

CURRENT TOPICS

THE INITIATIVE of what is generally accepted as one of the greatest revolutions in history was taken with respect to Russian government in the proclamation issued by the czar on October 30. In this proclamation the czar expresses his anxiety to terminate all existing troubles and to make uprisings in the future unnecessary by "securing the unity and co-ordination of the power of the central government, and to assure the success of measures for pacification in all circles of public life which are essential to the well being of our (the Russian) people."

THE CZAR THEN DIRECTS the government to carry out what he calls his 'inflexible will' in the following manner: "First. To extend to the people the immutable foundations of civic liberty, based on the real inviolability of person, freedom of conscience, speech, union and association. Second. Without suspending the already ordered elections to the state Douma (national assembly,) to invite to participation in the douma, so far as the limited time before the convocation of the douma will permit, those classes of the people now completely deprived of electoral rights, leaving the ultimate development of the principle of the electoral right in general to the newly established legislative order of things. Third. To establish as an unchangeable rule that no law shall be enforceable without the approval of the state douma and that it shall be possible for the elected (representatives) of the people to exercise real participation in the supervision of the legality of the acts of the authorities appointed by us."

THIS IMPORTANT PROCLAMATION concludes in these words: "The government should abstain from any interference with election to the douma and keep in view my sincere desire for the realization of my ukase of December 25, 1904. It must maintain the prestige of the douma and have confidence in its labors, and in no way resist its decisions as long as they are not inconsistent with Russia's historic greatness. It is necessary to respect the ideals of the great majority of society and not the echoes of noisy groups and factions, too often unstable. It is especially important to secure the reform of the council of the empire on an electoral principle. We appeal to all faithful sons of Russia to remember their duty toward the fatherland, to aid in terminating these unprecedented troubles and to apply all their forces in co-operation with us, to the restoration of calm and peace upon our natal soil."

COUNT WITTE now Russia's premier was, it is said, chiefly instrumental in persuading the czar to issue this proclamation. In a public statement Count Witte says that he is sure the American people will rejoice with the Russian nation at this moment "when the Russian people have received from his Imperial Majesty promises and guarantees of freedom, and will join in the hope that the Russian people will wisely aid in the realization of those liberties by co-operating with the government for their peaceful introduction. Only thus will it be possible to secure the full benefits of the freedom conferred upon the people."

THE CZAR'S PROCLAMATION was received with great manifestation of joy by the Russian people generally, although the extremists insisted that the reforms promised were not all that they pretended to be. Disorders in many sections continue, but the opinion seems to be growing, even among some who at first doubted the seriousness of the proposed reform, that Russian autocracy is at an end. The opinion expressed by the old minister of finance "the old order of things is changed; Russia has a constitution" appears to be accepted as a correct statement of the situation. Doctor Dillon, the St. Petersburg correspondent for the London Telegraph says that the reforms are real and irrevocable, and that the people of Russia are now well on the way to liberty and a constitution.

POBEDONOSTSEFF, THE HEAD of the Russian church and known as the arch enemy of reform in Russia, a man who has in the past

wielded great influence over the czar, has resigned his post and a cablegram to the Chicago Record-Herald says: "The passing of this high priest of autocracy is second in importance only to the granting by Nicholas of a constitutional form of government." Premier Witte has organized a new cabinet and the czar has ordered the abandonment of arbitrary rule in Finland and a return to a constitutional form of government. Reports from Finland say that this is "the first strong evidence of a purpose to fulfill promises of reform given by the emperor."

ST. PETERSBURG CABLEGRAMS under date of November 1, say: "The people, while celebrating their new found freedom were in many instances set upon by Cossacks and police while sometimes the spirit of mob violence broke forth among the lower elements of the people, who gave themselves to pillage and destruction. The most serious disorders apparently occurred at Odessa, where hundreds of persons are reported to have been killed or wounded and where the rioting is momentarily expected to flare out into a repetition of the slaughter of last July, and at Kazan, where a three day's reign of terror was ended only by the retirement of all Cossacks to their barracks. A deplorable feature of the news from the interior is that anti-Jewish uprisings have occurred in many places, especially in South Russia, where the populace vented its hatred of the Jews by sacking their stores and clubbing the members of the race, in some cases resorting to the torch. The attacks on the crowds are reported to be in most cases the work of Cossacks, who many times were apparently let loose upon the people without direction or authority."

TALLEYRAND SAID "every one of Louis XVI's concessions came a day too late." Quoting this from Talleyrand the St. Louis Globe Democrat says that Nicholas II is wiser than was his unfortunate forerunner. The Globe-Democrat points out that there was small reason that reliance should be placed on former proclamations issued by the czar, but it contends that his latest manifesto "reiterates most of the concessions previously promised, makes the important further concession that 'no law shall be enforced without the approval of the state douma,' and that the members of that body shall 'exercise real participation in the supervision of the legality of the acts of the authorities appointed by us.'"

THE GLOBE DEMOCRAT adds: "The national assembly, which would have been only consultative under the previous grants of power, will now have some, at least, of the attributes of a real parliament. The basis of the electorate is broadened, too, so that more classes can take part in the choice of members of the assembly, though even now the grant is far from the manhood suffrage which the liberals had been demanding. Moreover, Count Witte has, under the authority conferred on him, formed a ministry, though this will be dependent on the monarch, as in Germany, and not on parliament, as in England and France. As already framed, the ministry has some strong men, but the dominant personality in it—who, at least, will be dominant unless the czar, in one of his paroxysms of vacillation, turns against him and gets under the sway of the bureaucracy again—is Count Witte."

ACCORDING TO THIS SAME authority: "Mirabeau would have saved Louis XVI and his monarchy if Louis had submitted early enough to the moderately liberal program which Mirabeau, Lafayette and other reformers had proposed. At least on the surface of things Nicholas has surrendered to Witte. He has thrown overboard his absolutism to save his head and his dynasty. To an extent not expected so soon or so peaceably by the friends of freedom in the outside world, the liberal propaganda in Russia has succeeded. Many will still be skeptical about the permanency of the reforms which have been promised, but most of the men on the ground seem to accept the concessions as genuine, so far as they go. It was fear and not affection that incited Nicholas' pledges, but the power of the populace for inspiring terror into a Russian ty-

rant, should Nicholas or some of his successors attempt this role, will be greater hereafter instead of less. Education is gaining ground in Russia. The impact of the world's opinion has at last shaken the autocrat's faith in his ability to raise his quarantine barriers high enough on his frontiers to keep out the twentieth century. In St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa and the rest of Nicholas' centers of agitation the liberals are acclaiming the new day. It is possible that October 30, 1905, will be hailed in the after time as day 1 of year 1 of the calendar of free Russia." The czar's proclamation has been accepted in the same spirit by American newspapers generally, and while it seems to be generally agreed that the czar is a weakling, it is likewise agreed that the new premier, Count Witte, is a strong man, really desirous of bringing out practical and lasting reforms.

A GLOOMY VIEW OF THE situation is taken by the St. Petersburg correspondent for the London Times. This correspondent under date of October 31 says that the situation is "more serious than ever," and adds: "The constitution granted yesterday has come too late. It satisfied nobody except the very moderate element, which is devoid of any influence upon the political evolution of Russia. The events of today fully justified the predictions in my last telegram. The imperial manifesto has served as a signal for a renewed conflict, and the conflict has been even aggravated by the introduction of a strife between the moderates on one side and the revolutionists on the other. This development has already given rise to sanguinary collisions. The reds and whites, as they are respectively styled, have shed each other's blood in the name of political freedom. St. Petersburg on this occasion can boast of far exceeding the provinces in the intensity of its political passions. Telegrams from other cities, except the larger centers, indicate a predominance of contented element. The people there have hailed the manifesto with patriotic processions and thronged the churches in devout thanksgiving. But, alas, churchgoers no longer have the guiding voice in the affairs of this country. The delays and blunders of the government and long heart-breaking oppression have created a resolute army, which refuses to parley with the oppressors, scorns their terms and demands nothing less than unconditional surrender. The inhabitants of St. Petersburg, whose political education is vastly more advanced than the great majority of the provincials, remain passively, if not actively, on the side of the revolutionaries. The manifesto is regarded as an avowal of weakness and an incitement of further agitation."

THE IMPLEMENT AGE, published at Philadelphia, has for a long time been waging vigorous war against the Harvester trust. The authorities of the state of Arkansas have filed complaints against the Harvester trust and we are told that similar complaints are contemplated in other states. The Implement Age tells an interesting story concerning the origin and the methods of the harvester trust. It says that the International Harvester company was former in the offices of J. Pierpont Morgan, with a capital stock of \$120,000,000 and was incorporated in New Jersey, August 12, 1902. It took over immediately, the plants and businesses of five of the largest manufacturers of harvesting machinery in the country. A month or so later, September 18, 1902, they organized the International Harvester company of America in Wisconsin, with a capital stock of \$1,000,000. This was for the purpose of having a selling organization to take care of the output of the manufacturing company, the International Harvester company, and to sell the products in the various States, and also to escape the taxation on the capital of \$120,000,000 in some of the states where concerns doing an interstate commerce, are taxed on their capital.

SOMETIME LATER THE International Harvester company bought the plant and business of Aultman, Miller & Co., at Akron, Ohio, for about \$650,000 at a receiver's sale, through a couple of gentlemen who were not supposed to be connected with the International Harvester