

MAINLY PERSONAL

The Voice of Labour

LITTLE but—oh my! Ben Tillett, photographed in his native town, Bristol, at the recent Trade Union Congress, is one of the drastic little men of England. Broad of shoulder as a middle-weight prize-fighter, he is also broad of brain enough to see the needs of England more clearly than some of the boards of directors and the brewers. His career has always been a storm. News-



Ben Tillett, Socialist and patriot, photographed at the Trade Union Congress.

paper stories about Ben Tillett during the past few years read like the exploits of Jesse James. Popular opinion of him in this country set him down as a natural-born disturber, red-ragger and second cousin to the anarchist. However, this pugnacious, self-made Socialist was, as may be remembered, the first prominent labour leader to be sent by Lloyd George to inspect the British and French lines at the front, that he might return with a message to the munition-workers of Great Britain. He brought back the message. His speeches in favour of burying hatchets and speeding up munitions were fervently effective. He saw the danger and the need. He told it to the workers. And those who heard him knew that he was the real national voice of labour. For Ben Tillett is one of those that have shouldered up from the low places to somewhere near the seats of the mighty. Born in Bristol, he worked in a brickyard when he was eight years old; at twelve, spent six months on a fishing-smack; afterwards articulated to a bootmaker; and when he got sick of the last took again to the decks as a seaman in the Royal Navy. Invalided home, he settled among the dockers and organized the Dockers' Union. A few years ago he was put in jail at Antwerp and afterwards hustled out of Hamburg for helping a strike. As Secretary of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union of Great Britain, he took a heavy hand in the big dockers' strike a few years ago. He is a writer of considerable force, an unqualified Socialist and—a patriot.

The International Sphinx

FERDINAND, King of Bulgaria, has now the opportunity of his adventurous career. For a few months past the Czar of the Balkans has held the balance of power in the part of the world that has most to do with the turn of the tide in the war one way or another. Successful in the first Balkan war, humiliated in the second, he has been keeping mum at his palace since the great war began, scheming how he can make his semi-Slav country, which he got by sheer adventure, the dictator of the Balkan States and something of a world power. He has been watching all the cats jump—and doing nothing; nothing that anybody but a secret service man could ferret out. Now and again he sticks one claw cautiously over each side of the wall to see whether the Kaiser or the Allies' diplomats put what he wants into it. And all the while, since the Russians began to retreat, this wily, grand monarch has been secretly hankering to join up with the Kaiser, if so be he could prove in the case of Entente victory that he had not actually broken neutrality. He has been offered all of Macedonia that Serbia got after the second Balkan War. He must have been offered more by the emissaries of the Kaiser. He wants more. If he gets enough more he may permit Germany to send troops and munitions through Bulgaria to the Turks. And he may be able to say in the final settlement—"What was the use of trying to stop it? Bulgaria would have been devastated like Belgium. Now, gentlemen of the Allies, how much do we get out of this—not actually fighting against you?"

Ferdinand is capable of a shifty policy, because he is himself a mixture. He was not born to be King of Bulgaria. An Austrian nobleman of the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha line, he is also a grandson of Louis Philippe of France, and the husband of a German princess. Blood and marriage have been sadly checkmated in this war. But this hybrid

monarch is determined to make his royal connections count for something. So far as Bulgaria is concerned, that country is useful to him about as France was useful to Louis XIV. He was pitchforked on to the Bulgarian throne, to which he had no more right by birth or by conquest than the man in the moon. When Bulgaria, twenty-seven years ago, had escaped from the tyranny of the Turk only to come under the shadow of the Russian bear, there was no king. Prince Alexander of Battenberg had been dethroned. Stambuloff, the peasant patriot and enemy of Russia, sent out a commission to find Bulgaria a king. The commission found him in a Vienna cafe; as a writer has said, "a young officer in the white-laced tunic and gold kepi of Austrian Hussars, who was sitting nearby—how accidentally one can only guess." This throne-hunting cousin to all the kings of Europe was given the throne of Bulgaria. He took it to be autocrat. When Stambuloff, his king-maker, opposed him, he had him put out of the ministry as the Kaiser did with Bismarck. Stambuloff was afterwards openly murdered—and the King was "sorry." And this is the man who says to all the diplomats of Europe—"Well, what will you do for my Bulgaria?"

O Wise Young Judge!

CROWN PRINCE RUPPRECHT, of Bavaria, has been giving his opinions of war and war personalities to the Berlin correspondent of the Neue Freie Presse, at his own headquarters. This able soldier and unamiable personality is the prince who, as commander of the Bavarian army—his father, the King, is too old to take the field—got copies of the Hymn of Hate distributed to his troops. So he is not likely to speak with much warmth of admiration of the British war lords. He said that Kitchener is an able organizer, but much over-rated as a soldier and as a leader. He claimed that Sir John French was less talented than Joffre, although he gave French the credit for the advance at the Marne. With characteristic German perspicacity, he accused Sir Edward Grey of being one of the chief instigators of the war; and he declared that both England and France foresaw and prepared for the war years ago—mentioning instances, thus and so to prove his point. He thought that British vanity had misled the British into thinking that Germany would sue for peace the moment England entered the war, and that King Edward the Peacemaker was a far superior man to King George as a diplomatic force in Europe. He supposed that Kitchener's army was all in Europe, and did not think the British were wise in trying to force the Dardanelles for the sake of Russia. In fact, the Crown Prince said so many astute things to the Berlin correspondent that it seems a pity he could not have been consulted by the Triple Entente before the war began.

At His Own Expense

AT the end of September, Mr. Gerald Birks, of Henry Birks and Sons, Ltd., in Montreal, sailed for France to supervise the work of Y. M. C. A. units among the Canadian soldiers at the front.

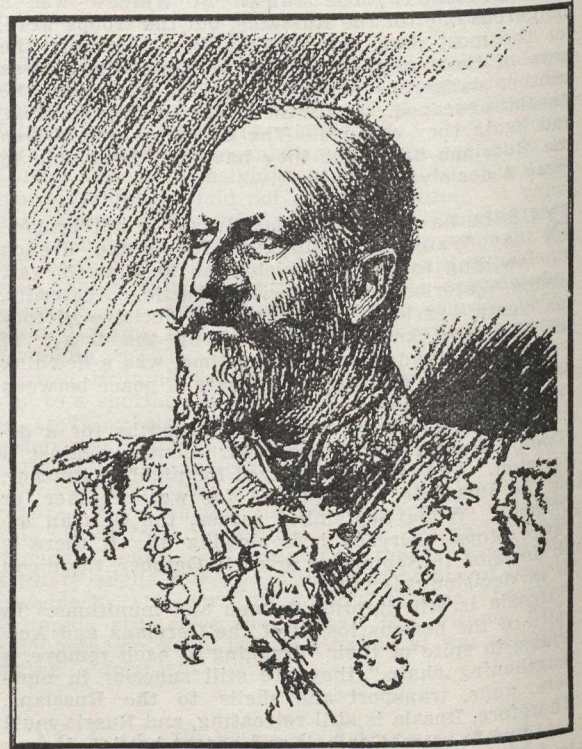


Mr. Gerald Birks, who goes at his own expense to supervise Y.M.C.A. camps at the front.

them advice at first-hand on problems which otherwise would have to be referred back to Toronto. He has also been requested by John R. Mott, General Secretary of the International Y. M. C. A., to co-operate with the Y. M. C. A. camps on the French front.

With the example of so many wealthy citizens of

Canada, accented by Mr. Birks, going at his own expense will soon become a patriotic custom in this country. The custom is worth encouraging.



Ferdinand, the International Sphinx of Bulgaria, seems a little more reasonable since the Allies' advance in the West.

For Business Government

SIR HERBERT HOLT has been named by the Financial Post as one of three big representative citizens who think that federal governments anywhere in the world should be organized on business lines. Sir Herbert is the well-known President of the Royal Bank, which is becoming in Montreal one of the big rivals to the Bank of Montreal, and of the Montreal Light, Heat and Power Co. He is quoted as having said that men higher up in England are thinking about politics and positions and votes instead of the best way of prosecuting the war. Sir Herbert should be able to see for himself—pretty clearly. He has never been blinded by politics; has never even been a candidate for a seat in Parliament, although he is one of the ablest organizing heads in Canada. He has never even sat on the Montreal Board of Control. In fact, for a man of his undoubted ability in a big administrative way—especially in the matter of light, heat and power—Sir Herbert Holt has done less public service than any other man in Canada. He is a member of the Ottawa Improvement Commission, which is supposed to beautify the Capital. But he seldom says a word that could be taken for advice by men who are in public harness. Sir Herbert occupies the largest general office in Canada in the L. H. P. building on Craig St., Montreal. He sits there a great deal and from his huge table directs big things. It seems to be a good time for him to help direct a few things not primarily connected with light, heat and power.

A Picturesque Soldier

ST. ELM DE CHAMP, Professor of French at the University of Toronto and by extraction a descendant of the House of Bourbon in France, is invalided back from the front. Standing knee-deep in the water of the trenches he contracted rheumatism, and may not be able to go back to the French or any other lines. That is not a startling fact in itself, but for the fact that "The Count," as he is familiarly called by people who are not his intimate friends, is himself a startling sort of man. For several years this black-bearded, big man with the patrician face, the portentous walk and the boulevardian manner, has been a picturesque figure in Toronto. He may be regarded as the one real habitue that Toronto has of high-class music, operas and plays. So far as is known, de Champ has never occupied more than one seat in Massey Hall, front row, in the balcony, east side, half way between the turn and the stage. He is always dressed "de rigueur"; always enthusiastic, alert and vivacious. His conversational powers in French are very high. He has a sonorous de Reszkian bass voice, and he is very amiable. When the war broke out he happened to be in France. It was said a year ago that during the summer in anticipation of war he was helping to guard bridges. Much as he may be missed from the conviviality of life in the trenches, he has been missed in the musical and art life of Toronto, where he is much more than a big note in decoration.