



## PREHISTORIC GERMANY OF 1918

*NOW that the Canadian Government's new Budget has made everybody decide to eat less, wear clothes longer, smoke less, and go easy on the coal-heap, we shall all find a great deal of useful information in knowing what Germany has done along these lines. What the Teutons have been doing for two years we are now beginning to do. It's all a problem of getting as near to cave-man economics as we can and still be civilized.*

ONE day after England declared war on Germany in 1914 the writer of this turned the hose on a potato patch. His back garden compared to the countries then going to war was the size of a postage stamp on the side of a mountain. But the lawn hose of 1914 was instinctively recognized as part of the war. How? Nobody quite knew. None of us who had hoes and hose in 1914 dreamed that in 1918 the hoe and the hose would be organizing over half the world. We only dreamed that if the war should last even three years it would come to a desperate struggle for food, comfort, fuel, clothes, light—all the things that make a nation materially civilized.

More men, more men is one cry. Food, and more food is the other. The call is heard under every flag. The whole world is living from hand to mouth. In every country people are learning, as only our bush forefathers knew, the business of scraping every platter, using every stitch, raking up every pound of fuel, economizing every copper.

"The war will be won not by the victories of armies in the field," said Ludendorff, the brains of war-Germany, "but by the disintegration of peoples behind the armies."

Maybe he was thinking of Bolshevism. Or he may have meant food, clothes and fuel. We don't know. But he knows. Ludendorff knows what disintegration means in Germany. He is the Quarter-master General. We used to say this was a war of war-lords, of despots, of officers, of professors, of newspapers, of gold, of ships, of a dozen other things that for the time being seemed to fill the bill. Now we know that this is the Quarter-masters' War.

And we have been everlastingly wondering as we in Canada were taxed and drafted and economized and man-powered and food-regulated—how was this game of getting down to the bottom of the pot going in the countries that for three years and a half have been blockaded by the British Navy from commerce with the world?

A DEAL of buncombe has been handed out on this question. And there is a lot of comfort to be taken from the fact that the people of the Central Powers are down to the "iron ration," that profiteers have pillaged the populace and that the socio-economic fabric of Central Alliance has been worn threadbare; that the British blockade has, in fact, been a mighty efficient factor in forcing Berlin towards the inevitable capitulation. It is heartening also to learn that the much vaunted "efficiency" of Teuton officialdom is "buncombe—rot, pure and simple," and that the administration of internal affairs was so badly bungled by the bureaucracy during the first two years of war that the whole structure was wobbling with war-weariness and threatening to collapse entirely.

All these things are set out in a remarkable book written quite recently by George Abel Schreiner who, until Washington finally broke off correspondence with Berlin, was United States Associated Press correspondent in Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey, and as such had freedom to travel and take

By REX CROASDELL



A FEW years ago he was a prominent citizen with a box at the opera. He is still fond of the opera, but he's too busy scrambling for existence to bother with it.

in the significance of the sights he saw around him. The book is the first uncensored and authentic exposition of the real state of affairs in the Central European States. It is a comforting book to read—at first sight.

But even at that it does not require second sight to see that the significance of Schreiner's book is not its expose of Germany's weakness and the weariness of her allies, but its demonstration of Germany's strength and the determination of the Alliance to stick. The conditions he uncovers are amazing and even gruesome in some details, but they combine to confirm the idea that every man, woman and child in Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey, and every ounce of productive effort, has been mobilized and drilled or thrilled into co-operation with the fighting forces in the field.

Passing over the blunders of the bureaucracy and the pillaging of the profiteers, look rather at some of the things which resulted when, in October, 1916, the governments saw their peace doves returning

with ruffled wings and no way out of the mess of internal affairs but to mend the mischief which had nearly wrecked their various States. Remember that before October, 1916, they had already put the people on the "iron ration." Food, fuel and clothing had been controlled, conserved, "substituted" and "sub-substituted" up to a point where thousands of the aged, feeble and infants had died of mal-nutrition; hearths were cold and homes without artificial light; clothing was of shoddy four and five times removed from the original fabric; and a cobbler would mend your broken shoes without cost if an older pair, from which he could salvage a few extra scraps of leather, were left with him for his labor.

As Mr. Schreiner puts it: The regulations to which the food crisis of the fall of 1916 gave justification laid the axe to the middleman system of distribution. The several governments empowered their Food Commissions and Centrals to establish shortcuts from farm to kitchen that were entirely in the hands of the authorities. Though the Purchasing Central was even then not unknown it came now to supplant the middleman entirely.

The grain was bought from the farmer and turned over to the mills, where it was converted into flour at a fixed price. The miller was no longer able to buy grain for the purpose of holding the flour afterward until some commission-man or wholesaler made him a good offer. He was given the grain and had to account for every pound of it.

NOR was the flour turned loose. The Food Centrals held it and gave it directly to the bakers, who meanwhile had been licensed to act as distributors of bread. From so many bags of flour they had to produce so many loaves of bread, and since control by means of the bread-card coupon would have been as impossible as it was before, the Food Commissions assigned to each bakeshop so many consumers. The bread cards were issued in colored and numbered series. The color indicated the week in which they were valid, while the number indicated the bakeshop at which the consumer had to get his bread—had to get it in the sense that the baker was responsible for the amount the card called for. The Food Central had given the baker the necessary flour, and he had no excuse before the law when a consumer had cause for complaint. If there were one thousand consumers assigned to a bakeshop, the authorities saw to it that the baker got one thousand pounds of flour, and from this one thousand loaves of bread had to be made.

The regulations were enforced with no regard for persons. One baker tried "stretching" the flour and diverted ten loaves into illicit trading channels. He had been thirty years in business and was a "reputable" citizen. He was fined five thousand crowns and lost his license, and only his gray hairs saved him from a prison sentence to boot.

Will some of our potential profiteers kindly remember this?

What bread is for the adult milk is for the baby. It, too, was zonified. A card similar to that governing the distribution of bread was adopted, and dealers