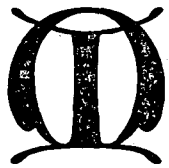


EDITORIALS



AY I suggest that invention, improved engineering, and courage to take the road, are needed now more in the social than in the physical sciences. I recommend that we take the overhead of research and experiment in the social field now when the social balance sheet is stable and not postpone them to the day when it may be too late." These were the concluding sentences of an address delivered, not before the National Conference of Social Work but before the annual convention of the National Electric Light Association. The speaker, Owen D. Young, chairman of the board of directors of the General Electric Company, sees in the development of great supplies of cheap electrical power a solvent of labor troubles, a guarantee of social peace. "To the extent to which we may substitute inanimate power for that generated by the muscles of human beings, we shall not only relieve the exertion of workers, but we shall increase their output which is the only way of advancing wages and living conditions. . . . We must aim to make the earning power of human beings so large as to supply them not only with a living wage, but a cultural wage. . . . Let no man think that power supply is remote in its reactions on human welfare."

One of the chief obstacles to the more rapid development of the power industry is the atmosphere of suspicion and hostility that surrounds the relations between the electric public utilities and the public. When a clash of interest arises, the politician confounds his own with the public advantage; the utility operator, devoted to the interests of his company, wants something which it seems clear he should have. "He goes after it and resents interference." Blind partisanship poisons impartiality.

The classic example is the war which for decades has raged around the question of public vs. private ownership, especially of our great water-power resources. Neither side has often approached the problem of the best method of developing these resources in the spirit of impartial scientific inquiry. The need for scientific exploration and research in this field is evidenced by the fact that even Mr. Young bases his conviction that "efficiency and economy of operation are best accomplished by private ownership," upon the opportunity which he individually has had "during the last few years to observe the operation of publicly owned enterprises in most of the principal countries of the world." Mr. Young is a highly qualified observer, but even his observation is a narrow basis for so broad a generalization. But he recognizes that the discussion of this question has been clouded "by the old animosities," and that while the debate goes on, "vast rivers go unharnessed for power, waterways are undeveloped, floods drown us, and droughts devour us." He therefore calls for a broader view in the public interest from the representatives of both the utilities and the public.

The decision as to whether water shall be stored primarily to prevent floods, for irrigation, improved navigation, or the generation of power should, he believes, be left to the government "without protest much less opposition from any private power company." In most cases where storage dams are built, power can be developed without impairment of the other uses. Mr. Young proposes that the construction and ownership of such enterprises should be in the hands of a public corporation, "the stock of which should be government owned, with the provision that the corporation finance the enterprise with its own securities." He believes that our experience with the War Finance Corporation, a wholly public concern, and with the Federal Reserve Banks, gives assurance that "we can obtain men of technical qualification and high purpose, free from political bias, to administer these enterprises in such a way that development can be most advantageously achieved with justice to all interests."

Surely some way must be found to utilize the vast power resources that now run to waste in our unharnessed streams. Whether Mr. Young's specific proposal is, from the point-of-view of social consequences, the best means to that end, we are not prepared to say. He is certainly right, however, when he says that the practical engineering problem will not be difficult to solve once the atmosphere of heated controversy and prejudice is cleared away, and when he suggests that the persistence of this atmosphere signalizes greater need today for invention, improved engineering, research and experiment in the field of the social than in the physical sciences.



WHILE the durability of the Soviet Republic was still matter for a kind of universal debate, the Survey Graphic in 1923 gave over an entire issue to an interpretation of the social forces at work in Russia. It was made up in large part of articles by outstanding Russians—educators, industrialists, politicians and scientists. Now, a decade after the revolution, it is pertinent to inquire the general effect of the Bolshevik experiment upon the common life of the country. The Foreign Policy Association has accordingly rendered a distinctive service in making a rigorously objective study of the important changes which have taken place in the soviet economic system during the past eight years, with a view to making clear the present status of Russia's trade relations with the rest of the world, and especially those with the United States. The data utilized in this survey, taken largely from Russian official sources, are interpreted critically and with unprecedented frankness. The survey was written by Savel Zimand, who five years ago, gathered the materials for our Russian number.

On the one hand, in the period under review, American humanitarian forces have been engaged in large projects for relief and reconstruction. On the other, American diplomatic relations have been atrophied by anti-communist propaganda. What of trade developments? The report states that in the last year the trade with Russia by American manufacturers and exporters has reached a volume which in money value is more than twice what it was before the war and revolution. In the course of the last twelve months our export trade to Russia doubled. It is noted that although no United States commercial attaches or consuls are at the service of American exporters in the Russian trade area, four official trading companies are operating in the United States, some of them under our state laws; and that the Russian State Bank and the Russian Foreign Trade Bank are represented here by some of our leading banking institutions. According to Russian official data, the United States supplied in the period from 1909 to 1913 an average of 7 per cent and in 1924-25 nearly 30 per cent of the total Russian imports.

In another passage in the section of the report given up to Russian-American trade, it is pointed out that its further development depends upon increased agricultural production. Unless Russia has a substantial surplus of wheat, rye, flax, etc. for export she cannot buy abroad. The crops of 1925 were exceptionally satisfactory, but the surplus available for export was much less than expected because the peasants, unable to buy goods at what they considered fair prices, withheld from the market as much of their grain as possible.

So far as the general industrial situation goes, Mr. Zimand points out that the soviet authorities have frequently been obliged to scrap their communist theories, when the latter clashed too harshly with economic realities, and have made big concessions to capitalistic standards. Some of the more orthodox followers of Marx have occasionally protested violently against these concessions, but in vain. The report chronicles that the intermittent "cat and mouse" tactics practised shortly after the institution of the New Economic Policy now appear to be permanently in the discard and that the tendency toward doing business on a capitalist basis grows stronger from day to day. For instance it sets forth that in spite of attempts by state competition to break the back of private capitalism in 1925, private enterprise is again enjoying a free hand. This contention is backed by figures which would seem to show that 50 per cent of the retail trade of Russia today is in the hands of private traders. Even the rigorous government monopoly of foreign trade has been modified the last year.

Meanwhile, not only has there been substantial progress in clearing up the general domestic financial situation, but industrial production last November had reached 71 per cent of the 1913 output, compared with the 15 per cent recovery by 1921. The report refers to the steady growth of Russian imports and exports from the zero point of that year. In 1924-25 imports into Soviet Russia over both the European and Asiatic frontiers were 52.2 per cent of the like imports into Russia for the calendar year 1913, while 1924-25 Russian exports over all frontiers were 37.3 per cent of like exports in 1913.

The report steers wide of any discussion of political issues, yet its dispassionate pages are essentially a challenging footnote to the course of American diplomacy in the past

decade. We seem to have reversed positions with our British cousins. A hundred years ago they were given over to their dreads while our young New World Republic had understanding relationships with Revolutionary France. Today, western Europe has recognized Russia and we have not. Our traders, however, have had their ears to the ground, and caught and acted on the tidings of post-war Russian reconstruction.



THERE ought to be a good job for a traffic manager in directing the deliberations of New York's new City Planning and Survey Committee, to which over 470 persons had already accepted appointment when Mayor Walker announced its formation in mid-June, with more to come. This truly metropolitan concourse will, it is true, be subdivided into seven sections, to deal respectively with

Housing, Zoning and Distribution of Population
Port and Terminal Facilities
Traffic Regulation and Street Uses
Sanitation and Harbor Pollution
Highways and Bridges
Parks and Recreational Facilities
New Sources of City Revenue.

But even the subcommittees will be overly large for the effective discovery of answers to New York's many more than seven-fold enigmas, unless their function is simply to serve as sounding-boards for the constructive suggestions of experts.

An odd limitation on the plan as announced is that no members of the committee are charged with a study of transit. One would like to think that this meant a recognition on the part of official New York that the hullabaloo about subway building and bus-lines is after all barking up the very wrong tree, and that if the questions lumped under the heading Housing, Zoning and Distribution of Population were seriously and fundamentally answered the transit situation would in the long run fall into its proper subsidiary place. But the official explanation is that the regularly ordained city legislative bodies are now busily considering these transit matters and there is therefore no need at present of volunteer formulation of policy.




AMONG the expert groups to which the new committee may turn its multitudinous ear is the staff of the Committee on a Regional Plan of New York and its Environs, which made its usual annual report of progress at a meeting in the Town Hall on May 25, a little more than four years after the similar meeting which inaugurated the project. With a year and a half or two years of work still ahead of it, the Committee has reached the stage of forecasting that its findings will appear in eight or ten volumes, and has begun to exhibit specimen maps, on a grand scale, of its general recommendations for the utilization of land within the 50-mile radius from New York's city hall. Some clues to the principles which will underly the findings were given by the technical director of the (Continued on page 436)

Letters & Life

In which books, plays and people are discussed

Edited by LEON WHIPPLE

The Heavens Declare

 HE big car slid up to the service station on a Maryland back-road near Washington. The horn sounded. The chauffeur wanted gas. But nobody came. So he got down, as did his passenger—a General in the United States Army. They went into the garage and then stopped short.

Perhaps twenty men, some in overalls, were standing in a silent group, their hats off in their hands. Some one was praying. The officer stepped back in confusion, but a mechanic whispered, "Wait a little, sir, the bishop is praying." He pointed at a loud-speaker perched on a second-hand automobile. From this came the solemn intonations of the prayer. The general quietly removed his cap and joined the worship at this garage which had been turned into a wayside church by grace of the radio. The Right Reverend James E. Freeman, bishop of the Episcopal diocese of Washington was conducting services as he does every Sunday afternoon through Station WCAP to an unseen congregation estimated at half a million. After the benediction, the garage-man explained:

"You see, sir, there is no church in ten miles so the neighborhood men have gotten into the habit of coming here on Sunday afternoons to hear the Cathedral services. We never permit any work while the service is 'on the air.'"

Bishop Freeman himself states his belief thus: "I believe the use of the air for transmitting the message of the gospel is the greatest demonstration of the real spiritual power of the things invisible the world has ever seen. It dissolves all differences and distinctions.... I believe the radio will be a potent factor in making the twentieth century the age of the brotherhood of man. More and more I have come to feel that this growing feeling of brotherhood may result from the intimacy and fellowship created through the medium of the air."

This is the larger vision. The present fact is that whoever has a radio receiver anywhere (even at the North Pole!) may by a twirl of the dials listen to the greatest preachers and the noblest ecclesiastical music. Consider Easter. Bishop Manning broadcast a message from the Episcopal cathedral of New York and Archbishop Glennon celebrated pontifical high mass from the Roman Catholic cathedral in St. Louis. You could attend morning service at fashionable St. Thomas's in New York, or the historic South church in Boston. The Presbyterian could choose the West End church in New York, and the Baptist hear John Roach Straton at Calvary church. Or he could attend church in Schenectady, Chicago, or Los Angeles. In the afternoon (and

every Sunday afternoon) he could have joined the interdenominational service of the Greater New York Federation of Churches, the Young People's Conference at the Marble Collegiate church, or the throng who delight in the shrewd wisdom and rapid-fire answers to questions from Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, president of the Federal Council of Churches in America. And later had his spirit calmed by the vespers at St. George's in New York with music directed by Harry Burleigh.

Nor need the worshipper at newer shrines go uncomforted. John H. Randall, of the New York Community church, spoke through the Ford Forum of Boston. The Christian Scientist almost nightly can choose between the orthodoxy of Mary Baker Eddy's successors from WMAC or the heterodoxy of Augusta Stetson from WHAP. Indeed, several stations are primarily religious institutions though they interpose music and talks in their evangelism. Such are WBBR of The International Bible Students on Staten Island, New York, and WLWL of the Paulist Fathers. This last broadcasts the Sunday night sermon and the noble chants of the Paulist choristers and offers a catechetical question-box weekly—again proving that the College of the Propaganda serves itself with the new devices. Fridays the noble intoning of the Jewish service is often on the air, with heart-piercing music. There are moments of religion all through the week; the Greater New York Federation provided a morning prayer period from 7:45 to 8 o'clock during the winter and a "hymn sing" each Thursday evening.

The very bells of the church rang in our ears last fall when the lovely music of the carillon in the tower of the Park Avenue Baptist Church in New York played by a Belgian carillonneur was caught by WJZ's microphones netted over the church roof and flung across the land to delight millions. Easter was a great concert ceremony with oratorios from Handel and Haydn and programs of song. Even the joyous church sacrament of marriage has been shared for last winter I overheard the faint "I will" of a bride at Freeport, Long Island, and sat entranced one night hearkening to the magnificent ritual of the Hebrew service from a synagogue.

Yes, the air certainly believes in religious freedom. You may choose your faith and nothing but static will interfere. Later the question of tolerance may arise when in the crowded air-ways a church may find it hard to secure a private wave-length on which to broadcast purely religious programs. But now the commercial stations seem remarkably open-minded. Scarcely one of the larger stations but gives part of its precious time to religious messages or music. The