

Civil Servants To The Rescue!

AS ONE'S OWN TROUBLES are always of paramount personal importance, so many Americans are inclined to isolate the affairs of their nation from world tendencies, to ignore the causal forces which are working toward similar ends elsewhere.

Because we have different traditions, a different history, a different "racial" background, we are prone to believe—if we think of it at all—that our problems and our development must be different in character from those of other peoples.

Yet the universality of wars, of depressions, of poverty in the midst of plenty, of social movements, even of religious concepts, suggests that the differences between nations and their problems are incidental and superficial. The commonality of these currents indicates that the whole world is one people, subject to identical and inexorable forces. Despite aspersion by latter-day intelligentsia, the evidence points to the working of universal laws.

For instance, we in America have been reading about the conflict for control of our national affairs between the "reforming" New Dealers of the past eight years and the business men whom Mr. Roosevelt is now calling into council. It is therefore interesting to note that a similar struggle is going on in England.

In a recent leading article *The Economist* (London) speaks of the "Battle of Civil Servant v. Business Man," and quotes a Lord Perry as saying that "the Civil Servant, although outwardly self-effacing, is really a mass of well-trained gentlemen of leisure grabbing for power."

The publication goes to bat for these "self-effacing" gentlemen, (we are reminded by this phrase of the quality of "anonymity" which the President gave our career men) and points out that the number of failures among business men in national affairs is quite high.

This struggle for political power between visionaries and men of affairs has been going on for years in all countries. Sometimes the one group is in the ascendancy, sometimes the other. Sometimes the struggle becomes so destructive that a third party, the adventurer, steps in to take over.

Hitler and Mussolini were adventurers with whom the "business men" made deals to take over and keep order, only to find that strong-arm men make order only for their own profit. In Russia the visionaries got into control, but they too were ousted by the adventurer. Chaos always brings the ruthless and self-seeking to the top.

The preparatory ground-work for this struggle

always and everywhere delves into economic maladjustment. Poverty must be the general condition before social reformers can gain a hearing. A hungry man will listen to any promiser, and the loudest or most extravagant promiser will get the greatest applause, the largest vote.



The promiser par excellence is the intellectual, because he is not hampered in phrasing his promise with any practical considerations. So, upon assuming power he makes a mess of things, or he makes an existing mess worse. The business man, the man who has made a fortune out of manufacturing tooth-picks or speculating in real estate, is summoned on the assumption that his material success is proof of his ability. He also fails.

No political scheme will ever free men from their economic chains. In fact, these chains have always been forged by politicians. It never occurs to politicians, be they idealists or practical men, that the way to free men is to repeal laws rather than make new ones, and especially to repeal all laws which make for special privileges. But then, politicians never vote themselves out of office.

That being so, and the groundwork of poverty having been well prepared, precedent leads to the belief that at the proper time the adventurer type will gain the ascendancy in both England and the United States. Probably after the war.

But a hint at how England's thinkers are planning for that time should be interesting to America right now. The article in *The Economist* ends with a suggestion for a "special service for doing the economic executive work of Government—work that will inevitably grow in scope in the years to come . . . Only so will the State, whether socialist or capitalist, be able to maintain a constructive control over all those many facets of the community's economic life . . ."

So Englishmen are fighting for a special government service to maintain a constructive control of their economic life! Who will control the service? And, is that what *we* are going to war for?