

Psychology Of The Hour In Europe Is Still War

Reparations and Debt Problem Not One of How Much Each Nation Can Pay but How Much Each Can Get Out of Paying Before the Next Conflict.

By DAVID LAWRENCE
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(This is the eighth of Mr. Lawrence's dispatches from Europe dealing with post-war reconstruction problems as they appear to him after five years absence. He finds that the French have made amazing progress in restoring those portions of their country that were devastated in the war, but that their mood after five years is still one of vivid war recollections. That is why he started his survey of European reconstruction on the battle fields of France where he says every student of French policy should start.)

Paris, July 24.—How real is France's fear of another invasion by Germany? In America the average man is inclined to shrug his shoulders and say "there is not going to be another war for some time, because the people are too poor to fight again." But in Europe the average man has an altogether different idea of what constitutes the recuperative power of a nation.

In fact, the whole quarrel about reparations is not a dispute over what each nation can pay, but what each wants to pay, for there seems to be a general belief that in another ten or possibly fifteen years all the European powers will be back on their feet economically speaking and ready to go to war again.

So vivid is the thought of another war in fifteen years that already the French are beginning to worry about the fact that when that time comes they will be out-numbered in man power by Germany almost two to one. The French are doing everything they can to increase the birth-rate. They realize that because of the heavy losses in men during the war families that would have been born and would have furnished troops for the years beginning 1935 or thereabouts will simply not exist for France. Even in 1914 the French birthrate was much lower than the German. Indeed, the French have been passing all kinds of laws urging people to marry and have larger families. Reduced railroad fares, exemptions from certain taxes, and other inducements have been offered to stimulate the raising of larger families.

Even if the war hadn't broke out in 1914, statisticians had it all figured out that the population of France would fall from thirty-nine million to thirty-five million in 1950. The loss of a million and a half men must be taken into consideration as a permanent factor in the next twenty years as well as the fact that while practically all men in France were at the front the birthrate declined so much that estimates today are very pessimistic for the French army. Some statisticians claim that the French will be unable to put in the field fifteen years hence half the number of men they were able to mobilize in 1914.

As for the Germans, they always did have an excess in population because they have believed right along in raising large families. Losses in man power during the war will not affect Germany half as much as France. The last war, the French claim, has tended to stabilize Germany's supply of man power, removing some of the inconveniences of over population for which Germany has been seeking an outlet for the last two decades.

All this is predicted, of course on the idea that the wars of the future as in the past will depend upon the size of the land armies and will not depend either on naval or air supremacy. It is curious indeed, in talking to military men here, to find them still thinking in terms of forts, guns and trench systems. They do not seem to be as fearful of the use of new weapons of warfare as might be expected. For instance, there is a good deal of agitation in the press just now about the gradually increasing size of the British air fleet which will challenge France's supremacy of the air. Similarly the French have succeeded in exempting from the Washington naval limitations treaty, restrictions on submarines. But nothing seems to have been done about chemical warfare.

American experts have figured out that a whole city of people could be wiped out in a few hours by dropping the rain gas from airplanes, and that if war had lasted a few months longer tens of thousands of troops would have been killed by the Allies through the use of these new inventions. To all this the French do not seem to have risen. They say it is as yet unproved that chemicals are as deadly as claimed. They say the last war did not prove that gas bombs killed as many men as shells and bullets, so they will stick to those as the principal weapons and will think of war in terms of another German invasion by infantry and artillery. There is no doubt that the Germans are relying to some extent on the new weapons of warfare for the next conflict.

Underlying the French apprehension is the ingrained fear of the German capacity for invention and mischief. The psychology of the hour is still war. As for America, there are facetious Frenchmen who say: "Of course, the United States will not be drawn in—that is, not for the first two years."

Writes His Name in Carolina Concrete

Governor of Tennessee Leaves Reminder of His Inspection of State Highways

Nashville, Tenn., July 25.—Governor Peay wrote his name not in the sand, but in the imperishable concrete of a North Carolina highway when he inscribed with a stick in the roadbed still soft, "Austin Peay, Governor of Tennessee, June 11, 1923."

This was at Landis, N. C., where a large highway building program was under way when the governor and other Tennesseans visited there on the recent tour of North Carolina's highway system.

The executive inscribed his name in the fresh concrete at the request of the North Carolina members of the party.

"The interstate meeting and tour of highway authorities and officials of three states was an epochal event, the most determining factor toward the passage of the proposed \$75,000,000 bond issue so far in Tennessee," said P. M. Estes, president of the Tennessee Good Roads Association, at whose suggestion the tour was planned.

The Tennessee Good Roads Association is going to commemorate the trip by the erection of a marker in concrete with bronze tablet to be placed at a high point on the Tennessee-North Carolina state-line, where the official party was met by the North Carolinians and formal greetings were exchanged, Mr. Estes said.

There were 50 or more who met the Tennesseans at the State line, including Highway Commissioner Page of North Carolina, and at first the party thought they had suddenly run upon a mob, Mr. Estes said. Instantly the cameras began to click and motion picture machines got into action and welcome was extended with the exchange of short

but formal addresses.

Governor Cameron Morrison accompanied Governor Peay and the party for two whole days over a portion of the approximately 1,500 miles traveled.

The governors "talked shop" along the way, said Mr. Estes, Governor Morrison telling Governor Peay that the people are squarely behind the highway construction and maintenance program, which had exceeded his most sanguine expectations, and that he had based his political future on the program.

"There were eight cities averaging around 30,000 population, which we could make in one day, Charlotte, Stateville, Salisbury, High Point, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Durham and Raleigh, all with modern and handsome hotels, modern streets, schools and beautiful residences, in which the highway program has played a great part," the roads association president said.

"He added that he confidently believed that the bond issue had been put over in Tennessee by the official insight into the fine North Carolina system and the public sentiment that is being aroused throughout the State for good roads.

"The association is being asked for speakers to be assigned in various parts of the State and we have been asked to conduct a demonstration each day for the three days of the West Tennessee Farmers Institute this month," asserted Mr. Estes.

"The party which visited North Carolina was impressed not only with the development of the highway system, but with the entire economic development," Mr. Estes concluded.

"The members of the tri-state party agreed that the great need is to have a highway system right away, linking the three states and furnishing an outlet to the seaboard, he stated.

FAMOUS OLD THEATER TO BECOME MARKET

London, July 25.—Shall it be Opera or Onions is the question agitating holders of business premises in Convent Garden Market. Business has grown to such an extent of late that dealers allege the Opera House, which is admittedly old and decaying, should be demolished and the site utilized for an extension of the congested market.

While people complain they cannot get to the opera with their motor cars because the market wagons block the way, fruit and vegetable merchants assert that a food market is more important to the general public than "Faust" or "Tanhauser."

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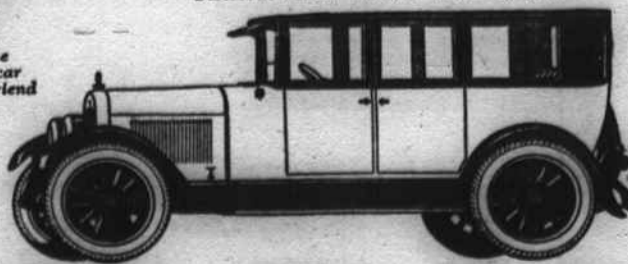
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