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Efforts of the President Secure Peace for World

When the Portsmouth conference was about to convene The Independent pointed out why it was necessary for Russia to have peace. It was shown that because of Russia's desperate plight there was good reason to hope that a treaty of peace would be signed. The outcome has justified The Independent's view.

But the mere fact that Russia, bereft of a navy and torn by internal dissensions, could not hope to achieve anything substantial if the war continued, was not of itself sufficient to make peace certain. If Japan could have gained more by keeping up the fight there would have been no peace. Undoubtedly the Mikado and his counselors saw that there were many selfish reasons why Japan, as well as Russia, should have peace. And because they did see this they did not insist on terms which Russia could not accept.

It is true that Russia's finances were seriously impaired by the war, but it is also true that Japan had piled up a tremendous debt at which the financiers of the world were beginning to murmur. A continuation of the war would have increased this debt with discouraging rapidity and without bringing sufficiently great results to warrant an expenditure that might never have been met by an indemnity. Japan had pushed the war to almost its ultimate limits. About the only thing that could have been achieved that had not already been achieved was the capture of Vladivostok, and Japan did not forget the lesson of Port Arthur. Vladivostok might have held out for years, and a relieving army of half a million men would have been pounding constantly at the backs of the assailing Japanese.

Russia could obtain nothing worth while by such a war, but

neither could Japan. On the other hand, both would merely pile up debts and imperil their financial integrity. To this the financiers were unalterably opposed, and who can tell how large a share the financiers had in bringing about peace? Perhaps the president could, if he would. At all events, the president will receive, and should receive, credit for the restoration of peace. To him the world owes a great debt of gratitude and we shall hear his good work proclaimed in all the lands.

Two facts stand out prominently as a result of the conference—the magnanimity of Japan and the triumph of M. Witte. It must not be forgotten that while peace was desirable to Japan, and although a continuation of the war could have brought little gain, Japan was in an excellent position to maintain hostilities if the Mikado had wished to insist on the payment of an indemnity.

Undoubtedly M. Witte will be the great statesman of the changing order in Russia. His achievements at the peace conference, even though due as much to the generosity of Japan as to his own force of will and diplomatic adroitness, will make him the idol of the Russian people. His adaptability, as shown by his skill in making himself and his people well liked in a nation where sentiment has been overwhelmingly favorable to Japan; his kindness, courtesy and largeness of view, as illustrated by his admirable speech to the newspaper correspondents, have obtained for him a secure place in the esteem of Americans and will win for him the affection of the Russian masses now engaged in the final struggle for freedom.

Railway Bureaucrats Change Front With Reference to Government Ownership

Those adaptable literary gentlemen who lend their lustrous thoughts to the railway argument bureaus are beginning to view with alarm the trend toward government ownership. It is not so many months ago that these same gentlemen asserted with great economic perspicacity that government ownership was much to be preferred to government regulation. At that time government ownership of railways seemed so remote that they considered it safe and sane to propound an argument for government ownership in order to discredit government control.

But events are moving swiftly. The arguments that sufficed a few months ago are already outworn and must be discarded. Glib arguments in favor of government ownership were permissible when it had only a far-off significance. But "in less time than it takes to ripen a strawberry" government ownership has become a nightmare to the financiers of the railway world. Consequently the literary gentlemen have been instructed to trim their sails for a beat to windward. They are now expected to oppose not only government control, but government ownership as well. Witness the following lucubration:

It would not be at all like having the government attempt to operate a railroad through Nebraska. Here there are political bosses in every voting precinct, and every such boss would insist on having something to say in the management of the local end of the railroad. He would also have, just as he calculates on having now, the votes of the railroad men behind him. Of course under the civil service such a condition would not be contemplated, but they would exist just the same. Under the civil service the postal service is not presumed to be a political machine, but it is just the same, and the most powerful and unyielding in the country,

Postal employes make no bones of it. They band themselves into ostensible service improvement organizations, if not for political purposes, at least with manifest political results. Their meetings are nothing more nor less than political rallies, and always laudatory of and in fidelity to the prevailing national administration. Wherever you find a postal employe now voting anything other than the straight republican ticket, you can bet he is doing it on the sly and is in mortal terror lest some superior in rank may find it out. Go out among your acquaintances in the postal service and find, if you can, a single one who, though he may be a democrat in principle, dare let it be known. Then go out and find, if you can, a single republican attache of the service who does not make the fact known upon every appropriate occasion, and on some that are not appropriate. Here is the greatest menace of government ownership. This is the condition that the Panama experiment does not have to meet. If the railways of the country were owned by the government and manned by men of its selection, as foreshadowed by Expert Dalrymple, it would be the biggest and most powerful and most dangerous political machine in the history of the world, and the president who controlled it could give Czar Nicholas and Kaiser Wilhelm cards and spades in a game of despotism and beat them out.

Can anyone contemplate the patriotic pleadings of these gentlemen without being moved to tears? They foresee that the railways will become the Octopus of politics and they wish to warn the people against a terrible catastrophe. It matters little to these devotees of the inconsistent that the railways are now, and have been for many years, a gigantic force for evil in national and state politics. They insist on being patriotic even at the cost of being called hypocritical. If they can save the nation from ruin, these friends of the people will endure with much peace of soul and mental serenity the harsh epithets applied to them by agitators and demagogues.

But what of their argument? Is it true that under govern-