

paring to add large sums to its naval budget.

The reason is clear. England will inevitably be drawn into a war between Japan and the United States. Which side, is a secret of the future; for one would have to be 'intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity,' as Disraeli said of Gladstone, to talk seriously, of the sacredness of treaties and alliances, after what the world has recently witnessed. But England would find itself in a very difficult position. The people of India are restless and their sympathies would be pro-Japanese. The Dominions are more and more determined to have their opinion count in the councils of the Empire, and they are equally anti-Japanese.

On the ninth of last December, Baron Sakamoto, a very eminent member of the Chamber of Peers, advocated renewing the Japanese alliance, but he insisted strongly that

Great Britain must waive all the conditions of the earlier stipulation in the matter of possible hostilities between Japan and the United States. His words were received with general approbation. Public sentiment in Japan knows exactly what it wants. It wants to renew the Anglo-Japanese alliance, subject to the condition that England engage to join it, in case of war with the United States. On the other hand, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, which are to-day nations and no longer colonies, are in full accord with the United States in favoring a convention relating to Asiatic immigration as recently suggested by Senator Lodge.

It will take all of Lloyd George's suppleness to convince the White race and the Yellow race that he is the devoted friend of each. If he succeeds in getting the alliance past this Charybdis and this Scylla, he will have indeed won his title as the Celtic sorcerer.

[*L'Opinion* (Paris Nationalist Literary Weekly), January 29]

BRIAND'S SEVENTH CABINET

BY JEAN DE PIERREFEU

A CHAMBER filled to suffocation, humming with rumors, swarming like an ant hill, crowded benches, a public of professionals and amateurs, all equally impatient to see the curtain rise. Briand, with his Cabinet in battle line behind him, mounts the platform to read his declaration of policy.

The new head of the Ministry — for the seventh time, leader of a cabinet — is conspicuously unperturbed. He

reads with his expressive voice — thrilling when it vibrates in its lower notes — clearly, with care, evidently intent only upon performing well a necessary duty. Article follows article; one by one he takes up the great questions which confront us. The Chamber applauds some passages and lets others pass in silence. Now and then, some impatient group audibly murmurs. A voice interrupts, another voice protests; whereupon the presiding officer

strikes his bell vigorously, and the reader continues his recital.

Veterans around the press table comment aloud: 'Too long.' In fact, the Chamber begins to be restless. We can see that the representatives of the people are impatient to talk; but on the whole, they show model restraint. M. Briand reaches the end of his discourse without interruption, and quickly leaves the platform, amid sufficiently prolonged applause. At once, the Chamber becomes noisy and disorderly, like school boys released at recess.

We usually say that a ministerial programme means nothing. It consists of promises; and we judge cabinets by performances. The deputies, feeling, doubtless, that the new Premier's statement was a mere formality, listened with a slightly wearied air. Everyone knows that the present Chamber strives to be different from its predecessors. Elected under a more liberal franchise, composed for the most part of men new to the game of politics, it affects a particular interest in the general welfare. It was evidently guarding against seeming to throw itself into the arms of M. Briand. That gentleman, in turn, showed by his phlegmatic indifference, that he asked of the Chamber only the confidence due every new cabinet at the outset.

Did the attitude of Parliament betoken sagacity? That is by no means certain. It suggested an affected skepticism unrelated with actual conditions. Deputies who propose to outdo their predecessors, should have more faith in themselves.

However, the new Chamber has discovered that its task is by no means light, and possibly its confidence is somewhat shaken. I should have liked to see it more responsive to the ministerial programme. That would have

suggested that the members knew what they wanted, and did not need instruction.

M. Briand stated clearly and precisely what he proposed to do. He cannot be accused of underrating his difficulties.

Methodically, he enumerated his tasks, one by one, in the order of their importance, explaining how he proposed to deal with each: German disarmament, reparations, the Eastern question, Bolshevism, the army law, financial and economic reconstruction, social reforms, administrative reforms, resuming relations with the Holy See, domestic policies. I could not see that he left us in the dark as to his proposals on any one of these burning questions. It would have been difficult to say more than he did in such a statement. Briand is too old an orator to waste eloquence on an occasion like this. He did not try to be brilliant, in order to invite applause. He chose a dry, matter-of-fact manner of presenting his proposals, in numbered paragraphs, setting forth plainly what he had in view.

Some of his statements seemed to me of exceptional gravity. For instance, referring to Germany he said: 'We have the power; we can, and we shall, employ it, if necessary, to enforce respect for all the engagements which have been signed. But Republican France is essentially pacifist, and it seeks to induce Germany to fulfil its obligations by peaceful means. France demands its due. It is reasonable. It does not demand what is impossible.' It would be difficult to misunderstand the sense and the significance of such a solemn declaration. Germany is not to be permitted to evade its obligations. It is given notice that our policy depends on its own policy, and that we shall not hesitate to adopt severe measures if it proves impossible to

avoid them. He said further: 'Under present conditions, we shall follow the policy of our predecessors in refusing to recognize the soviet government.'

This Chamber of Deputies contains so many young men that it is particularly responsive to eloquence. It is easily moved to applaud even contradictory arguments, if they are advanced by able orators. As I have already suggested, a minister cannot secure that body's support merely by laying his programme before it. It wants to be convinced. That is why the Cabinet statement, with its intentional business-like simplicity, left the members cold and somewhat disappointed.

However, they woke up later, when the speakers warmed to the debate. There, surely, were orators enough. A dozen had registered interpellations. Some of these had the modesty to withdraw. Others talked without having anything to say.

Then M. Pressemane appeared. His specialty is making scenes and sowing discord. He implored the Chamber with vehemence, with exaggerated gestures, with alternating appeals and indignation, to witness the untold infamies of the bourgeois government. He is a speaker skilful in exciting his auditors to anger. A dangerous orator he must be, in great public mass meetings, when facing a trusting and untutored audience. He is a master of invective. Nevertheless, he wasted his efforts this time.

The man who really profited by the unsteadiness of nerves aroused by Pressemane's Socialist harangue was M. Forgeot. That gentleman is a polished orator. His voice is clear, well-modulated, and incisive. His gestures are restrained, graceful, and always significant. He does not belong to the studied, affected school of speakers. He talks without declaiming,

but with vigor and persuasion. One notes that his speeches consist of two parts: first, a lucid, luminous statement of the problem he is discussing; second, a challenge to his opponents' logic, where he does not always disdain to resort to skilful sophisms. This is his moment of triumph. He becomes animated, alert, at once elusive and aggressive, and skilful the adversary who escapes his thrusts.

This time, he was in especially good form. Realizing that the Chamber was disposed to be ill-humored, he made a speech remarkably well calculated to undermine the confidence which the Cabinet demanded. Such speeches cannot be made impromptu. Forgeot knew, beforehand, what the Premier's statement would contain. He utilized to the utmost the advantage which a man with no responsibilities invariably has over a man who has every responsibility to bear. Discussing reparations, the speaker contrasted two attitudes: that of Poincaré, who wants us to exact the last ounce of flesh possible under the Treaty of Versailles, and that of Millerand, who considers it far safer to fix a definite sum. Should we scale down our payments? He concluded by asking which plan Briand proposed to follow.

Such a combination of malice and cleverness at once captivated the Chamber, which found itself in perfect agreement with the speaker, and fancied it had always agreed with him and wanted just what he did. The orator won new support with every word he uttered. Briand seemed already to be fading into the background of the Chamber's mind.

Suddenly, the charm was broken. Forgeot contrasted Catholicism and Bolshevism, invoking the first as the eternal defender of property, the true champion of conservatism. Why not utilize this tremendous force? But

that was too audacious a conception. The enthusiasm of the Chamber chilled. Men at once comprehended that the speaker was talking like a philosopher and not like a statesman, whose business it is to maintain a sure majority in a Republican parliament. His theories were ingenuous, but were they practical? Except for a few young deputies, easily captured by fair words and new theories, the members realized at once that no cabinet could follow the speaker's proposals and survive.

That is why, in spite of the vigorous applause he received, this brilliant orator did not win the day. He was merely its poet laureate.

Night brings counsel. Briand, who thoroughly knows men, let the Chamber meditate for that period on what had been said. But that was enough. The moment the session opened the next day, he mounted the platform.

As we watched him ascend the steps to the speaker's tribune, quietly, a little heavily, slightly bowed, we all instinctively divined the incomparable mastery which this man possesses over a Parliament which can hide no secrets from his eyes.

Immediately, perfectly sure of the effect he wished to produce, he placed himself — by his attitude, his voice, his thought — in complete opposition to the young deputy from the Marne, who had spoken yesterday, and to whom all knew he intended to reply. Forgeot had been brilliant, aggressive, self-confident; Briand was prudent, indulgent, almost paternal. He knows that young men like dramatic situations — bold solutions, but that experience counsels prudence. Without being pedantic, with the utmost good nature, he gave the Chamber a lesson in political sagacity which was not lost.

First, he confessed the profound emotion he felt in the presence of the

difficulties he had to resolve. His voice, his caressing inflections, expressed that emotion convincingly. But the Premier soon dropped that attitude. When you are devoting your whole soul to the service of your country, you must show yourself stouthearted. He intended to do the job in hand; and to do that well, he must have the full confidence of the Chamber.

Therefore, in order that he might receive this confidence, he wished first to reply to the criticisms of his cabinet selections: 'A ministerial crisis — it is the seventh which I have had the honor to resolve — begins and ends with men. That is to say, it affords an opportunity for a manifestation of many noble and generous sentiments. Here and there, it also may arouse sentiments which are not quite noble.' I leave you to imagine the combination of malice and good humor in these words. The Chamber laughed. It was already conquered. His manner pleased the members. The siren which had been painted as so dangerous yesterday, no longer frightened them. As he proceeded with his speech, the deputies found their sympathy growing for this veteran statesman, who explained so simply how we may do good work even with the imperfect instruments we are forced to use in this world below.

But the philosophical optimist rapidly yielded to the responsible statesman. There are boundaries which cannot be crossed without compromising the security of the country. To counsel disorder is madness. Whenever it becomes necessary to repress disorder, the Premier will do his duty.

Passing to the foreign problem, Briand explained his views in further detail. France expects the just fruits of her victory. She seeks peace, but it would be intolerable for her to be made, after all her sacrific-

of the nation which attacked her. France can rely upon her Allies; for she has never merited their confidence more than to-day. Going to the heart of the question, the Premier discussed the methods of obtaining reparation. The speaker of yesterday seemed to fancy that we had the choice of only two opposing methods. The Premier thought that there was at least a third; 'Not a fixed sum. It is not a good time to try that, when Germany is at its worst. But Germany is rapidly recovering, and this is to our advantage as her creditor.' The thing to do now is to protect the rights of France, with proper reservations for the future. Does that mean abandoning the Peace Treaty? Not at all. 'Imperfect as is the Treaty, it includes means of enforcement which the parties interested should not hesitate to employ.' There you have Briand's method of accommodating our policy to the facts. The Premier insisted particularly on the need of determining the sanctions which must be employed against Germany, in case that country sought to evade its obligations.

Next, the Prime Minister addressed himself to domestic problems — first of all the Vatican. He had been accused of dodging that question in his official programme. He dealt with it this time as decisively as could be asked. It had not taken him until to-day to appreciate the advantage of direct relations with the Holy See:—'During the ... I had to enter by the postern the ... had preferred the portal this, we need not be ... all the pressure the Senate to ... ever, there is ... between the ... and that ... his ... the

plan of a majority which it is an honor for a Republican government to possess. At his gesture, doubts vanished. They say that the present Chamber is 'conservative.' Briand, apparently, wishes to do away with that objectionable term. He stated, boldly, that we must defend our social reforms as resolutely as we defend our political liberty, for which the Republic has bled. He placed the question frankly before the Chamber. He asked it to show whether it was as loyally Republican as he; or whether it wanted to retrace its steps to the past. The enthusiastic applause which greeted the orator when he concluded was sufficient answer. The vote which followed was merely a formality.

So we can say that the Briand Cabinet starts out with a perfect understanding. The Premier has won the majority he wished. He has revealed to the Chamber not only his policy, but what is more important, himself. We are justified in hoping for fruitful coöperation between Parliament and the new ministry.

[*La Vanguardia* (Barcelona Clerical and Financial Daily), December 11, 1920]

QUEUE PHILOSOPHY

BY FABIÁN VIDAL

OUR good citizens of Madrid have resigned themselves to queues. Though protesting against them vigorously at first, they have come to the conclusion that they cannot be abolished. Our Spanish post-war blundering has betrayed us into this absurd system of distribution.

One night I was returning from my club at three o'clock A.M. Queues were already beginning to form before the shops at that early hour. Ragged, hard featured women wrapped in shawls, untidy, shivering