

# The Outlook

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**B**EARING the date of the day after election, this issue is necessarily prepared and printed before election. We have said our last word upon the issues of the campaign. If the result of the election is ascertainable as promptly as usual in Presidential years, we shall comment upon it next week.

## Roorback

**A** COMMENT upon American politics is to be found in the definition of the word "roorback." In the Century Dictionary it is defined as "a fictitious story published for political effect; a 'campaign lie.'" In the Standard Dictionary it is defined as "a lie or fictitious report for political purposes, as before an election." And in both dictionaries it is marked as a word peculiar to the United States. We do not suppose that campaign lies issued just before an election are confined to American politics; but they are frequent enough in this country to have acquired a distinctly American name.

Generally, Presidential candidates have been spared the indignity of attack by roorback; but they have not been immune to the sort of attack that is made by the twisting of facts or by personal reflections.

An example of one kind of appeal to prejudice has been the effort to discredit Mr. Coolidge's part in the suppression of the Boston police strike. The attempt has been made to represent him as inactive as Governor during that emergency. As a matter of fact, Mr. Coolidge did what every good executive does under such circumstances. He leaves those in direct charge to act, and backs them up unless they fail in their duty. Mr. Coolidge proved himself a good executive on that occasion. His sententious statement at that time, "There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, any time," will long be remembered as the statement of a leader.

An instance of personal reflection upon a candidate which is impossible for the candidate himself to pay attention to and yet may be accepted by people just because it is not answered is an article circulated by the John W. Davis College

League in which Mr. Coolidge is characterized as "a rattled and ridiculous person," "a very much dismayed and huddled little man," "a passive and pallid little man." There is little or nothing in this article which is anything more than the author's personal characterization. And yet this article has been circulated by an organization of which the Honorary Chairman is the President Emeritus of Harvard, Charles W. Eliot, the honorary vice-chairmen include such college presidents as Dr. Alderman of Virginia, Dr. Garfield of Williams, Dr. Hibben of Princeton, Dr. MacCracken of Vassar, and Dr. Mary E. Woolley of Mount Holyoke, and the National Chairman is Mr. Cleveland E. Dodge. Probably some subordinate authorized the circularization of this attack under the apparent indorsement of these influential names. It is not so much against the roorback as such that intelligent voters need to be on guard as against irresponsible appeals to prejudice made with all the guise of responsibility.

## The President Restates His Policy

**P**RESIDENT COOLIDGE, speaking before the United States Chamber of Commerce, but addressing the country by radio and otherwise, gave a clear account of what the Administration has done during the past four years and what, if he is elected President, it will undertake to do during the next four. There was in this speech more of calm statement of achievement and of purpose than might have been made in months of campaign speeches.

The President insisted that the Government has a well-defined international policy, and he specified the components of that policy both in what it has achieved and in what it hopes to achieve—adherence to the Permanent Court of International Justice, international conferences to consider definitely stated international problems, limitation of armaments, codification of international law, constitutional covenants which will look to outlawing aggressive war, opposition to the proposed referendum on adherence

to the League of Nations, opposition to cancellation of foreign debts, opposition to international consideration of peculiarly domestic affairs of the United States.

Governmental economy, public economy of every kind, he emphasized as of almost supreme importance, the need for it world-wide. "That nation," he said, "which demonstrates that it has sufficient self-control to adopt this course will immediately become the leader in the financial world." This leadership, he said, is easily within America's grasp.

He defended the tariff as it exists. He placed the blame for deflation of currency and credit upon the Administration which preceded that of Harding and Coolidge.

He announced his intention of calling a conference of leaders of agricultural thought to work out a programme of legislation which will place farming permanently on an equality with other business and which, he said, "we can all support."

He told why Government ownership of transportation and water-power facilities would be disastrous. Such a system, he said, could be used to control "all other business of any importance."

The proposal to give Congress the power to set aside decisions of the Supreme Court would, he said, "put the power of life and death in the hands of Congress," make possible destruction of the States, abolition of the Presidential office, the closing of the courts. The weak would not have more, but decidedly less, protection than at present.

It was an excellent statement of fundamentally sound American principles.

## An Old-Time Minstrel

**T**HE death of "Lew Dockstader" (his real name was George Clapp) on October 26 recalls a chapter of stage entertainment of a kind now all but extinct. Indeed, the "nigger minstrels"—only super-refined people ever said "Negro minstrels"—were on the wane when Dockstader made his reputation, and in a few years he, like other famous black-face comedians, drifted into vaude-

ville. He was perhaps the last of those whose names are recalled with joyous reminiscence by old-timers addicted to this form of amusement; nowadays schoolboys and other amateurs have almost a monopoly of the burnt cork as a medium of fun. There are many living, however, who recall Primrose and West, Duprez and Benedict, Backus and Birch, Thatcher, and other old-time favorites of the prime days of minstrels, say, in the late sixties and the early seventies. Then the end-men, the solemn middleman, and the half-circle of singers were in their glory. The shows began to lose their special hold on the public when they became formal, ambitious, and "gigantic"—with two or three "bones," two "interlocutors," and so on. Other kinds of shows improved; the "nigger minstrels" deteriorated. But in its palmy days "nigger minstrelsy" was indubitably and excessively funny, and it was on the minstrel stage that many of the still-enjoyed melodies of Stephen Foster and other song writers gained their popularity.

It is said that the first Negro minstrel on the American stage was Dan Rice, who as Jim Crow (the part was taken from a slave then living) danced and sang himself into immense popularity both here and in England in 1836. The first actual troupe of cork-faced minstrels appeared in 1843, and from that time on the bones, the banjo, the song of the plantation, and the "second part," made up chiefly of dancing and comic acts, rivaled the circus in attractiveness to boys and to grown people who retained a boyish sense of fun.

### **The Farmer and the Town Man**

PROFESSOR KOLB, of the University of Wisconsin, has a strong conviction that one thing that would help the farmer would be for better relations to exist between the farmers and the people and business men of the near-by towns. Professor Kolb has issued bulletins from the University's agricultural experiment station which contain interesting facts. These certainly go far to indicate that better relations personally, socially, and especially in business, are fairly due to the farmer.

The conclusions were drawn from investigations made in several counties, and hundreds of farming families were visited and questioned. It was found that farming groups in the country do not have

local high schools, and that when the children are sent some distance to the town the farmers do not have a share in the management of the high school, and their boys and girls do not receive just the right kind of knowledge and vocational training that they should have. Again, it is said that the local farmers' church is seldom large enough to thrive, while if the rural people go to town for church privileges they notice "a discriminating distinction" as between the farmers and the business and professional men.

On the business side the figures and conclusions are somewhat surprising. A survey of eight towns near Madison showed Professor Kolb that in those towns the farmers in one year bought goods and services to the amount of \$4,694,560 and all the customers other than farmers and their families bought only to the value of \$1,802,929, yet it is alleged that the towns do not rightly appreciate or encourage country trade and are reluctant to give the farmer credit, although the figures obtained show that the farmer is only slightly slower pay as compared with the town man.

The remedy proposed as against discrimination and patronizing of the farmer by the town man is that apart from purely agricultural matters the farmers should organize for all sorts of progressive purposes; that they should have boards and institutions of their own and meet their neighbors in town and city with more sturdy assertion of equality.

### **Secretary Wallace**

HENRY CANTWELL WALLACE, Secretary of Agriculture, who died in Washington on October 25, had taken his official duties even more seriously than is customary with men called to Cabinet positions. Somewhat because of that, somewhat because of the early-rising habit of the farm which had never left him since his boyhood, he was usually at his desk and at work before the rest of official Washington had finished shaving. He worked hard—too hard, his friends thought. And overwork, very likely, was a contributing cause to his untimely taking off.

Secretary Wallace's hard work, however, was not work wasted. Despite the recent fomentations in Washington which have made difficult any accurate appraisal of the efforts of men in administrative positions, it is clear that Mr.

Wallace rendered a public service of large and abiding usefulness.

The safeguards of Conservation were somewhat weakened during the early days of this Administration. Those who oppose the holding of public resources for other generations—both those who properly may be called exploitationists and those others who honestly believe that the withholding of material resources from immediate use is not wise—were having their inning. The National forests were looked eagerly upon by those who would bring them into immediate exhaustive use. There were efforts, not always open, to have the forests transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior. Genuine conservationists believed they saw the possibility of disaster in that. It was no reflection on the Department of the Interior, they held, to say that it is not as well fitted as the Department of Agriculture for administering a trust such as this. The Department of the Interior through all its existence has been an agency to develop resources for immediate use. Its channels of thought run, naturally, toward mining a resource. The Department of Agriculture through all its history has been an agency for developing and conserving resources for permanent usefulness. Since, they contended, timber is essentially a crop to be harvested occasionally and not a deposit to be mined, supervision of the forests belongs in the Department of Agriculture.

Against odds, Secretary Wallace successfully maintained that position. His persistent adherence to it was sometimes exasperating to those who held the other view, and his devotion to what he believed the best interest of the country was given by some the name of "Scotch stubbornness." The forests remained in the Department of Agriculture. Had they gone elsewhere, they might not have remained always National forests.

If Mr. Wallace as Secretary of Agriculture had done nothing else than this, his contribution to the welfare of his country would have been great. But there were other trying problems which, if he could not always quite solve, he labored upon in helpful fashion.

When Mr. Wallace became Secretary of Agriculture, the industry of agriculture in the United States was entering what has been probably the most serious depression it has ever known. Whether Secretary Wallace did all that could have been done to make the disaster less se-