

The Submarine Raid

THE raid of a German submarine on the shipping of the Atlantic coast has naturally caused a sensation. Both in England and in Canada appeals are made in the press to the United States Government to do something to prevent such depredations. Regrettable as the raid is from the viewpoint of Great Britain and the Allies, there is reason to doubt whether there is any ground for complaint by the United States authorities. The submarine warship is one of the big inventions which were little known when international laws were formulated. Whenever civilization has a chance to assert itself again at an international conference rules will, no doubt, be made for the future government of such vessels by nations which do not regard all conventions as mere scraps of paper. But until such rules are made Germany may with much force claim that the rules of international law, as applied to ordinary warships, shall be recognized as governing the work of submarines. If these rules are to so apply, it seems probable that the depredations of the submarine off Nantucket last week will be held to be within the law. True, operations of this kind are in effect a partial blockade of American ports. The foreign trade of the United States is carried on very largely in the ships of the Allies, the British shipping particularly. The American merchant marine is still small. If British ships cannot pass safely in and out of American ports American trade must suffer. But while the American Government will clearly see this fact they hardly can make it the ground of any complaint to Germany. British ships are to Germany enemy ships, and the Germans have an undoubted right to destroy them wherever they can be found, except in the waters of neutrals. The only limitation of this right is that which was so infamously disregarded in the case of the *Lusitania*; where the vessel is not a warship, but one engaged in commerce, international law requires that warning must be given to her before she is attacked and that there shall be reasonable opportunity for the saving of the crew and passengers. There often is room for controversy on the point whether adequate provision was made for the safety of the non-combatants. If the attacking vessel has accommodation she should take off the crew and passengers of the ship about to be destroyed. If, as in the case of the submarine, she has not such accommodation, then her commander must see that the crew and passengers of the enemy ship are placed in boats under such conditions as afford them reasonable opportunity to reach land in safety. The recent operations of the German submarine took place at points near the American shore, but outside the three mile limit, and at a time when the water was quite smooth. The crews and passengers in all cases were picked up by ships from the shore. A report that the crew of one vessel had perished has not been confirmed. The probability is that this raid was made close to the American shore to enable the German commander to comply with the rules respecting the saving of life. The one case in which there may be room for complaint is the destruction of the Red Cross liner *Stephano*, plying between New York, Halifax and St. John's, Newfoundland. The *Stephano* was a British ship, but she carried some American passengers. If, as one report alleges, she was torpedoed without warning, that would be a clear violation of the rules and one that would properly concern the United States Government. Apart from that case, which may need

investigation, the commander of the submarine seems to have kept himself within the rules, and therefore the American authorities, while they must realize the disadvantage which their own commerce suffers from the raid, may find in it no ground for action against Germany.

Special Delivery Stamp

MR. H. E. MARKHAM'S letter in our last issue respecting special delivery postage stamps on letters crossing the border serves a good purpose in pointing out that people who wish to do so can secure the benefit of the special delivery system by providing themselves with supplies of the postage stamps of the country in which the letter is to be delivered. Thus a Canadian correspondent can keep a stock of American stamps and attach a ten cent American stamp to a letter which he wishes specially delivered in the States. In like manner an American correspondent can keep a stock of Canadian stamps to be similarly used for letters to be specially delivered in Canada. But possibilities of this kind do not meet the situation as well as a reciprocal arrangement between the postal authorities of the two countries would. It is not always easy to obtain American stamps in Canada or Canadian stamps in the United States. We are assured that in practice the difficulty we have pointed out exists. Letters from the United States bearing useless American ten-cent special delivery stamps are frequently received at Canadian post offices, and it is highly probable that similar letters bearing Canadian ten-cent special delivery stamps go to the States. A reciprocal arrangement between the two Post Office Departments would make the system available to the general public, who under present conditions are often denied the convenience of the special delivery. Meanwhile correspondents should note the point made by Mr. Markham.

What Good Roads did for New York State

IN PREVIOUS issues of the Journal of Commerce reference was made to the advisability of building great national highways at the end of the war, partly as an economic measure, and partly to furnish work for returned soldiers. A striking example of the value of good roads is furnished by New York State.

According to Governor Whitman, who quoted census returns, there are some 22,000,000 acres of farm lands in that state. In the decade preceding 1900, the value of these farm lands decreased to the extent of \$87,000,000.00, despite the fact that the largest city on the continent and many other large cities were in the state, and furnished ready markets for everything the farmers could produce.

After a thorough investigation by the state authorities they concluded that the absence of good roads was at the bottom of the stagnant rural condition, and it was decided to spend \$150,000,000.00 on improving the highways of the state. This money was expended, not only in building great state highways, but in constructing branch lines as feeders to the main arteries of commerce. In the ten years following the expenditure of that \$150,000,000.00 on good roads the farm lands in New York State increased \$387,000,000.00 in value. This is a most striking example of what good

roads mean. A decrease of \$87,000,000.00 in one decade was turned into an increase of \$387,000,000.00 in the following decade; the magic change being wrought by the expenditure of \$150,000,000.00 on new roads.

One does not have to be much of a mathematician or economist to figure out whether that expenditure was profitable or not. There is no reason to doubt but what a similar showing could be furnished in Canada, were our legislators induced to expend money on improving the highways of this country.

Patronage

IN THE British Columbia election campaign, which has terminated successfully for him and his associates, Mr. Brewster, leader of the Liberal party, made a strong presentation of the evils arising from the exercise of what is called "patronage" in the politics of the country, and gave assurances that if his party were placed in charge of affairs the "patronage system" would no longer prevail. Now that he has won the election there will be some curiosity to learn how he will carry out his promise. There is no reason to doubt that Mr. Brewster was sincere in what he said. There may well be doubt, however, as to whether, having had no experience in the art of governing, he quite realized the difficulty of the situation in which he was placing himself. It is beyond doubt that the patronage system has often been so used as to do great harm. One needs an interpretation of what patronage means before subscribing to a general condemnation of it. In the field of politics it means the giving of a preference to one's political friends in the making of appointments to office, and in the distribution of orders for things required. In the case of the furnishing of supplies or the performance of public work the patronage idea can be eliminated to a large extent by the employment of a system of tender and contract, impartially administered. In the case of appointments to office the problem is not so easy of solution. A system of competitive examination for the civil service would go far to do away with patronage in that field. But in the carrying on of the affairs of government there will necessarily be some positions for which such examinations cannot well be held. In these cases the places must be filled by persons chosen by the Government of the day, and in the making of the choice the principle of patronage comes in. Mr. Brewster will be obliged to exercise his discretion in the matter. He will be more than human if, all other things being equal, he does not give a preference to his own political friends. The exercise of patronage in that way is inevitable, so long as the system of party governments exists. And it is not necessarily an evil. If for political reasons, to reward party friends, men are appointed to offices for which they are not fitted by character and qualifications, there is an abuse of patronage which operates to the injury of the public interests. But if men are chosen who are fully qualified by their integrity and ability to discharge the duties assigned to them, and thus to serve the public well, the fact that they have been supporters of the Government of the day cannot be pleaded against the appointments. In such cases there is a legitimate exercise of patronage. Mr. Brewster will probably find that in his zeal to stop an abuse of patronage he has made his condemnation too broad to be sustained in the practical working of the affairs of the Government.