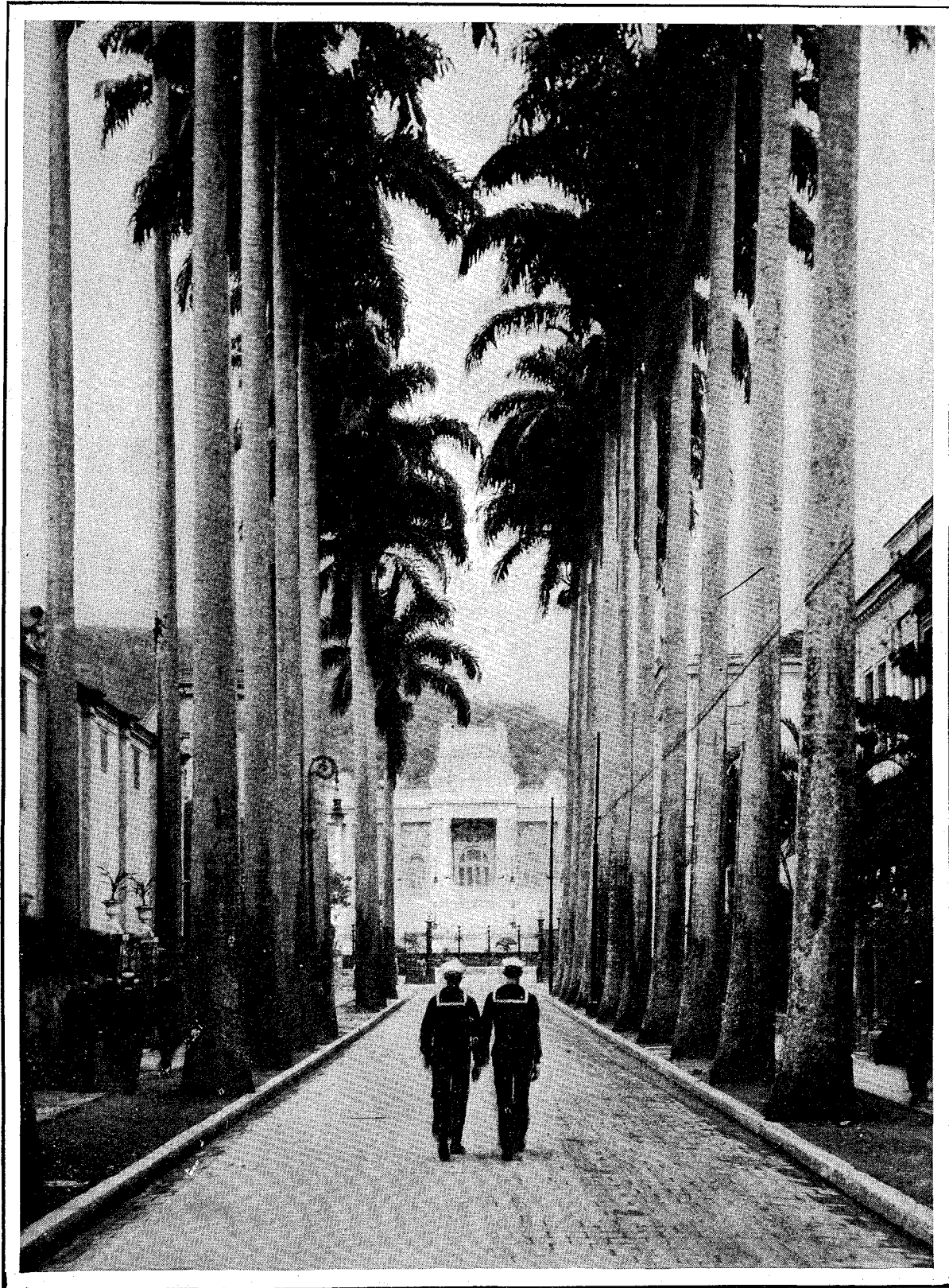
Brookhart insists upon having seven billions of water eliminated from the railway capitalization of the country at one fell squeeze. He is a radical railway reformer who represents quite exactly the temper of a large part of Iowa at this time. He is against what he calls the non-partisan league of Wall Street and all its works. He favors a soldier's bonus, to be paid out of war profits and excess profits generally. He is opposed to ship subsidies. He attacks "predatory blocs," but favors the farmer bloc, the labor bloc, the soldiers' bloc, the mothers' bloc, and any business bloc which is willing to co-operate with his favored list. He is the Republican candidate, but every Republican paper but one in the State is fighting him. When I was in Iowa, nobody seemed to think that regular Republican opposition will make any difference. The people gener-

ally seemed to be for him, including the Democrats in droves. More recently many of the regulars have organized against him and the tide of opposition has risen somewhat. The conservative Republicans will vote for Herring. They are afraid of Brookhart. They thought he would not get thirty-five per cent of the primary vote, as required under the Iowa law, and that the choice would therefore go to a convention. But Brookhart got nearly forty-five per cent of the primary vote. It is the Republicans who are on the rampage in the West, not the Democrats.

There is one reason why Brookhart seems as good as elected. He has been in two wars, the Spanish-American and the World War, and he is the finest rifleman in the State of Iowa and one of the best in America. He was a National Guardsman, and when the World War broke out he was put on the Rifle Commission by the Federal Government. He soon fell afoul of the views of the West Pointers and the army bureaucrats in Washington. They said that there was no use in training the millions of young Americans to shoot at a target, that if a thousand men stood up and fired at the enemy together they were sure to hit somebody; and the practice of accurate shooting, under the circumstances, was a waste of time and money. Brookhart said that it was very important that every American boy should learn to shoot straight. His theory was that a man who knew he could shoot straight and that the nearer the enemy came the better his chances would be of picking him off, would be more stable as a soldier in battle and more likely to stand without flinching or fleeing. He made himself so disagreeable to the army bureaucrats that he was put off the Commission, so I am informed. But high State influence got him a thirty-minutes' interview with Secretary Baker in Washington, and in thirty minutes he convinced Baker that he was right, and Baker took two brigadier-generals off the Rifle Commission and put Brookhart and a friend of his back on the job. And Brookhart set scores of thousands of young men in every army camp in the country shooting at a target every day. And Iowans claim that it helped at Château Thierry and elsewhere in France. When American soldiers began to pick off Germans at eight hundred yards, it was a new and discomfiting experience on the western front.

It seems to me that it will be hard to beat for public office a man with a record like this, especially when he fits into the temper of his State at the moment and into the economic circumstances of the time. Brookhart seems exactly the kind that the people of Iowa want to go to Washington for them just now. And the more cavorting about he does in Washington, the better they will like it. If he metaphorically kicks the roof off, they will applaud. That's what they are sending him there for. Two years from now it may be different.

AMERICAN SAILORS SEEING THE SIGHTS



U. S. Navy Official Photograph

BLUEJACKETS ON THE AVENUE OF PALMS; CASTLE GUANABARA,
WHERE SECRETARY HUGHES STOPPED, AT END OF STREET