

Are We Near The End Of The War

By J. M. C.

This issue of the Canadian Forward will be in the hands of our readers a few days before Xmas Day. How near are we to the idea chanted by the angels at the birth of Jesus the Nazarene of "Peace on earth and good will to men" I am not prepared to say. Lately the way looked very black and dismal, when suddenly Lord Lansdowne's letter is published, and immediately the discussion on peace holds the attention of the people of this Empire once again.

The Forward (Glasgow), Nov. 3, 1917, says: It is now known that from the 1st September to the 1st October there were parpoulers for negotiations for peace being discussed on the basis of an official German offer through the medium of a Belgian Ambassador in Switzerland, to M. Briand in France.

"The German proposals were quite definite." (See Manchester Guardian, Nov. 23, 1917; the Daily Telegraph, Nov. 25, 1917,) "offering to

"Restore complete independence to Belgium;

"Cede Alsace-Lorraine to France;

"Cede Trieste to Italy.

"On this basis Germany desired compensations from Russia, and a French Colony from France.

"M. Briand immediately transmitted these proposals to M. Ribot, the French Foreign Secretary, who appears simply to have informed the Allied governments that he had received peace proposals which he regarded as a 'snare.' He told the French Chamber that he had heard a 'whisper' of peace, but the whisper of peace was a 'trap,' whereupon M. Briand demanded and secured a secret session to discuss the action of M. Ribot.

"Result—M. Ribot was fined, and even 'Jusqu'aboutiste' papers like M. Herve's Victoire declare that there is no harm in talking about peace.

"The Russian Government declared that it had received 'formal assurances' that Britain and France would not contract peace without Russian agreement.

"On 9th October the German Foreign Secretary Kuhlmann announced that 'never' would Germany make concessions regarding Alsace-Lorraine. The hope of peace had flown for another winter."

The Christian Commonwealth, Oct. 24, 1917, editorially says:

"Separate peace overtures have apparently been made to France, hinting at the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine, and these overtures have been rejected as an insidious attempt to divide the Allies. . . . If the enemy is prepared to restore Alsace-Lorraine and is also ready to make restitution and reparation to Belgium, two of the chief obstacles to peace are removed. There is utterly no reason that we can see why, if these proposals have been made, they need be discussed in an atmosphere of diplomatic mystery or why the mere receipt of such proposals should shake the foundations of any Allied Government. A good peace is the common interest of all the nations, and it is a matter of life or death to some."

Meanwhile the Kerensky Government falls in Russia by another Revolution and Lenine the Extremist becomes Premier, and L. Trotsky Foreign Secretary, and a Canadian Press Despatch to the daily press, Dec. 8, 1917, gives the following news items:

London, Dec. 8.—A Russian Government despatch dated Thursday and received here by wireless announces

that Leon Trotsky, the Bolsheviki Foreign Minister, has sent to all the allied embassies and legations in Petrograd a note intimating that the armistice negotiations with the Central Powers have been suspended for a week at the initiative of the Russian delegation for the purpose of providing opportunity of informing the peoples and the Governments of the allied countries the existence of such negotiations and their tendency.

The note adds that the armistice will be signed only on condition that troops will not be transferred from one front to another, and that German troops are cleared from the islands around Moon Sound. It generally indicates the points of the negotiations in accordance with the wireless statement received from Petrograd Thursday, and concludes:

Word to the Allies.

"The period of delay thus given, even in the existing disturbed condition of international communications, is amply sufficient to afford the allied governments opportunity to define their attitude toward the peace negotiations, that is, their willingness or refusal to participate in negotiations for an armistice and peace.

"In case of refusal they must declare clearly and definitely before all mankind the aims for which the peoples of Europe may be called shed their blood during the fourth year of the war."

Whether this is the beginning of the end and that all the belligerent nations will come together and settle their differences by negotiation rather than by more slaughter, time will tell. What a joyful Xmas this would be if an announcement to that effect were made before Xmas. God grant that we may soon have peace which the world now needs to prevent it from having a world-wide famine.

The Labor Leader recently had an article by Philip Snowden, in which he said:

"The threatened world famine is already upon us. From Italy, France, Austria, Germany, and from neutral countries there come appalling stories about the starvation of the civil population. In many of these countries food riots are of constant occurrence. In Italy there have been very serious troubles due to the scarcity of food. Recent food riots took place in Austria, during which the people plundered shops and did an immense amount of damage. Martial law had to be proclaimed against the civil population, and this led to disaffection among the troops. A communication from New York states that information has been received showing that German civilians are now getting rations which are less than half the normal standard for people in sedentary occupations and insufficient, for that reason, to maintain health. To the other horrors of the war, the starvation of the civil population, is now going to be added that of a slow and painful death by starvation. Nero fiddled while Rome burned, and the statesmen of the world, whose incompetence or immorality brought about this war, talk lying platitudes while millions suffer these agonies. How long shall this continue?"

In the words of Isaiah, "A terrible thing is now happening in our midst . . . and what will the end be thereof?"

Will it be a peace that will bring good will to all men?

Wage slavery is upheld by its slaves and must be overthrown by them.

FRANCES WILLARD'S VIEW OF SOCIALISM.

Frances E. Willard is recognized as one of the greatest women this country has produced. Her entire lifetime was spent in the advocacy of reforms, particularly temperance. The State of New York has honored her memory by putting a statue of her in Statuary Hall at the United States Capitol in Washington, D. C. Miss Willard's statue is the only statue of a woman found in that famous hall. This is what Frances E. Willard thought about Socialism. It is from her address at the national convention of the Women's Christian Temperance Union at Buffalo in 1897:

Look about you; the products of labor are on every hand; you could not for a moment maintain a well-ordered life without them; every object in your room has in it, for discerning eyes, the mark of ingenious tools and the pressure of labor's hands. But is it not the cruellest injustice for the wealthy, whose lives are surrounded and embellished by labor's work, to have a super-abundance of the money which represents the aggregate of labor in any country, while the laborer himself is kept so steady at work that he has no time to acquire the education and refinements of life that would make him and his family agreeable companions to the rich and cultured?

The reason why I am a Socialist comes in just here.

I would take, not by force, but by the slow process of lawful acquisition through better legislation, as the outcome of a wiser ballot in the hands of men and women, the entire plant that we call civilization, all that has been achieved on this continent in the four hundred years since Columbus wended his way hither, and make it the common property of all the people, requiring all to work enough with their hands to give them the finest physical development, but not to become burdensome in any case, and permitting all to share alike the advantages of education and refinement. I believe this to be perfectly practical, indeed, that any other method is simply a relic of barbarism.

I believe that competition is doomed. The trust, whose single object is to abolish competition, has proved that we are better without than with it, and the moment corporations control the supply of any product, they combine. What the Socialist desires is that the corporation of humanity should control the supply of any production. Beloved comrades, this is the frictionless way; it is the higher way; it eliminates the motives for a selfish life; it enacts into our everyday living the ethics of Christ's gospel. Nothing else will do it; nothing else can bring the glad day of universal brotherhood.

The Military Revolution

(Continued from last issue.)

A recent writer reminds us that mankind may not be far from the discovery of a means of utilizing atomic energy. (It may be mentioned that modern scientific research has revealed the presence in the atom of a store of energy so vast that all sources of energy now used by mankind seem insignificant in comparison. The discovery of radium, fifteen years ago, suggested the possibility of using this store of energy.) If such a discovery were made, it would be possible to supply the needs of society with a very much smaller expenditure of labor than is now necessary. Women alone would be able to supply the

needs of society; and it would be possible for the whole of the male citizens to be permanently released from industry in order to devote the whole of their lives to military activity. Can it be doubted that such a condition would result in the extermination of civilization? And yet such a result would have followed from what should have been the most beneficent discovery in the course of human history!

The mode of escape from the paradox is not for man to refrain from directing his energies towards scientific research, but, by a cessation of military rivalry, to make unnecessary and pointless the application of scientific knowledge in the one direction in which it threatens to exterminate mankind, namely: to the development of means of destruction. Scientific knowledge may prove in application to be beneficent or otherwise according to the purpose and intention of the application. One or two illustrative instances of this may be quoted.

The commercial preparation of substances in which nitrogen from the air has been fixed is an achievement of recent years. This same very important achievement of chemical science may be said to have, according to the direction in which it is applied, two opposite effects; helping to conserve life and helping to destroy it. It is of first-rate importance in regard to agriculture; for it enables nitrogenous fertilizers to be obtained from the atmosphere, and thus solves the serious problem with which mankind was confronted by the approaching exhaustion of the Chili deposits of saltpeter on which agriculture had formerly relied chiefly for its mineral nitrogenous fertilizers. It is also of importance in providing a means of making the nitric acid which is so essential for the preparation of explosives. Indeed, it is almost certain that, had not Germany been able to make nitric acid from the air, by means of a process discovered in the course of his researches by the German chemist Oswald, she would, owing to lack of nitric acid, have been quite unable to continue fighting.

The triumphs of chemical science in regard to the preparation of explosives have similarly had both benevolent and malevolent applications. Explosives are used for the destruction of human life. They are also used, probably in greater quantity, in mining; and, indeed, the mining of the ores upon which modern life so much depends could not have reached its present development without the use of explosives. Explosives are also used in quarrying stone; they are also finding application for various agricultural purposes, such as breaking up of a hard sub-soil.

Or again, as a further example, may be mentioned the gas chlorine. It is probable that this was the first poison gas used in the present war. In this case again, the contrast, in the application of the results of scientific research, between a life-destroying and a life-conserving use may be observed. The chlorine, which recent scientific work made commercially available, is used, on the one hand for the sterilization of city water supplies, and is thus an agency for preserving the public health against disease; it is used, on the other hand, in warfare, and is thus an agency for destroying life.

The Solution.

The logical outcome of reliance as a guarantee of national security is the effort to establish world-dominance in a military sense. But, in the present period of history, when all the chief nations have felt the effects of the Industrial Revolution and of the Military Revolution, and when, as a result of the former, communication between the different parts of the globe has so developed as to make the earth one world, instead of, as at the time of

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