

The Outlook

January 16, 1924

Hiram Johnson's Platform

SENATOR HIRAM JOHNSON has announced the chief planks in his platform as a candidate for the Presidential nomination. He announced this platform in a speech at Cleveland on January 3. For the policies he has announced he now asks the indorsement of the Republican voters. If he should secure the Republican nomination, he would then ask the Republican party to seek the indorsement of the voters of the whole country for those same policies.

From beginning to end the speech is an attack on the administration of the Government by his own party, and specifically an attack on the Coolidge Administration.

His speech may be divided into three parts.

In the first part he attacks the methods used by those in power in his own party for selecting the Presidential candidate. For years the proportion of delegates from the Southern States to the Republican Convention has far exceeded the proportion of Republican votes in those States. One Republican in South Carolina, he declares, for example, has an equal voice in Republican councils with one hundred Republicans in Ohio. This has led to manipulation and corruption, as everybody knows. "It is this system upon which we war," he says, "and it is this system I challenge in this campaign."

In the second part of his speech he attacks Mr. Mellon's proposal for tax reduction, and advocates the payment of a bonus to able-bodied veterans. His argument against Mr. Mellon's tax reduction plan is of course not against tax reduction as such, for he believes that to be desirable and possible, but against the proposal to make large reductions on big incomes. He says, for example, that there are 13,600,000 people who pay taxes on incomes of less than \$10,000, while only 330,000 pay taxes on incomes of over \$10,000. Therefore he concludes that the 13,600,000 should have their taxes reduced, while the 330,000, being rich, can exercise their "happy faculty of looking out for themselves." He re-



International

Senator Hiram Johnson

gards the fact that under the Mellon plan a man with an income of \$250,000 would "save" \$49,000 a year, and one with an income of \$1,000,000 would "save" \$252,000 a year, as an argument against the Mellon plan. He declares that his party is pledged to the payment of a bonus, and cites statements by individual members of the party in support of his contention. He does not point out how the bonus can be paid without preventing by the amount of the bonus an otherwise possible tax reduction. He attributes the argument against "commercialized patriotism" to the prating of millionaires.

In the third part of his speech he discusses the foreign policies of the Government. He reiterates his opposition to all connection with the League or with the World Court—with the League because it involves us in political affairs in Europe, from which we ought to keep free, and with the World Court because it is a product of the League and because, having no power to enforce its decisions, it is "futile." He opposes the sale of arms to Obregon on the ground that it encourages the suppression of revolution, and that our own country was founded on revolution. The argument seems to be that we ought to encourage rather than suppress revolution, although in the

same discussion he says he abhors war, and would go to any length and make any sacrifice to preclude wars.

A Fighter with Just One Good Blow

IN the scandal about Southern delegates to the Republican Convention Senator Johnson has a good case. His campaign for the nomination would be stronger if he confined himself to that issue. On that he speaks with knowledge and without any distortion or misunderstanding of the facts. The Republican machine and its managers ought to be hammered, and hammered hard, for failing to correct the corrupting evil that, as Senator Johnson says, pollutes the stream of representative government at its source.

When, however, he discusses tax reduction, the bonus, and foreign affairs, he is by no means as certain of his ground, or as convincing to thoughtful citizens.

He seems to assume that the amount of money that a rich man has is used solely for his own luxurious enjoyment. He totally ignores the fact that it is out of incomes that capital investments are made, and that what goes into taxes cannot go into investments. It is because so many public men in America have argued as Mr. Johnson is arguing that there has been extravagance in Government coupled with famine in capital which is the food on which industry thrives. He talks about the rich man being better able than the man of moderate income to bear the burden of taxation. What he fails to see is that the burden of taxation cannot be made to rest only or even chiefly on the rich, but must rest on the whole community, for taxes are passed on either directly or indirectly to those who consume the products of industry. In this respect Mr. Johnson has joined the campaign of the Democratic opposition. He is as unconvincing in his argument for the bonus as he is in his argument against the Mellon tax reduction plan. His whole appeal on both tax reduction and the bonus is an appeal to men of moderate means, but

an appeal not to their reason but to their prejudices. It is the same kind of appeal that Mr. Bryan made in 1896 against the gold standard.

On foreign affairs Mr. Johnson reiterates the arguments he has already made familiar so far as they concern the League and the Court, and they will have weight only with those who already agree with him. He presents no new case. We think he is right about the League and wrong about the Court. In his argument upon Mexico it seems to us he answers himself. He is self-contradictory. In one breath he urges revolution, and deplores war. In one breath he declares that the insurrection against Obregon is an exercise of a free people in resisting oppression, and then declares, "The merits of the contest raging in Mexico I don't know."

Discussing Russia

ALTHOUGH recognition of foreign governments is an executive act, the Senate has made it its business to discuss the subject of recognizing the Soviet régime in Russia. The old Chinese proverb, "It is a rainy day—leisure to beat the children," seems to apply to the Senate in this case. It might be paraphrased, "Deadlock over the chairmanship of Inter-State Commerce Committee—leisure to discuss Russia." Senator Borah is as persistent in digging up the Russian recognition question as a dog is in going back to the old woodchuck hole. He seems to think that if we once should consent to sit down at the same table with the Bolsheviks, we should flatter and gratify them so by our act that they would become complacent and friendly, and would soon acknowledge their evil ways. It is true, he says, that he is in perfect accord with President Coolidge on requiring the settlement of American claims of the adjustment of the Russian Reparations debt and the stopping of the Communist propaganda as prerequisites to recognizing the Russian Soviet Republic; but, in order to get this official expression of a change of heart, he would negotiate with the Bolsheviks, and thus to that degree recognize them.

The argument appears to be, briefly: Of course we must not recognize them until they repent; but, in order to secure their repentance, it is necessary to recognize them. Conclusion: Let us recognize them.

To answer the demand for the recognition of Russia, Senator Lodge devoted

on Monday of last week a speech of 30,000 words. He produced documentary evidence to show that the Bolsheviks had subsidiary companies, so to speak, with interlocking directorates. When the Communist International engages in the propaganda characteristic of it, the Russian Government affects innocence, and protests that it must not be held responsible for what is done by this other body. As a matter of fact, the same men act as the dominant political organization in Russia in one capacity, as organized international propaganda in another, and as the Government of Russia in another. "The Russian Soviet Republic, the Federation of Soviet Republics, and the Communist International are practically one and the same," said Senator Lodge. "Here was declared to be presented," and he showed a table of high officials, "a system of interlocking directorates which would be accepted at once by any court or any jury in this country as demonstrated without any further inquiry. These interlocking directorates constitute the real government of Russia. All power is theirs. . . . Everything that has been done by any one of the three branches of the Russian Government—the Federation of Soviet Republics, the Russian Soviet Republic, and the Communist Party, and the greatest of these is the Communist Party—has been done by the Government of Russia. There is no escaping that fact."

Senator Lodge quoted from a letter written by Trotsky to an American Negro, urging the "training of black agitators" as "the most important revolutionary problem of the moment." He quoted a letter written under date of July 12 last which demonstrates "the close connection between the Communist International and the Workers' Party of America." As Senator Lodge shows, the Communist International is dominated by the Russian Communist Party, which also controls the whole Russian Government. "In other words," said Senator Lodge, "the Communist propaganda in America comes directly from the Government we are asked to recognize."

A Paralyzed Congress

AN obstruction forms in a small blood-vessel, and the whole body becomes paralyzed. A bit of dirt clogs the carburetor, and the motor stops. A deadlock occurs in the voting for the Chairman of a Senate Committee, and the

whole business of Congress has been paralyzed.

If the Senate of the United States cannot soon choose a Chairman for its Committee on Inter-State Commerce, the country may have to abandon hope for any considerable programme of constructive legislation at this session of Congress. A small group of radical members of the Senate have cast enough votes to prevent either of the leading candidates, Senator Cummins, Republican, of Iowa, and Senator Smith, Democrat, of South Carolina, from receiving the majority needed for election. This small minority, though possessing as a group no constructive power in legislation, have shown themselves possessed of an obstructive power which can be used to defeat any party measure which they wish to oppose. It is not the deadlock itself, and the consequent failure in attempting to elect a committee Chairman, that threatens the law-making power, but the obstructive power, spirit, and tactics of these radical Senators who style themselves progressive.

Until President Harding died there was no reason to doubt that Mr. Cummins would continue to be, as he was in the last Congress, both President *pro tempore* of the Senate and Chairman of the Inter-State Commerce Committee. When, however, Mr. Coolidge became President of the United States and therefore ceased to be the presiding officer of the Senate, Mr. Cummins became virtually the Senate's permanent presiding officer. The so-called "progressive group" objected to having the holder of this important position also Chairman of one of the most powerful committees, and therefore it refused to vote for Senator Cummins. Senator La Follette, next in seniority and a radical on railway questions, was absent from the Senate on account of illness, so the "progressives" united in voting for Senator Couzens, though they would prefer and, if they really had a chance to elect, would have probably voted for Senator La Follette. As a consequence, although there is a Republican majority in the Senate, on typical ballots Senator Smith, the Democratic candidate, has been receiving two or three more votes than Senator Cummins.

From the Republican discord the Democrats are receiving small comfort. Quite as much as the Republicans, they are devoted to the seniority precedent, and most of them, though for party rea-