

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Before the war broke out financial prophets told us that the economic burden entailed by it would be so great as to make its long continuance impossible. But thoughtful students of history were well aware that wars once entered into were not stopped because of their tremendous costs. The present war is no exception, and probably will continue until one side or the other is in a position to enforce its terms. In the midst of the terrible conflict no appeal for peace can successfully be made on the basis of destruction of wealth. Nor should it be in this war, at any rate. For so far as the United States and her allies are concerned, the other issues involved far outweigh the utmost economic destruction that can be imagined as the result of the war.

However, the matter of cost is of great interest as well as of importance from two points of view. Many people are surprised that the countries involved have been able to incur the waste of war through so long a period. The surprise, however, exists because of a common misconception concerning the source of a country's economic ability to bear war. War is not waged with wealth accumulated in gold or silver; nor, for any length of time, even with accumulated munitions of war. If a country's agricultural and industrial forces are sufficient to supply what is necessary to feed and clothe the people, including the army, the country may continue war indefinitely so far as concerns the "sinews of war." The important thing is that the supply of food, clothing, and munitions and implements of war shall be continuous and adequate. That continuity of supply depends on the natural resources of the country and the population not included in the fighting line. In such a condition, even if a country could not buy anything abroad, it could continue in war. Moreover, it could, while at war, buy abroad as long as its supply of gold lasted and its credit was good, provided, of course, it could insure that the goods bought would get to its