

TOPICS OF THE DAY

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES: THE OTTAWA SITUATION: BRITISH LABOUR'S FIRST YEAR IN POWER: OUTLOOK IN CANADA.

The United States has just passed through a major political crisis, which cannot fail to have a profound effect upon the fortunes of the approaching Congressional election and the Presidential election in 1948. After Mr. Henry Wallace, the Secretary of Trade and Commerce, made his now famous speech in which he criticized by implication the foreign policies pursued by his colleague, Mr. Byrnes, the Secretary of State, advocated a *rapprochement* with Russia and arraigned British Imperialism, President Truman, who beforehand had given the speech his blessing, was faced with the alternative of getting rid of Mr. Wallace from his Cabinet or admitting partnership in the attack upon Mr. Byrnes, whose resignation would then have become inevitable. So he chose to uphold Mr. Byrnes and dismiss Mr. Wallace, but the maladroit ineptitude which he displayed throughout the whole crisis has impaired further his already waning personal prestige. Moreover, the departure of Mr. Wallace, following upon the retirement of Mr. Ickes, removes from his Cabinet the last of the liberal politicians who were ardent cooperators with Franklin Roosevelt in the "New Deal" programme, and leaves it a distinctly conservative administration. In this character it can expect to retain the support of the voters of the states known as "The Solid South", but its prospects will be very bleak in the northern and western states, where Mr. Wallace, who intends to remain in politics, and his friends have many sympathisers, particularly among the labour elements that have already been antagonized by President Truman's labour policies. So, even if President Truman can avert a complete split in the Democratic party, and can secure renomination, he will enter the Presidential contest with thousands of voters, who always backed Roosevelt, indifferent to his fortunes if not bitterly hostile. Roosevelt had managed to convince the American people that the Democratic party was an instrument of reform and the Republican party an agency of reaction, but President Truman has contrived to destroy this distinction, and he and his party will pay a heavy penalty for it. Under the circumstances the Republicans see "glad confident morning again", and feel assured that the gates of power are once more opened up for them.

But, if the Democratic party, fighting as a conservative party, goes down to disastrous defeat, its recovery will be very difficult. The Republicans have preempted the ground as the conservative party of the United States, and there is no room in the country for two conservative parties. Indeed it is now more than possible that before the Presidential election comes round, the liberal Democrats led by such men as Messrs Wallace and Ickes and Senator Pepper of Florida may proceed with the almost solid support of the labour unions to organize a new Leftist party in the United States. The emergence, sooner or later, of a definitely Leftist party with a programme containing a strong flavor of Socialism is an inevitable development in the United States, and the recent crisis may well have accelerated it.

THE PRIME ACCOMPLISHMENT of the session of Parliament recently ended was not so much the very substantial volume of useful legislation, which it passed, as the success of the combined efforts of the House of Commons and the Senate to reestablish the legislative supremacy of Parliament, which had been waived in wholesale fashion to strengthen the hands of the Government for meeting swiftly and efficiently the dire exigencies of the war. But Ministers always hate to part with arbitrary powers which they find very convenient and greatly to their liking, and so they would fain have retained as many as possible of them for handling the problems of the post-war years. But their proposals for their perpetuation in connection with the *National Emergency Powers Transitional Act*, and the system of Foreign Exchange control, encountered such effective criticism and resolute opposition from all the other parties and from Liberals of an independent outlook that the Government, in order to secure any extension of its arbitrary authority in these matters, was compelled to accept very definite limitations for it. To this achievement Liberal members of the Senate made a notable contribution, and one of the leaders of the revolt, Senator Crerar, lately a member of Mr. King's Cabinet, coupled an admirable statement of the fundamental principles of Liberalism with a damning indictment of his former colleagues for their attempted betrayal of them.

The narrowness of the Government's majority in the House of Commons made the Government peculiarly susceptible to pressure from the critics of its policies, and its position has now

been made more precarious by the unexpected loss of a bye-election in the Pontiac division of Quebec, which the Liberals on the strength of its record had every reason to regard as a safe seat. The seat was lost not to the candidate of the Progressive-Conservative party, who ran a poor third, but to the champion of a local organization called *Les Electeurs du Pontiac*, who, without giving definite allegiance to Mr. Solon Low, the bellwether of the Social Credit party at Ottawa, advocated its gospel along with other radical reforms. Of the candidates he was, although by far the youngest, being only 29 years of age, the ablest speaker and most skilful campaigner, and his victory proved that ability and personality still count in Canadian elections. However, the political pundits do not interpret the result in Pontiac as an indication of the mass conversion of its voters to Social Credit doctrines, but rather as evidence, very ominous for the Liberal party, that, with the issue of conscription relegated to the background, many voters in French-Canada now feel free to record their displeasure with other policies of the Liberal party, and to vote for other parties. If, moreover, this disconcerting reverse is followed by the loss of another impending bye-election in the very dubious seat of Portage La Prairie in Manitoba, Mr. King will be left with only 123 regular followers in a House of 245 members, and thereafter his Government will always have a perilous life. He has lately intimated his intention of leading his party till the close of the present Parliament and of undertaking a reorganization of his Ministry. But, if the latter process involves the opening of risky seats, he will probably defer it. In any event, the portents now indicate that the present Parliament may not live out its statutory term, and the first business of the new session should be the passage of the projected redistribution measure which will increase the number of seats in the Commons from 245 to 255.

THE DECISION OF Prime Minister King to divest himself of the Ministry of External Affairs achieves an important administrative change which was long overdue. As the business of this department was comparatively small, there was considerable excuse for the Prime Minister adhering to the statutory arrangement which gave it into his care. But after Canada assumed all the trappings and responsibilities of a full-fledged nation, at the close of the First World War, the work expanded year by year at such a pace that the arrangement became positively

harmful to the national interest. A Prime Minister who has upon his hands the heavy burdens of leading Parliament and managing his Cabinet, of reaching decisions about a wide range of national problems and of directing the fortunes of his political party, could at the best give only cursory attention to foreign affairs, and had of necessity to rely in very large measure upon the abilities and wisdom of the chief officials of the Department who happily have been above the average in competence.

However, Mr. King had a strong motive for retaining personal control of our foreign affairs. He was well aware that, ever since the First World War, Canada's foreign policy and particularly any commitments which might involve Canadian participation in another European war contributed a very important factor in domestic politics, and he was determined to countenance no move which might imperil the allegiance of his French-Canadian followers who were in the main strongly permeated with isolationist doctrine. So he felt that he could not safely entrust the direction of foreign policy to any hands other than his own, and as the menace of another world blood-bath grew darker, this feeling grew stronger in his mind. But the principle of formulating a country's foreign policy primarily on domestic political considerations is thoroughly unsound and dangerous.

The foreign policies which Mr. King pursued did not avert the calamity of Canada's involvement in a Second World War. Foreign policy should be directed from a long-range view of the nation's best interest. It is highly desirable for this reason that it should not be in the hands of a perfervid political partisan, and that there be some continuity about it.

The divorce of the Department of External Affairs from the Prime Minister's Office is a highly commendable move. Although it is unfortunately not yet to be treated as a full-time job and its new head, Mr. St. Laurent, will retain his present portfolio of Justice, it can be assumed that this is only a transition stage and that when the Cabinet is next reorganized, External Affairs will have a separate Minister of its own. Mr. St. Laurent is a very able lawyer who in some respects—not in his handling of the espionage cases—can be rated an admirable Minister of Justice; but since he is the acknowledged leader of the French-Canadian Liberals, there can be a reasonable certainty that he will guide our foreign policy on lines strictly palatable to his French-Canadian compatriots, and will

manifest no enthusiasm for close co-operation with the other nations of the Commonwealth. But he will surely find time for making a greater contribution than Mr. King has done to the education of the Canadian Parliament and people about foreign affairs and our policies regarding them. The Opposition had good ground for making strenuous complaint that Mr. King had disdained to favour Parliament with any adequate account of his stewardship of Canada's interests either at the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London or at the Peace Conference in Paris.

MORE THAN A YEAR has now elapsed since the Labour Ministry of Mr. Attlee assumed office in Britain, and some appraisal of its record should now be appropriate. The foremost item in its credit balance is an immense volume of legislative accomplishment. By driving Parliament very hard, it has produced no fewer than seventy brand new statutes, including such major measures as the bills for the nationalization of the coal mines and of the Bank of England.

There are very few of these measures which the Opposition, if it came into power tomorrow, would repeal or amend materially. But it is only fair to say that most of the Government's legislation was greatly improved by public discussion and parliamentary criticism. To the latter the House of Lords with its huge Conservative majority, which has behaved with great wisdom, made an invaluable contribution. The Conservative peers were well aware that in view of Labour's very decisive mandate for far-reaching changes in the economic and social order, they could not afford to adopt an attitude of obstruction without incurring popular wrath. They have not, however, been complaisant to the Government's bills, but have subjected them to constructive criticism. Moreover, with certain exceptions, they have tried sedulously not to accentuate partisan strife or leave the impression that they were watchdogs for selfish vested interests and indifferent to the welfare of the mass of the people.

Civil servants who are working closely with the Labour Ministers report that most of them are both abler and more industrious than their Tory predecessors. Good progress has been made with the tasks of demobilization and reconversion, and the Government has shown great administrative energy, particularly in connection with the drive for increased exports,

and in the light of the very encouraging figures about export trade it is reaping some reward for its firmness in refusing to yield to the very intelligible popular clamour for more domestic supplies. Its record about the housing programme, as the raiding tactics of homeless veterans testify, is much less satisfactory and is a constant theme of criticism.

In the field of external policy the Attlee Ministry, recognizing that Britain is now too weak to sustain her old burden of Imperial commitments, is making an intelligent effort to lessen them by trying to negotiate harmonious settlement with the nationalists of India and Egypt about her withdrawal from these countries. But there is almost general admission that a sad bungle has been made about the attempted solution of the thorny Palestinian problem. Opinions differ greatly about the merits of Mr. Bevin as Minister of Foreign Affairs. He has achieved with Mr. Byrnes, the American Secretary of State, a happy concordat for co-operative action on many of the vital international issues, and he has won popular acclaim by his robust attitude towards the Russians; but the warm commendations, which the Tories have lavished upon some of his foreign policies, notably in connection with Greece, have convinced the Left Wing of his own party that they are not such as should be pursued by a Labour Ministry, and have evoked severe strictures from that quarter.

When the Government took power, it was foreseen that one of its weaknesses would be a dearth of first-rate men, and far too much of the burden has rested upon five men, Messrs Attlee, Morrison, Bevin, Dalton and Sir Stafford Cripps. Mr. Attlee is more or less a figurehead, but his personal popularity and gifts for conciliation are useful to prevent internal dissensions. Mr. Morrison, who has the clearest brain in the Cabinet, has to his credit a vast amount of solid work, and Mr. Dalton, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, has proved a great parliamentary success. Of the younger Ministers, Mr. Aneurin Bevan, the Minister of Health, and Mr. John Strachey, the Minister of Food, are the two who have enhanced their reputations during the past year. Among its parliamentary recruits the Labour party has an exceptionally large number of able young men, but Mr. Attlee has been very slow in moving to bring some of them into the lower offices of the Government and to give them training for heavier responsibilities. However, he has lately dropped some of his weaker brethren, like Sir Ben Smith, and given a

chance to able young Socialists like Mr. Mallalieu. The favourite accusation which the Tories level at the Government is that Ministers have been primarily concerned with giving practical effect to their ideological programme, and in pursuance of this goal have neglected vital national interests. But the Government has also shown caution in not pressing schemes of nationalization too extensively, and it has lately modified its policy about the iron and steel industry by deciding to co-operate with its leaders in a plan of reorganization under public control but without public ownership. Undoubtedly the British public is chafing at the continuance of a system of austerity, but the results of the recent byelection indicate that, while the Labour party has shed some of its popularity, the erosion is not yet serious enough to impair the validity of its mandate for drastic reforms, and the verdict of the independent *Economist* of London is that, as a Labour Government, the Attlee Ministry is a good one.

HOPES THAT THE baffling problem of India's future was well on the way to solution have risen only to wane. Mr. Jinnah and his Moslem League have revoked their acceptance of the constitutional plan and procedure propounded by the special mission of the British Cabinet for the achievement of complete autonomy for India, and have fallen back upon their original demand for their solution of a separate Muslim state to be called Pakistan. The experiment of an interim "caretaker" Ministry nominated by the Viceroy has proved unsatisfactory. However, the Congress party authorized its leader, Pandit Nehru, to accept the invitation of the Viceroy to form a provisional administration, and he has been engaged in this task. He offered the Muslim League 5 seats out of 14 in his Cabinet, and proposed also to include a Muslim who belonged to the Congress party, but Mr. Jinnah rejected his offer and protested in a public statement against "the installation in power of a Hindu majority on its own terms by the British Government to rule over Muslims with the help of British blood and treasure." The fury of the leaders of the Muslims over what they regard as their betrayal by the British Government is so great that men like Firoz Khan Noon, lately High Commissioner for India in London, whose pro-British zeal earned him some years ago warm plaudits and hospitalities during a visit to Toronto, have renounced all titles conferred on them by the British Government. The bitter campaign which they have been carrying on against the new

arrangement has produced bloody riots and affrays between Muslims and Hindus in Calcutta, (where the dead were numbered by the thousands,) Bombay and other leading cities. Something closely akin to a state of civil war prevails in certain provinces, and Anglo-Indian Colonel Blimps, who predicted that if India were given self-government, blood would run from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, are saying "We told you so." However, Mr. Jinnah and other Muslim leaders have condemned unreservedly the acts of violence, and the intervention of troops to assist the police has been effective in restoring peace in most places. Moreover, there has lately been one encouraging development in the decision of the leaders of the Sikh community, the Panthic Board, who had refused to endorse the plan of the British Mission, to enter the interim Ministry and participate in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly which is to frame a new constitution for India. The elections of delegates for the latter has now been virtually completed, and both the Congress party and the Muslim League have realized their expectations in regard to seats in it. But, when it meets, there will be a valuable balancing force in the shape of a substantial contingent of able and enlightened delegates, who have been elected by the various minority groups. The general situation remains very precarious, and there is always the danger that Russia, whose arm extends very close to the northwest frontier of India, will see an opportunity to fish in troubled waters. Meanwhile the Muslim leaders have modified their tone but not abandoned their campaign of protest, and the Nawab of Mamdot, President of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League, in renouncing his title by way of protest against the new plan, said lately: "What we want now is a clash between British Imperialism and Russian Communism. The British will then demand the help of Indian Muslims, who will demonstrate at that time their power and importance."

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SOME TIME AGO, shortly before death took him, one of the wisest and most learned men in Canada, in parting from an old friend after a long talk about the state of the world, said "I have come to the sorrowful conclusion that the human race has failed." If he were alive to-day to survey the grim condition of the world, he would have even more reason for his pessimism. Rather more than a year has now elapsed since the unconditional surrender of Japan ended the Second World War. Mankind,

after six harrowing years of bloody travail, breathed freely once more and felt able to cherish fond hopes that a new era of peace, security and settled prosperity had dawned with the subjugation of the forces of evil. But, alas, virtually no progress towards the realization of these hopes can yet be recorded. The recurring bouts of strife and bickering which have occurred in the meetings of the United Nations Organization, and so-called Peace Conference at Paris, reveal that national egotism and selfishness have only been slightly scotched by the terrible experiences of two bloodbaths for the world, and that the fund of statesmanship available in the world is wholly inadequate for the speedy and successful accomplishment of the pressing tasks which face it. But the most ominous feature of the situation is the deplorable division of the victors in the struggle for freedom into two antagonistic camps:—on the one side the Russians, with the array of satellite states in Eastern Europe which they have firmly tethered to Moscow, and on the other the Anglo-Saxon democracies, with another group of subordinate allies. Above them all hangs the menacing shadow of the Atomic Bomb with its frightening potentialities of destruction and, as far as is known, the Atomic Energy Committee of the United Nations has made little headway in reconciling the vital differences between the American and Russian ideas about a plan for its effective international control.

Many people are gradually becoming inured to the thought of the general doom of mankind as the result of a third world war fought with atomic bombs and other new weapons of devastating power. It is an index of the grimness of the present situation that Dr. Harold C. Urey, a distinguished American scientist, who made a notable contribution to the development of the atomic bomb, after delivering the now stereotyped warning of all scientists that failure to achieve international control of atomic energy will inevitably lead to a "civilization-destroying war," went on to propound the logical corollary, that to avert such a war the United States, while it still retained a monopoly of the atomic bomb, might have to declare war itself "with the frank purpose of conquering the world and ruling it as we desire and preventing any other sovereign nation from developing mass weapons of war."

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THE COLD AND TRAGIC truth is that even at this stage, when so cautious a statesman as Mr. Anthony Eden is publicly avowing his apprehensions about the menace of another world war, none

of the three great powers has made any serious effort to promote a generous international settlement on liberal lines, offering some guarantee to the world of future peace. The Russians are intent upon building up through control of satellite states an outer ring of bulwarks for security against an attack by a combination of the capitalist powers, which they foresee. The British are deeply concerned about the preservation of their line of communications to the East through the Mediterranean, and the Americans are making extravagant demands for bases in the Pacific in the interests of national defence. With these motives uppermost in their minds, their representatives at international conferences have engaged in long and almost indecent wranglings about the settlement of minor issues like the fate of Trieste. But since the machinery of an international organization in the United Nations was provided at San Francisco, none of the dominant powers has made any move to formulate a world-wide programme of settlement, which could either be accepted or made the basis of a possible compromise. The growing lack of confidence in the United Nations Organization will be confirmed by a long report of the International committee for the study of European problems, which is signed by 31 prominent statesmen, diplomats, scientists and scholars of six European countries, including such eminent figures as Lord Beveridge, M. Edmond Herriot, formerly Prime Minister of France, and Dr. M. L. Oliphant, the nuclear physicist. This report declared that under the present arrangement about the veto power the Security Council of the United Nations will never be able to prevent any nation from acting as it wishes, and that because the world's political structure has not been altered, the nations are now setting out on the same roads that lead to war. The signatories of the report can see no hope for the salvation of mankind save in the establishment of a world-wide federation entailing important surrenders of national sovereignty, and they urge the formation of political groups committed to the project of a world state and working to speed what the report calls "the normal evolution of the world towards unity as it has been evolving during the past 20 centuries". Here is the crux of the world's problem, the surrender of national sovereignty, and our own Prime Minister is evidently prepared for it, but there are scant signs of any inclination of the rulers of Russia or the United States or even of Britain to advance beyond the feeble limitations upon sovereignty involved in

Meanwhile Mr. Churchill proposes regional limitations of sovereignty for the creation of a United States of Europe, into which a Germany adequately punished for her sins and purged of her aggressive temper would be received as a full and equal partner with the chapter of retribution against her closed. This project has no element of novelty. It was advocated by a great statesman, Sully, several centuries ago, and another, Aristide Briand, after the last war devoted the closing years of his life to an eager campaign for it. The eminent Spanish political scholar, Ortegas y Gasset, in his admirable book *The Revolt of the Masses*, argued a dozen years ago that in view of the portent of the Russian Soviet system and the attractions of Communism for the masses of other countries, the leaders of western Europe should bestir themselves without delay to provide some counter dynamic to cure its sickness and revive the spirit of its peoples. He said he could see none likely to achieve these results except an intelligent plan for a western European Federation.

But Miss Dorothy Thompson has sound justification for her argument that there can be no restoration of political and economic health for Western Europe by a Federation or any other plans until there is a satisfactory permanent settlement about the fate of Germany, which has for half a century been the mainspring of the economy of continental Europe. Since V-day, Germany has been politically a void, divided for occupation purposes into four zones controlled by British, American, Russian and French troops, and while local German authorities have been given certain limited powers of administration, there has been nothing like the semblance of a German Government. And there has been no accurate means of gauging the trends of political sentiment inside Germany, until elections provided for under the *Potsdam Agreement* and designed to supply the Germans with a framework of local government in the shape of district councils were held a few weeks ago. But the outstanding feature of their results was the clear revelation that the ideological rift in politics between Western and Eastern Europe cuts down through the heart of Germany.

In the Russian zone the Socialist-Unity party, which the Communists dominate, won an absolute majority, with the Liberal party running second and a Roman Catholic party third. In the British zone the Roman Catholic Christian Democratic party carried the largest number of seats, but the Socialists were not far behind it and, while independent candidates together got about half as many votes as the leading

parties, the Communists secured only one-seventeenth of the popular vote. The vote in the American zone showed an almost identical political pattern, and in the French zone, which includes Bavaria, a great stronghold of Catholicism, the Christian Democrats surpassed the Socialists by two to one and the Communists polled only one-tenth of the votes cast. So the inference is that the conciliatory policies pursued in recent months by the Russians in their zone of occupation have been successful in inducing the majority of its inhabitants to follow the Poles, Czechoslovakians and most of the Balkan peoples in the direction of Communism. But in the three western zones there is visible, as there is in France, Italy and Belgium, a distinctly conservative bias, which seems to favour the economic and social order prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church. So this fissure beclouds hopelessly for the moment the prospect of achieving the basic aim of the *Potsdam Agreement*, a centralized system of joint control by the four powers as a prelude to the establishment of a central democratic government for Germany, and accordingly British and Americans are moving to unify the administration of their zones and hoping that the French will come into the new arrangement. The door will be left open for the Russians to participate, but in their present mood their abstention can be expected.

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