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Mr. Harding's Dilemma

Mr. Harding, President elect of the United States, has gone a-fishing, which is about as sensible a thing as a man can do who has very perplexing problems before him. Philosophers who have had experience testify that there is nothing so well calculated to absorb thought and cause forgetfulness of the cares of life as the watchful waiting of the fisherman who is hoping for a bite. Probably there is much reason for believing this. Nevertheless, it is exceedingly probable that in the midst of his contact with the tarpon which eventually he landed Mr. Harding had some thought of the problems of government, particularly of the predicament in which he finds himself on the question of the Versailles Treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations.

In the recent campaign, Mr. Harding and his friends had the comparatively easy task of criticising the work of President Wilson. He is now facing the more serious task of constructive service. Technically the United States is still at war with Germany. The treaty devised by the representatives of the great nations of the earth, including the President of the United States, having failed to obtain the approval of the American Senate, the new President, on taking office in March next, will have to devise ways and means of making peace with Germany and of making clear the part that the American Republic is prepared to play in world affairs. To start the whole business afresh, to endeavor to make a new treaty and obtain the assent of other nations to it, would be to undertake a task so heavy that any statesman might well shrink from it. Mr. Harding, viewing the question from the new angle of responsi-

bility, will discover merits in the Treaty of Versailles, and even in the part of it which contains the Covenant of the League of Nations; that did not before appear to him. He will see how convenient to him it would be, how great a saving of trouble, to find some excuse for adopting the treaty and the covenant. He will find a large and influential group of Republicans who will advise that course. Mr. Taft, ex-President, Mr. Hughes, ex-candidate for the Presidency, Mr. Root, ex-Secretary of State and ex-Senator, Mr. Wickersham, ex-Attorney General, Mr. Hoover, who was in the running for the Presidential nomination, Mr. Schurman, ex-President of Cornell, Mr. Lowell, President of Harvard, and many others of less prominence were at heart warm supporters of the League and found some difficulty in adjusting themselves to Mr. Harding's position in the campaign. They will now use every effort to persuade the new President to accept the treaty. They will assist him in the making of any ingenious excuse for a change of attitude that may help him.

Mr. Harding will be a willing listener to their proposals. He will desire to simplify the position and save himself and his party much trouble by accepting the treaty, of course with some "reservations" which may not be of real importance, but which nevertheless may be magnified to the American public. Action along these lines will almost certainly be desired by Mr. Harding. And for the "peace, order and good government" of the world at large such action by the new President and the Republican Senate is much to be desired. But can Mr. Harding and his associates take this course?

Mr. Harding, in the latter part of his campaign, surrendered on the League question to Senators Borah and Johnson and the other extremists, who condemned the League without qualification of any kind. If there were others who wished a compromise on the League issue they were over-ruled by the extremists, who required Mr. Harding to take up a position of uncompromising hostility to the League and to the treaty. When President Wilson declared the Presidential election to be a "solemn referendum" on the question of the League of Nations, the extremists in the Republican side forced Mr. Harding into an acceptance of the issue.

It was as an avowed enemy of the League that Mr. Harding won his great victory. If he should be inclined to forget that such was the position he will find many to remind him of the fact. Already there are signs of the battle that will be waged within the Republican ranks on this important question. Already Mr. Harding is being warned against those who will desire him to forget. Mr. Vireck, editor of a German paper in New York, has reminded Mr. Harding in a published telegram that six million electors of German descent who cast their votes for him expect him to live up to his pre-election declarations. "With such men in the Senate", says the German editor, "as Moses,

Brandegge, Watson, La Follette, Johnson, Reed and Borah, the attempts of British propagandists to revive the League of Nations in some other form will be shipwrecked as miserably as was Wilson's Administration."

Senator Johnson too has given a similar warning: "The menacing, dangerous and entangling League", he says "has been emphatically and overwhelmingly repudiated."

Mr. Harding will have to make his choice between those who wish to adopt the Versailles Treaty, with some sort of reservations, and those who like Senator Johnson and his followers insist that the treaty has been and must continue to be repudiated. Our anticipation is that acceptance of the treaty, with some harmless reservations, will, in the end, be the new President's way out of the trouble. But there will be a lively fight between Mr. Harding and his present friends, the Johnsons and Borahs, before that end is reached.

The Canadian and the Hottentot

For the hundredth time there is an outcry in Canada against the British regulation which requires Canadian cattle to be slaughtered immediately on their arrival in England. At one of the Imperial Conferences not long ago, when there seemed to be some difficulty in finding grievances that called for remedy, the old question came up as a sort of godsend, the usual resolution against the regulation was passed, and—so it is alleged—the members of the British Government who were present gave an assurance that the regulation would be repealed. Time is passing, and the promise has not been fulfilled. Therefore there is some anger in Canada, which is supported by some resolutions passed at a recent convention of butchers in Great Britain. It is claimed that if the Canadian cattle could be admitted without restriction large numbers would be sent across, landed and fed until in a condition to be sent to the slaughter house at the right moment. Canadian critics complain particularly because the British authorities allege that the restriction is maintained as a protection against cattle disease, while it is asserted, with apparent good ground, that there is no disease among Canadian cattle.

The truth seems to be that, whatever may be said as to the motive of the regulation when first made, it is now and has for a long time been maintained as a protection to the English and Irish farmers against Canadian competition. The regulation, if we remember aright, was first made by a Conservative Government in England. It was condemned at the time by many Liberals and there was an expectation that on the change of Government the regulation would be abolished. But every move in that direction has been resisted as firmly by the British agricultural authorities un-