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The Week

ECONOMICS to the rescue is the order of the day in European international affairs. Politically it was impossible for the western powers to have any relations with Soviet Russia. Capitalism and communism could meet theoretically only in war, and neither could afford war. Politically the problem of the relations between Germany and her conquerors was insoluble. Germany could not pay the charges imposed upon her and France could not consent to lightening those charges. Germany could not accept the control over her domestic affairs implied in the proposals of the Reparations Commission. Such control infringed upon her sovereign rights. France could not be content with less. Any yielding on this point weakened the foundations of the Treaty of Versailles, according to political theory. But in spite of politics it was found possible to talk business, if not to conclude business, with Russia, when systems and principles were thrust into the background by the discussion of loans, exports and imports, and concessions. In like manner, the dis-

cussion of a loan is putting a new face on the German problem. There are a good many matters that the Germans would not consent to discuss before that prove entirely capable of discussion now when a loan comes within the range of possibility.

BEHIND the political systems of nations lie economic interests, quiescent in normal times but irresistible when political mismanagement becomes intolerable. To the vast majority of men food, clothing and housing, employment and business are realities of far more compelling importance than any systems or theories. The Russian government was the first to incur the pressure of economics, or at any rate the first to recognize it. The compromises it has been forced to accept under this pressure cut far deeper than any compromise a western government will have to make. Next after the Russians the British exhibit the greatest readiness to subordinate political traditions to economic necessity. The explanation is simple. England's position as a great power, and even her very life, depend upon the skill of her statesmen in maintaining a favorable commercial and economic environment. Italy and Germany come next in their degree of dependence upon economic statecraft; self-sufficient France comes last. But there is not one European government which can afford to pursue political objectives in ruthless disregard of economic consequences.

RUMORS of a revolution to overthrow the Obregon government may safely be discounted, since the head of the revolutionary movement is Felix Diaz, whose only qualifications for leadership are dynastic. Everything Felix Diaz lays his hand on fails. The claims of the Hapsburgs are not so illusory as the claims of the Diaz heir. But whether the Diaz movement is doomed to failure or not, its existence is a source of uneasiness in Mexico. At any time it may assume the form of open rebellion, destroying thousands of lives and inflicting enormous economic injury. If that hap-

pens it will be in order for our government to wash its hands. For it is the failure of our government to recognize Obregon which puts heart into every revolutionary movement. It is worth observing that Felix Diaz promises to restore the Constitution of 1857, under which adventurers from the United States ranged freely through the natural resources of Mexico. Diaz presumes that we would present no obstacles to the functioning of such a government as the restored Cientificos would give.

READERS of the New York World on Friday, May 26th, read what the World introduced as Lloyd George's "speech in full." Either the columns that followed were not the complete speech, or those parts of the New York Times' report of the speech which did not appear in the World were invented. This latter supposition we may reject. The World's "full" report omitted an interesting and cynical passage in which Mr. Lloyd George—here we rely on the Times—quoted the help given by France to the Royalist party in England at Cromwell's time, and the assistance later given by England to the "anti-revolutionary party in France," neither of which interventions were followed by claims for damages, as precedent for the invalidity of Russia's claims for damages done by Kolchak and Wrangel.

BESIDES this omission, there was some discrepancy in another passage. The Times' quotation reads:

The Russian leaders are men of exceptional ability and they are men with knowledge of the outside world. However much they communicate of it to the outside world, they know . . . perfectly well . . . that they are not going to get credit in the West upon a basis of confiscation and repudiation of debt.

The World's report of the same passage is as follows:

The Russians are men of exceptional ability. They are men with knowledge of the outside world—however much of it they communicate to their followers, they certainly know it themselves—and they know perfectly well they are not going to get credit . . . etc.

The World's version implies that the Russians fool their followers. The Times version says something quite different, and it is obviously the correct one. How did all this happen to the World's "speech in full"? We hope nothing worse than sloppy reporting or bad editing is responsible.

SECRETARY MELLON seems to have advanced the following solution for our railroad troubles: Apply the methods of the Washington

Conference to the transportation problem, with the agreement that for five years, or more, federal regulation shall entirely cease. This proposed bargain seems scarcely a two-sided one. It would have little parallel with the Conference; it would be more in the nature of a moratorium than a mutual agreement. Suppose we apply this amiable project of a moratorium to another sphere, and declare that for five years there will be a moratorium on the prosecution of bootleggers. There is considerable disorder in the regulation of both these businesses, and it is possible that in five years they would, if left to themselves, work out a scheme of regulation more suited to their needs. Secretary Mellon's proposal is not only a curious specimen of economic thought, it is also a strange bit of political miscalculation. One of the last things the people of this country will stand for is presenting the railroads with a free pass toward their own prosperity at the expense of the prosperity of everybody else, and a party one of whose leaders thinks such a course possible is blind indeed.

WE ask everyone who thought that the whole truth about the killings at Centralia was that the seven I. W. W.'s were murderers, and as such justly convicted, to consider the recent sequel of that case. Now three of the jurors in that trial have come forth with some startling affidavits. One of them swears that a trial ballot taken before discussion began showed the jury unanimously in favor of acquittal. Further, this juror, E. E. Torpen, believes "that if these men had not been affiliated with the I. W. W. they never would have been convicted of the crime." Another juror, Sweitzer, said that he emphatically believed that there had been a plot to raid the I. W. W. hall, adding: "If I knew that somebody was going to raid my home I'd go into the barn, get a gun and shoot hell out of them." It is evident that the verdict was rendered under the high pressure of local hysteria, and now that the hysteria is more or less over, the truth peers from its hiding place.

WHEN Dr. Hibben said that the United States ought to take a larger "and more personal" share in the world's affairs, one was scarcely prepared for the description that followed of what he takes a "personal" attitude toward other nations to be. We must, in his view, "bring our fist down on the council table in Europe." The fist should not, of course, be mailed, for other nations have tried punching with such an instrument of "personality" and failed miserably. But a fist none the less. We suggest a slogan for a parade, to be led by Dr. Hibben carrying a mace: "A

bigger and better fist for Uncle Sam." This cheerful talk about fists is only the more general part of what Dr. Hibben feels about the necessity for our taking part in European affairs. More specifically he suggests that if we were represented abroad, "the United States might take Russia by the throat, if necessary, and show her that she has got to have an international mind and an international heart." Have a heart, Russia, have an international heart such as Dr. Hibben wishes ours to be, a heart which knows how to take a personal grip on other people's throats, a heart which is also a fist.

THE reduction in railway wages and its effect upon the spirit of workers is one of many proofs of the defectiveness of our price system. When prices trend upward wages have to go up; when prices trend downward wages have to come down, but in neither case is the adjustment made without struggle, friction and discontent. If we lack the inventive capacity or the political courage to grapple with the general problem of price stabilization, can we not at least free limited categories of employment from the baneful influence of changes in living costs? During the war there were private concerns ingenious enough to solve the problem. On the basis of pre-war wages they paid a "cost of living bonus," which automatically rose and fell with prices. It would be entirely practicable to establish in a vital public service like the railway industry a scheme of payments automatically adjusted every fortnight to living costs. That would not solve the general problem of railway wages. The underlying basis of distribution between labor and capital would still remain open to discussion. But there would be no need of periodic struggles merely to keep wages somewhere near the cost of living level.

The Future of the League of Nations

Of all the achievements of Paris the League of Nations was the greatest in conception and the least satisfactory in execution. *The Round Table for March, 1922.*

IN the May issue of *Our World*, Mr. George Wickersham, one of the most sincere and intelligent Republican supporters of American participation in the counsels of Europe, describes what he considers to be the best possible relationship which in the future the United States can occupy with respect to the League of Nations. He dismisses as politically impossible for the present any further agitation on behalf of full membership in the

League for the United States. He dismisses as no less impossible the substitution for the existing League of a new and different general association of nations. But he sees no reason why the American government without joining the League should not participate in its special activities. Permanent commissions of the League are studying many phases or problems of intercourse among nations which seem to call for administrative regulation by international agreement. American representatives should, he thinks, serve on these special commissions and the American government might and in certain cases should enter into these special agreements.

With the last of Mr. Wickersham's suggestions the *New Republic* fully agrees. The desirability of cooperating or not cooperating in the work of these special commissions rests upon a group of political considerations very different from those which kept the United States from becoming a full member of the League. The commissions are dealing with objects of public policy which most civilized nations have already accepted in their domestic legislation, and they are seeking the better accomplishment of these objects by means of some measure of international regulation and administration. The refusal by the American government to share in these humane works because the American nation has decided not to assume the responsibilities of becoming a full member of the League is not statesmanlike consistency. It resembles rather the stupid and fearful superstition of the savage. It is equivalent to treating any plan which originates with the League of Nations as the emanations of a bad spirit which provokes the pious barbarian to howl and taboo.

Mr. Wickersham's other suggestions do not seem to us so entirely acceptable. We agree with him, indeed, as to the futility of contesting any more elections upon the question of membership by the United States in the existing League. If the friends of the League try to give further political vitality to that political issue, they will postpone rather than accelerate the coming of a closer political and economic relationship between the United States and Europe. Mr. Wickersham is, in our opinion, equally right in dismissing the idea of substituting for the existing League another association of nations which was intended to accomplish the same purpose. But agreement with Mr. Wickersham in these limited respects does not, as he assumes, close the discussion. In relation, for instance, to another association of nations, he does not recognize how far the Genoa Conference implied the birth of new associations of nations. It was called to consider many grave questions of in-