

National Defence

(By T. Proctor Hall, M.D.)

Six or seven years ago some of us cherished the delusion that war between two civilized nations was a thing of the past. The danger that war might begin through the insanity of a monarch or the cupidity of a ruling class would, we thought, be met and over-balanced by the growing strength of the international socialist movement, through which the workingman of the world

"Would brothers be, and a' that."

Today we face two facts: first, that Canada (or any other nation) is liable to a sudden attack by an overwhelming force aiming at the complete subjugation of the country; and second, that the development of aircraft has made most of the old lines of defense obsolete. If ten large airships, each carrying a few tons of poison gas, were to simultaneously attack ten Canadian cities—Halifax, St. John, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria, aided by several more carrying bombs to wreck important locks and bridges, how much power for organized resistance against the invaders would be left to us? Britannia may continue to rule the waves, but if she does not also rule the air she could be of little aid to us under such a condition. Dreadnaughts will continue to be useful for police purposes, but as decisive units in a war of the first magnitude they are already scrapped.

Against aerial attack Canada today stands defenseless. Dependent on herself alone, she would continue to be in a nearly helpless condition for many years to come. But as a member of the British Empire, as one of a family of nations whose hearts are set toward righteousness (though we still have a long road to travel), and who will stand together against all aggression, Canada is reasonably safe if each member of that family takes up at once its share in the defence of the Empire. Had Germany known that Britain would support France in 1914, she might have hesitated to attack. Any predatory power would also hesitate to attack Canada if it were considered certain that Canada would be instantly defended with all the might of the Empire.

The Intelligence department of the British Empire is second to none. It is therefore not likely that we shall be attacked without at least a few days warning. But if we had today a month's warning of an aerial attack in force, we would be little better off for the information, for it would be impossible in that time to build the necessary machinery of defense. During the last war anti-aircraft guns proved to be of little value. The machinery of attack is at the present time so much more effective than the machinery of defense, that the only effective defense lies in counter attack. Heavily armed airships and swift armed airplanes in large numbers, are the only visible defense; and these are not yet built, though the Dominion parliament has, with commendable foresight, voted a substantial sum for a beginning.

Assume that we have become partially prepared to meet an aerial invasion, and that with only 24 hours' notice our air-fleets can be armed and manned. Assume, too, that we destroy in the first battle all or nearly all of the invaders. Many of our own aircraft would also be destroyed or crippled. The invaders would receive hourly reinforcements; how are these to be met? Evidently it must be possible to immediately convert all our commercial aircraft to the uses of war. And where are we to get the new machines that must be produced, and the immense amounts of war material that are immediately required? If the first aerial invasion does not by its success become the end, it is only the beginning of the war. A few days, or at most a few weeks, of this destruction will see us with no more air defences, unless the whole industry of the

nation can be turned at once into war channels; and unless we have prepared beforehand all the necessary raw materials for this purpose, and the machinery for their conversion.

The Regimentation of Industry.

This entails nothing less than the regimentation of all industry. At present in Canada industry is controlled by the large property owners, in their own interest first. The fight is on for the control of industry in the interest of the workers by the workers, a fight which in the long run the workers are pretty sure to win. So long as the workers feel that the regimentation of industry is a move for the benefit of capitalists, essentially, so long will they oppose it violently as an attempt to enslave them. Our overgrown ideal of individualism leads the owners of property to imagine that they have an absolute right to its full control and leads the workers to think they have the absolute right to dispose or not dispose of their labour. Both are wrong. Each has a duty to the society of which he forms part. The splendid response to the call to arms when the nation was in danger is evidence that the workers are ready to undertake their full social duty, and that they will support regimentation when they see that it is a necessary part of social preservation and evolution. At its worst it would be less onerous than the present arrangement of labour.

All such preparations for defense have one essential aim—to put a wholesome fear into the heart of possible invaders. If we are overwhelmed, they in return will suffer the same fate from our allies. We are safe when we walk the city streets unarmed, because everyone knows that if we are murdered the might of the nation will avenge us, and the murderers will die. But very few, if any, of our fellow citizens have the slightest desire to molest us. By far the larger number would resent and resist any attack on us; and so far as these are concerned we are just as safe without the backing of the police and the military. A like condition is possible among the nations of the earth. The provinces of Canada do not require the presence of Imperial forces to keep them from attacking one another with fire and sword. Nor do the several states of the Union to the south of us evince any desire to fly at each other's throats. Why? Because under present conditions no state would be any better off if it were to attack any or all of its neighbours, and any state if it should attempt such a criminal action would inevitably be punished severely by the supreme power of the nation.

Democracy and Citizenship.

With such examples of successful federation before them it would be a simple thing for the nations of Europe to make such arrangements that peace would be clearly more profitable than war. Why is this not done? The common people are the ones who do the most of the fighting, and most of the suffering, in war; and no offensive war is worth to the common people what it costs them. Wars are waged for profit, or for anticipated profit, for those who plan them. So long as the common people are willing to let themselves be led by profiteers and robbers, whether of the legal or illegal variety, so long will wars be planned, and sometimes carried out. Genuine democracy, industrial as well as political, and a world federation, are the two conditions which must be brought about before we can hope that wars will cease; for then only will their principal cause be removed.

"Peace on earth; good will among men." Good will is the essential condition of peace. How can we secure it among Canadians? Does it make men loyal to keep them in an industrial system in which any man is liable to be deprived of his