

Reconstruction in the United States

Vitalization of political electoral strife by the opposing parties standing for genuinely combative principles and ideas, may be looked for after the war

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

Two proposals for reconstruction of national life and industry are before the Congress of the United States. One is known as the Weeks resolution, which asks for the appointment of a joint congressional committee of twelve, in equal portions from the Senate and the House of Representatives, with one half in each case to be Republicans and one half Democrats. The other is known as the Overman Bill, and asks for a commission of five to be appointed by the President, not more than three of whom shall be members of the same political party. It is commonly understood that the Weeks resolution is a Republican measure, and the Overman Bill a Democratic proposal.

Thus a party conflict is hatching. Non-partisan journals in the United States are already claiming to be able to discern the course of reaction upon the war of the two great parties. The Republicans, led by Senator Lodge, are enthusiastic for the prosecution of the war to the uttermost limit. Nothing but unconditional surrender on the part of the Central Powers will satisfy them. To this end they favor the unstinted employment of the material and human resources of the country in bringing the war to a speedy and victorious conclusion. They have not said that the President is less keen than themselves, but they are evidently resolved that no one shall ever be able to say that he was any more keen. And they are evidently jealously watchful to denounce any apparent slackness of energy on his part.

But the Republicans have little to say about a League of Nations. Their programme is to end with the discomfiture of and disablement of Germany. They would have the United States turn its attention then to purely national problems. It is suspected that a new drive is to be made on behalf of protection for manufacturers, with a high tariff as the tax-raising device in future finance. They fear, it is said, that a world alliance of peoples will have economic machinery which will interfere with a purely national policy.

The Democratic party, on the other hand, under the vigorous leadership of Mr. Wilson, is said to aim at keeping the discussion of the technical questions of reconstruction out of the hands of Congressional committees. Experts, they say, are required to determine the intricate and intimate programmes which the demobilization period will demand. Such things should be kept out of the arena of party dispute. Let Congress shape the policies broadly. Let the tasks of statesmanship be hers. But the administration, the carrying into detail of these policies, should be given to men trained in administration. That is the first difference between the parties.

Then, the Democratic party is more interested in the human side of reconstruction than the Republican. Since Cleveland's time it has balked at the plan of committing the destiny of the country to the big business interests. Gradually, and more or less unconsciously the new alignment of the two historic parties has come to be this, that the Republicans would have prosperity distil down from the superior classes, while the Democratic party would have prosperity steam up from the lower classes. In other words there is to be a clean cut contest between the materialistic elements and the humanitarian interests.

Doubtless this accusation will be hotly denied by many of the Republicans. The Progressive movement, under Roosevelt, certainly was of the humanitarian temper. And humanitarianism is never as consistent or as careful as is materialism. Within the pale of the Democratic party, not so long since, populism flourished. Mr. Bryan is an impossible figure in a Republican camp. Many had classed Mr. Daniels and Mr. Baker with Mr. Bryan, as weak enthusiasts for humanity who were incapable of dealing sternly with facts, but the surprising efficiency of the Navy and Army have overthrown the criticism of the two secretaries.

Moreover, the two programmes laid down respectively by the Weeks resolution and the Overman Bill are not so far apart as each other, and neither of them is more than strictly economic. Neither has more than an incidental mention of the problems of la-

bor, of equitable distribution of the nation's income, of housing, or any other of the matters which the countries of Europe are putting in front of their after-war legislative programmes. The programme of the British Labor party, with its four pillars of the house, reads like the product of another planet or another epoch, when compared with either of the American proposals. The one is for man, the other is for things.

I suppose that there is a reason for this divergence. The war has bitten deeper into the life of Europe than of the United States. It has decimated almost every family. It has turned the habitual course of industry upside down. It has been a life and death affair for more than four years of un-sparing effort and sacrifice. Thus it has uncovered the inner depths of the soul of the people. Motor reactions which millenniums had gone to develop, and which had been crested over by a couple of centuries of industrial activities, have been released. An elemental passion has seized masses of erstwhile passive creatures of a commercial order which had made property the sacred thing and fired them with the determination that property shall no longer be the sacred thing. The sacred thing is henceforth to be humanity.

It is very striking, this difference between Europe and America. One is led to hope that it is not so vast as appears, and that, when the guns stop shooting, the people who have risen with such fine and splendid fervor on behalf of the rights of the people of Belgium and Serbia will not turn their faces from the rights of the unprivileged among themselves. It cannot be, surely, that President Wilson will cease from the thrilling and lofty moral enthusiasm of his messages when those messages come to deal with his own land, nor that the citizens of that land will fail of a like response when he outlines for them duties fitting to a new home situation to that which they gave when he outlined the similar duties in a new foreign situation.

All this has a deep meaning for future politics in Canada. For we are very imitative of our neighbors to the south. We need not doubt the loyalty of our hearts to Britain because we recognize the fact that a very great many of political ideas and customs are importations from the United States. Even when these originated in Britain they have been often routed to us through the United States.

Propinquity and resemblance of habitat explain a considerable portion of our political imitativeness. We need not blame ourselves for it. Thus we are deeply implicated in the shape which reconstruction may take in the United States. If it gets no deeper into the concerns of human life than industrial readjustment and commercial reorganization we may vainly hope for anything better in Canada. Indeed, our one chance for a vital programme of ameliorative social legislation lies in the United States setting us the example.

At the present time it is evident that there are forces in Canada astutely plotting to restore the old party alignment. They like that sort of thing. They enjoy a good fight. They like dividing the spoil. They relish the power which is the prize of the victors. And no one can deny that they will make a strong appeal to the mass of the voters in the Dominion. Traditions are stubborn things, and the tradition of partisanship has become firmly rooted. Many will incline to welcome a resumption of what has been called our national sport. If these efforts succeed there will be little progressive political legislation.

But it is hardly likely, in my humble opinion, that the attempts to reform the teams on the parliamentary campus will succeed. There are quarrels within these teams which are not likely to be reconciled. New political organizations, from agriculture and from labor, will demand to be reckoned with. And, if we can avoid or abridge the reaction of spirit which the relaxation from the long strain of war will bring, it is not likely that the new generation will as tamely adopt their father's political catchwords as they might have done had they not been subjected to the poignant and arousing experience of the past four years.

It is inevitable that parties will be formed. And the natural division is that which aligns the radicals and the conservatives. I suppose that a permanent party alignment is possible on no other ground. Temporary and local interests may beget contests at any time, but such will last only for the period during which they monopolize the limelight. In a nation with many interests this can never be for long. If we are to have two great parties, and there is much to be said for the desirableness as well as for the inevitableness of such a marshalling of opinion, these must be the parties of change and of continuance, respectively. Such were the names of the old time parties, but the names corresponded very slightly to the real constitution of these parties. What we may hope for, and what we have some reason to expect, is the vitalization of our political electoral strife by the opposing parties standing for genuinely combative principles and ideas. This appears to be the tendency in the United States. If it should be so in that country, there is little doubt but that it will come to be so in Canada as well.

SEPTEMBER STATEMENT OF THE C. P. R.

The September statement of the C. P. R., issued last week, shows gross earnings at \$13,584,770, were \$1,340,429, or 10.9 per cent. in excess of the previous record for the month, while net of \$3,121,440 was down \$625,709, or 16.7 per cent., as compared with a year ago, and more than \$2,000,000 as compared with the high record for September, established two years ago.

As the following table of September earnings shows, with an increase of more than 50 per cent. in the gross business handled, profits are less than they were nine years ago:

Sept.	Gross.	Net.
1918	\$13,584,770	\$3,121,440
1917	12,244,341	3,747,150
1916	12,134,159	5,139,759
1915	10,273,165	4,745,300
1914	10,754,140	4,367,048
1913	12,157,082	4,415,579
1912	11,579,733	4,250,303
1911	10,049,084	3,917,446
1910	9,315,214	3,911,600
1909	8,323,178	3,431,889

NINE MONTHS' RESULTS.

The nine months' figures for the current year show the same tendencies as the September return. Gross earnings are a new high record, with an increase of about 1.5 per cent. over last year's record, but net earnings are down 28.2 per cent., falling considerably below the low level of the recent years.

Comparisons of nine months' earnings, gross and net, back to 1910, follow:

1918	\$111,080,975	\$23,207,067
1917	109,393,516	32,322,145
1916	100,663,789	34,216,371
1915	69,897,075	24,889,067
1914	85,682,536	26,623,143
1913	101,454,111	31,608,234
1912	96,637,022	32,244,399
1911	78,512,960	25,779,320
1910	72,503,736	24,857,972

September and nine months' figures, with more detailed comparisons with September, 1917, follow:

	Sept., 1918.	Sept. 1917.	Increase.
Gross	13,584,770	12,244,341	1,340,429
Exp.	10,463,329	8,497,190	1,966,139

Net 3,121,440 3,747,150 x625,709

For the nine months ended September 30th:

	1918.	1917.	Increase.
Gross	\$111,080,975	\$109,393,516	\$1,687,459
Exp.	87,873,907	77,071,370	10,802,536

Net 23,207,067 32,322,145 x9,115,077

x—Decrease.

FAILURES LAST WEEK.

Commercial failures last week as reported by R. G. Dunn and Co. in Canada numbered 11, against 23 the previous week, 11 the preceding week, and 12 last year. Of failures last week in the United States, 54 were in the East, 31 South, 28 West, and 25 in the Pacific States, and 50 reported liabilities of \$5,000 or more, against 52 last week.