

The Outlook

Volume 145

January 19, 1927

Number 3

A Chaotic Congress Helps the President

THE time draws nearer for shaping the issues and putting forward the candidates for the Presidential campaign of 1928. President Coolidge, silent as to his intentions, has had behind him until just now an apparently united party—united except for the element of Western radicalism. The common belief has been that he could have the Republican nomination if he wanted it.

Just now, however, the President faces for the first time opposition from many of those in Congress who have been Administration stalwarts heretofore. Two breaks have occurred—one with regard to the President's naval cruiser policy, the other with regard to his Nicaraguan policy. The leader of the opposition in the Nicaraguan question is Senator Borah, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, always an independent thinker. But the leaders of the cruiser question opposition are men who heretofore have made their actions conformable to Administration policies; such men, in the House, as Speaker Longworth and Majority Leader Tilson. Who will lead the championing of cruiser appropriations in the Senate is not yet apparent; but it is certain that the President's naval policy will be at least as strongly opposed there as it was in the House.

The President had consistently opposed any appropriation of money for the building of the three cruisers authorized in 1924. By agreeing to a new authorization for ten cruisers, but with no appropriation for building the ten or the three authorized in 1924, he had sought to compromise with a committee from the House which urged him to change his views.

Having failed to move the President, Republican leaders in the House determined to make an appropriation without his help. Representative Tilson introduced an amendment to the Naval Appropriation Bill to provide \$450,000 for beginning construction of the three cruisers already authorized. When the amendment came up for argument, Speaker Longworth took the very unusual step of leaving the chair and going to his seat on the floor to support the amendment. With one or two notable

exceptions, the Republican stalwarts were lined up with him against the President's policy; and the coalition so long existent between Administration Republicans and organization Democrats was still working.

The coalition lost. That is nearly inexplicable, but it is true. The President's policy had no organized support, yet it won by a margin of two votes—137 to 135. Even with the help of organization Democrats, the Republican stalwarts could not defeat the President's do-nothing naval policy.

Does the result of this clash reveal Coolidge strength or Coolidge weakness? Only the future can answer. The difficult factor in a present analysis of the situation is that the men who gave the President his majority on this vote are men who are very unlikely to support him on anything else of first importance. What the vote on cruisers definitely reveals is the chaotic condition of Congress; of a Congress peculiarly unresponsive to leadership, a Congress of adverse factions that when for a moment they draw together can dominate a situation.

Nicaragua

It is quite on the cards that many of the men who supported the President in his determination not to have any money appropriated for building cruisers will support Senator Borah in his opposition to the Administration policy concerning Nicaragua.

Borah, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, went to the White House and told the President that he could not approve what is being done in Nicaragua. His visit immediately preceded a Cabinet meeting. When the Cabinet adjourned, Secretary of State Kellogg reiterated the Administration policy. Then Borah issued a statement of the grounds of his objection to that policy. He declares that Diaz is in office in violation of the Nicaraguan Constitution and of the treaty between Central American republics, and is upheld by "sheer force of foreign arms." The break between the White House and the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate was clear and complete. Subsequently the President sent a detailed Message to Congress explaining his position, making quite clear

that Mexican interference in Nicaraguan politics was the compelling reason for his course of action. The Message was unexpected, because Secretary Kellogg's appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was looked forward to as the next step in the situation.

When the Nicaraguan question reaches discussion in the Senate, as it must do sooner or later, Senator Borah will maintain, first, that we should not take any part in Nicaraguan political controversies, and, second, that we have taken the wrong part.

Apparently, Mr. Coolidge faces the most serious contest of his career as President on his Nicaraguan policy. On this subject we comment further editorially elsewhere.

Borah on Party Funds

SENATOR BORAH, whom many Americans have long looked upon as a potential candidate for the Presidency, either as a Republican or an independent, has been unusually much in the public eye recently, and that not alone because of his break with the President. He was the principal speaker at the banquet of the Citizens' Committee of One Thousand for Law Enforcement and Law Observance. He improved the opportunity not alone to discuss the recognized issues in law enforcement but, in connection with one of them, to propose a remedy wholly out of the ordinary.

Political parties, Senator Borah said, should be recognized as quasi-governmental institutions, and their legitimate expenses should be paid by the Government. In that way, he believes, we may eliminate or at least reduce to a minimum corruption in politics. In that connection he attacked vigorously the system of party financing now in use. There is no difference, he declared, between "taking money from those interested in electing a Senator who, as they believe, will favor their interests and in taking money from the same people for the same purpose to secure the success of a party in a National campaign." He declared that Smith's acceptance of the Insull money was "no different, bad as it is and indefensible as it is, from accepting contributions from those vitally concerned with tariff duties, the reduction of income taxes, the enforcement of trust laws, and like matters, as we are

constantly doing in every political campaign." "Men," he said, "do not buy elections for amusement."

Political parties he described as the instruments through which responsibility is fixed. And he declared that institutions which control legislation, direct administration, and sustain or defeat National policies should not be financed by private capital. "It would be infinitely better for the people of this country," he said, "and it would come back to them a thousand times in the benefits of a clean public service to have these political parties treated as quasi-governmental institutions to the extent, at least, of the Government's taking care of the actual legitimate cost of a campaign."

Borah on Lawlessness

IN his address to the Committee of One Thousand Senator Borah delivered a double broadside. The other part of it was aimed at those who in opposition to prohibition "propose to elevate lawlessness into a principle of government and clothe it with all the sanctity of an inalienable right." And that was the dominant note of the proceedings of the Committee (of which Mr. Fred B. Smith is chairman), sounded by many of the speakers and in the resolutions adopted. The Committee concerned itself not so much with those who violate the Eighteenth Amendment as with those who seek to justify, on moral and Constitutional grounds, such violations.

The necessity of loyalty to the orderly and constitutional processes of government was stressed. The formal pronouncement of the Committee, after reviewing President Coolidge's recent statements on enforcement, was:

"We call upon the people of this country . . . to elect and support such public officials as may be trusted to carry out such principles, in order that the beacon light of an enlightened and constitutional democracy may show us the pathway of true National progress, in the midst of the sinister shadows that are cast by those who seek to overthrow our orderly forms of government in order to promote selfish and unworthy interests."

Immigration Quotas

THE immigration quotas for the principal countries of the world on the basis of national origins of the present population of the United States come out almost exactly as Congress meant that they should come out when the Immigration Act was passed. This may be

somewhat surprising in view of recent newspaper comment to the effect that the national origins feature of the law would have a result different from that which Congress intended and that the President had ordered the Commission at work upon the problem to desist. This latter report was promptly corrected from the White House, and the President has now transmitted to the Senate the preliminary report of the Commission. The national origins quotas differ greatly, in many instances, from the quotas based on the Census of 1890, the present basis of admitting immigrants, but they come very close to what Congress expected they would be. There is, however, a tendency toward flattening out of curves. The quotas that are increased are not as greatly increased and those that are reduced are not as greatly reduced as Congress expected.

The facts are shown by comparison of the tentative tables by which Congress worked when fashioning the bill with quota tables as prepared by the Commission. Germany has, on the present basis, a quota of 51,227. Congress expected that this would be reduced to 20,028. It is actually reduced only to 23,428. Great Britain and northern Ireland have a quota of 34,007. Congress expected that this would be increased to 85,135. It is actually increased only to 73,039. The Irish Free State has a quota of 28,567. Congress expected it would be reduced to 8,330. It is actually reduced only to 13,862.

In some of the smaller quotas the expectations of Congress were slightly exceeded. The expectation was that the quota of Sweden on the national origins basis would be 3,072. It is actually 3,259. On the present basis, Sweden's quota is 9,561. Norway was expected to have a quota of only 2,053. It has, on the national origins basis, 2,267. On the 1890 basis, however, it has 6,453. Russia's quota was expected to work out 4,002. It actually works out 4,781. On the 1890 basis, it is only 2,248. All the way through, the tentative figures by which Congress worked are surprisingly close to the results obtained by the Commission after long, laborious effort. This fact, however, does not lessen the dissatisfaction with which the new quota basis is received by friends of the countries which can send fewer men and women to the United States under the new than under the old.

Senator Shipstead, of Minnesota, whose State and section are interested largely in Scandinavian immigrants, has introduced a bill to repeal the national origins clause of the Immigration Act.

The Commissioner of Immigration suggested in his latest report that it might better be repealed. And there is rumor in Washington that the President will decline to proclaim the new quotas, on the theory that this feature of the law is not mandatory but permissive. But White House rumor is, more frequently than not, wide of the mark. Since three members of the President's Cabinet—the Secretaries of State, Commerce, and Labor—have assumed that "the issuance of the proclamation provided for in paragraph 3, section 11, of said act is mandatory," any effort to escape the national origins basis is more likely to take the form of Congressional action than of executive inertia.

The Quota Commission's Job

THE intention of the Immigration Act of 1924 is to limit immigration to the United States from any country in any year to two per cent of the people of that stock already residing in the United States. For temporary purposes, the Census of 1890 was taken as the basis, but provision was made that the permanent basis should be the proportion from each country in the entire population of the United States from the beginning of our history. The temporary basis continues until July 1 of this year. The President is directed to proclaim the permanent basis by April 1, and it is to go into effect when the old expires.

The Commission which has worked out the permanent basis is composed of two representatives each of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Secretary of Labor. It is evident that their work has been tedious, difficult, and not in all respects satisfactory even to them. In reporting to their superiors, the Commissioners said: "While the burden of proof appears to rest upon those who may object to the classification as being seriously erroneous, we are not prepared to say that their criticisms may not be in some cases or to some extent justified."

None the less, the Commissioners believe that their work has been well done. The report they have made is only preliminary, but "it is believed that further investigation will not substantially alter the conclusions arrived at."

Perhaps no group of statisticians ever had a more difficult job than that which confronted these men. They worked with Census figures from 1790 to the present, with classifications by racial stocks of those who were in this country prior to 1790, with foreign statistics of population by provinces and by linguistic and racial groups, with names re-