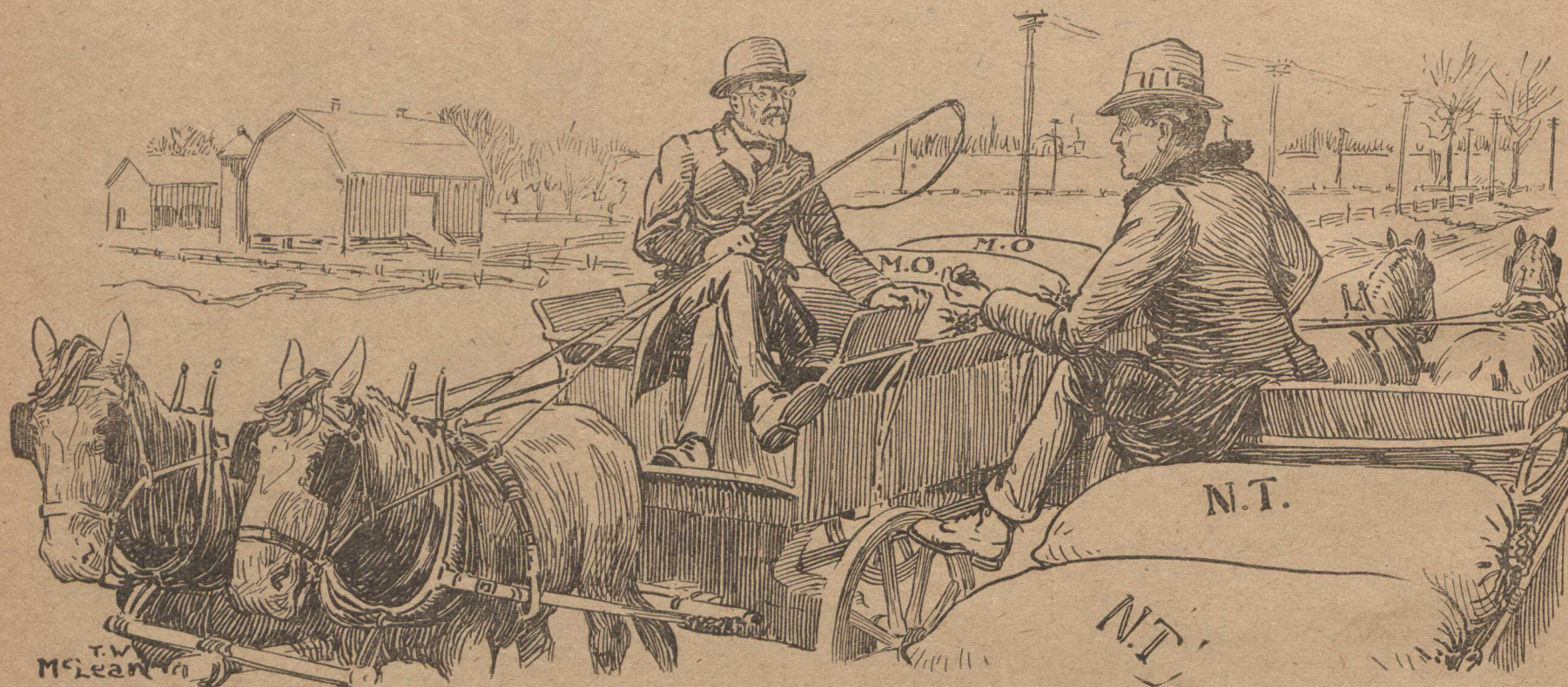


THE DREAD AND HOPE OF PEACE

Our New National Economics Since the Revolution



THE NEW NATIONAL TRUST

SOMEWHERE about the fifth of August, 1914, men and women commenced scrutinizing the faces of the passing days and asking: "When will there be any peace?"

When 1915 sent his first day slowly across the sky we strained our necks and asked with our eyes: "Have YOU seen any sign of peace?"

When the last of 1915 was merely a dim figure retreating down the street, we addressed ourselves to his heirs of 1916, and while we repeated the question we feared the answer. We were afraid that one of those inscrutable passersby would suddenly turn her face and show us what we hoped and what we dreaded—Peace! For we were told that Peace was bound to bring unutterable confusion. We were advised that if we failed to prepare for peace—!

Comes now 1917's first Day. The new set of mannikins begin to pass us—just as they always do—one by one: a blonde, a brunette; another blonde, another brunette, draped now in gold, now in blue, now in carmine and purple—saffron, green and white! And there are still people who watch the days with upturned, eager faces—like children lost on a pavement—eager for the word of Peace! For any hint or sign that the war will end before what THEY hold dear is swallowed up. And yet, in Canada at least, the anxiety is no longer so tense. The Hope of Peace remains. The Dread of Peace is fading. Though for Great Britain, France and Russia, Peace holds more problems than the war itself, and though the United States is afraid that then its neglected customers will be lost, afraid that its towering mountain of profits may topple over and swamp Wall Street in a golden flood, Canada, of all the nations, seems best able to face the beginning of world-reconstruction with equanimity.

Not long ago there was great talk of "Preparing for Peace" in this country. A politician who presides at least eloquently over a certain Ottawa department, urged our business men to convene, to plan for a raid on new markets after the war. Speakers at Canadian clubs lashed their gorged audiences—or thought they were lashing them—with fiery words. Writers in various papers—the writer of this article was one of them—took up various phases of "Prepare for Peace" propaganda—

And did anybody budge?

Did one Canadian manufacturer miss a meal thinking over the tremendous thoughts that had been peddled to him by his—seemingly—more able Canadian brethren?

Not one.

Talk of a business man's conference has dwindled sadly. Articles on "What are we going to do about this and that post-bellum problem" are forgotten. The manufacturer is calm and the country—so far as business is concerned—is calm. With seeming stupidity, but rare common sense, the Canadian

Farmer Tom White: "What have you got on, neighbour?"

Farmer Flavelle: "Oh, couple of hundred million war orders, up to Ottawa to grist. What's your jag?"

"Me? Oh, just a few bags o' national thrift. Another war loan soon. And as long as you keep on gathering munition orders, Joe, I guess I won't have much trouble with the loans."

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By BRITTON B. COOKE

manufacturer has refused to be roused. He continues to run his factory. Very probably he is figuring on a new car to placate his wife for something or other. Thrift campaigns may wax and wane, but he has somehow known all along what the professional wise men are only finding out: Canada is in a better position to meet Peace than any of the interested nations.

EVERYONE knows that the advent of the war saved us from the bailiff in 1914. It is even yet told in Ottawa how Sir Sam Hughes had unspeakable difficulty getting the home guard in British Columbia DE-mobilized. For the scare of a German invasion of our Pacific Province was a god-send to many a westerly Canadian who, without his home-guard wages, might not have been quite as happy as is good for the digestion. Toronto and Montreal suffered agonies trying to live up to the "Business as Usual" signs, and real estate fell on its stomach. War intervening solved for the time being the problem of surplus population, brought more money to the country in the form of munitions orders, and now, to quote from a Toronto morning paper, "For the first time in the winter history of the Toronto House of Industry no soup is being made for outdoor or for casual poor. . . . The number of inmates shows a decrease of twenty-six per cent . . . and there is a credit balance (instead of the usual deficit) of \$3,566." In short, the Canada of 1912 was NOT a solvent company, so far as its actual transactions during the year could show. We bought abroad more than we sold. We were not even feeding ourselves, though we boasted of our agricultural prowess. We were in debt not merely for money to build our cities and lay railway track, but we were in debt for common necessities of life. In 1914 we were approaching a day of addition and subtraction, and were saved only by the war. In this, the third year of the war, we have a big credit balance as the result of each month's trading abroad. There is no unemployment. Wages are high. We are NOT going in debt for the necessities of life.

Our good name is saved. Our prospects are brilliant! That is the existing condition. Now, what if Peace intervened?

I MET again, recently, a young Toronto man who had built up since 1910 a successful shirt-waist factory. We were in the smoking-room of a railway carriage on a train east-bound from Toronto. In the course of a long conversation he told me that he was on his way to the town of —, not far from Kingston, to start a new factory.

"Not shirt-waists?"

"No," he said, with a hint of emphasis. "NOT shirt-waists. Shells."

"But look here," I said—I had known him a long time. "That's a bit thick. What do you know about making shells?"

"Nothing."*

"Then how can you make 'em?"

"I've a contract for 75,000 four-point-fives."

"But how are you going to handle it?"

"I've bought an old woollen mill down here in —. I've spent two thousand patching her up and I've put in \$75,000 worth of machinery. I'm dealing with a big Canadian company that not only sells you the machinery, but assembles it, arranges the factory system, digs up shell-makers to train your staff."

"But what if Peace comes?"

"I'm safe."

"But what about the seventy-five thousand dollars' worth of machinery?"

"It will be so much scrap metal on the hands of the British Government—or the Imperial Munitions Board, which is the same thing."

"And then—"

"I'll just go back to my shirt-waist factory."

In that you have a characteristic illustration of a Canadian munition manufacturer's attitude. In Canada to-day there are probably between one and two hundred factories making shells or parts of shells. There are many thousand men and women at work on shells. The A. R. Williams Machinery Company, of Toronto—a firm that designs, equips, sets in operation and even finances munition plants—gives me a rough estimate of the value of shell-making machinery that has been installed in Canada since the war began, as "between fifteen and twenty million dollars." All of this gigantic system of munitions production is liable to be stopped at a moment's notice—and yet the Canadian manufacturer is free of anxiety.

"There will be no serious dislocation," one of them assured me, when we discussed the possibilities of

*In fairness to the Imperial Munitions Board, it should be stated that this man's ability as an executive, as a "producer," was ample ground for his being given a contract.