

## Current Comment on Leading Topics

### CONCLUSION OF PEACE

The peace agreement concluded by the Russian and Japanese envoys has been the main topic of editorial comment during the past week. It furnishes food for a wide variety of opinions, but the writers unite in paying tribute to the efforts of President Roosevelt:

The terms of peace contain nothing which is humiliating to either belligerent. Russia has lost much—its navy, Manchuria, Port Arthur, the Chinese Eastern railway, and its prestige in the orient—but has saved its "honor." Japan has gained much and has saved its "honor." It has not been humiliated as it was after the conclusion of the Chinese war, when the European nations compelled it to give up Port Arthur. Each nation will be free now, thanks in part to the generous efforts of President Roosevelt, to devote itself to the arts of peace. A year more of fighting would have exhausted both financially, and an irredeemable paper currency would have taken the place of gold in both empires. They have escaped that danger. The Russian government can devote itself to the restoration of internal peace and that of Japan to the restoration of domestic industry and the exploitation of Corea. Each has been so much worn down by war and is in such need of rest that they are likely to remain at peace for many years.—Chicago Tribune.

There is perhaps some exaggeration, but rather pardonable exaggeration, in the extreme laudation that is pouring upon President Roosevelt from all quarters of the world for the part he is considered to have taken in the consummation of peace. There is entire agreement, apparently, among both public officials and private citizens of the utmost distinction in all the leading countries that he is the man to whom is principally to be credited the gratifying result that has been reached, if not that without his intervention peace would have been impossible. This gives Mr. Roosevelt a distinction perhaps without parallel in history, and fully warrants the suggestion that the next Nobel peace prize should be given to him. Before this honor can be conferred, however, there will be needed an official statement of exactly what the president really did in the matter—a point upon which we are yet quite in darkness, and darkness that is, to say the least, not illumined by Baron Kaneko's latest statement, contradicting himself, that he had no personal connection with the negotiations at Portsmouth, and that his visits to Oyster Bay were only social.—Providence Journal.

A few weeks ago the kaiser and the czar met on a yacht and held a long conference. What they said to each other is known only to themselves. Russia's plenipotentiaries came to the peace conference with a determination to yield very little to the representatives of Japan, and a feeling of confidence that they would be able to practically dictate the terms of settlement of the war. They have been successful. Is Japan afraid of the mailed fist of the kaiser?—Buffalo Evening Times.

He gains immensely thereby in renown and popularity. When the time comes for further honors he will be almost invincible. Whether he sought it or not, by this last act he has fixed himself more firmly in the popular regard. The opposition was already broken and disorganized. He has swept it away. What he now protests that he will not seek or accept he finds himself forced to take if it is thrust upon him by the overwhelming sentiment of the country.—New York World.

Messrs. Witte and Rosen probably consider it a great diplomatic victory because they did not have to give up their socks and undershirts.—New York Press.

Both nations have won in the negotiations from their respective standpoints. M. Witte has saved his emperor from the re-

proach of accepting what he regarded as humiliating terms, and has gained by his diplomatic skill exceptional conditions of peace for his country. He goes home with his reputation as a statesman and diplomat greatly enhanced. Baron Komura has won for Japan all the objects for which the war was fought and the approval of the public—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Everybody will incline to agree that the Marquis Ito, the same statesman who brought the war with China to so wise a political conclusion, is the chief of the elder statesmen by whose advice the Mikado has brought to an equally wise conclusion the far greater war with Russia. He can well afford to disregard the passing anger of the Japanese jingoes, being assured of the approval of time and of the world. He may say of his action what a great western statesman said of his when it had made him temporarily unpopular. "I was bound to serve my constituents. To be pleased with my service was their affair, not mine.—New York Times.

Russia, on the other hand, comes out of the struggle with a great loss of prestige and of property. Her navy is destroyed; her military, political and commercial establishment in Manchuria is wiped out, only a single ice-bound port remaining in her possession, and her plans for the rounding out of her empire in the orient are forever nullified. Estimated in money, the aggregate of the Russian losses probably reaches 1 1/4 billions of dollars. It will be seen, then, that Japan, while abandoning much on which she might have insisted, has actually made a very profitable settlement. There is, therefore, no just ground for the cry set up by certain elements among the Japanese that the honor of their nation has been sacrificed nor yet for the assumption advanced on the Russian side that the outcome is a victory for Russian diplomacy. As a matter of fact, the outcome demonstrates, above all else, the weight of the influence which the United States has come to exercise in international affairs. It was President Roosevelt who prevailed upon the belligerent nations to provide for the holding of the peace conference at Portsmouth. When apparently insurmountable difficulties arose, it was President Roosevelt stepped into the breach, suggested means of compromise and finally persuaded the Japanese government to adopt the conclusions which rendered peace possible. By what he has thus accomplished, our president has raised this nation to the dignity of being the potential peacemaker of the world, an achievement the glory of which will outshine in history the greatest of triumphs achieved by force of arms. Honor is due to Japan for her magnanimity exhibited in an emergency wherein she had the right to be dictatorially exacting; honor is due to the Russian, De Witte, for his statesmanlike handling of a situation bristling with difficulties, but, above all, honor is due to the sturdy, manful, resourceful American, to whom belongs the credit of securing a successful issue to the peace conference, in spite of seemingly insuperable obstacles. Theodore Roosevelt is the real hero of this epoch-making occasion.—Pittsburg Leader.

### NO GRAFT IN EUROPE

Former Consul Frankenthal makes the astounding assertion that there is no graft in Europe. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch thinks the statement true and states the reasons why European countries—presumably Russia is excepted—do not suffer from dishonesty in office:

Former Consul Frankenthal, who represented the United States in Berne for many years, has made a study of the class of immigrants who are pouring into America, and he makes the assertion in an interview in the Post-Dispatch on Sunday that twenty per cent of them have police records which render them undesirable. Mr. Frankenthal has evolved a method of barring this criminal element. He would demand of each immigrant a certificate of character from the

authorities of his native town. In reply to the question whether such certificates could not be obtained fraudulently the consul said: "There is no graft in Europe." Astounding assertion! Yet those who have lived longest over there are as one in certifying to its truth. There are two reasons for absence of graft. Officials are in most cases appointed or elected for life and are thus removed from political influence or the fear of it. And the secret service system, which enables the police to produce at a moment's notice the record of any man or woman, complete to the most minute details, makes corruption so dangerous that only the most daring scoundrel would fall under the temptation.

### WATSON ON POPULISM

Tom Watson's Magazine for September contains this illuminating exposition of Populism, which is described as a protest as well as a creed:

In its last analysis Populism is a protest against existing evils and an organized effort to restore the government system of our fathers. The enemies of reform indict us as disturbers of the public peace, and, as foes to the best interests of society, attempt to set the conservative elements of the country against us. This is nothing new; the enemies of reform have always tried to overwhelm with ridicule and abuse those whose attacks upon social, political and ecclesiastical evils could not otherwise be met. In every society there are those who seek to fatten upon special privileges; speak against special privileges, and you incur the bitter hatred of those who enjoy them. They who dared to say that the public lands of Rome should be restored to the public were butchered by the privileged few who had seized the lands. When Turgot, in France, and after him Calonne, proposed to avert national bankruptcy and revolution by laying a tax upon the colossal property of the church and nobility, they were howled out of office by the blind selfishness of the privileged classes, who drifted madly into bloody revolution rather than concede the just demand for reform. When the Chartists in England demanded annual parliaments, manhood suffrage, secret ballot, the laying off of regular parliamentary districts and the payment of stated salaries to the members, a storm of indignation, backed by the fixed bayonet of the British soldier, drove the Chartists into the outer darkness of political defeat, and another generation had to be born and educated before the reasonable demands of the Chartists became (with one exception) the law of Great Britain. So the Populists, asking nothing that shrinks from the test of full and fair discussion, have been pitilessly assailed as a lot of cranks, fanatics and hoodlums, whose alleged principles were unworthy of serious consideration. The very essence of Populism is antagonism to class legislation and to special privilege. Its constant text is "Equal and exact justice to all men," its constant purpose to check the tendency which concentrates the political power and all material prosperity into the hands of the few. We arraign existing conditions, and we say that the worst features of the European system, which our forefathers came here to escape are creeping into our government and finding secure footing in our statute book. Our corporations have become a privileged order, armed with the power to tax the unprivileged, and thus we have an aristocracy. Our wealth has been exempt from taxation, made secure from the ordinary chances of competition by laws which tend to make the rich richer; and thus by legalizing the advantages of the millionaire we make certain that the numbers of those who must remain penniless shall ever increase. Wealth, after all, is but a common fund from which all must derive existence. If a few have seized upon more than they are legally and equitably entitled to, the many will get less than they need and less than they legally and equitably deserve. Populism would remedy the disease by removing the cause. We trace every evil of our present situation to some departure from the true principles upon