

Public Opinion

"TO HELL WITH PROFITS."

(Christian Science Monitor.)

The idea enunciated by Lord St. Davids, in the House of Lords recently, that "no man should gain by the war," seems to be about as simple and all-embracing as could be wished. In spite of all taxes on excess profits, the outcry against excess profits seems to be as loud as ever. No doubt it is not justified in every case, or in many cases, but a goodly number of people will be of the opinion that it should not be justifiable in any case.

THE NON-ESSENTIALS.

(Boston News Bureau.)

Slowly, but inevitably, the screws are beginning to turn upon the "non-essential" industry. Pleasure and luxury must learn to give way in war time. If after the needs of direct and indirect war work there is left no adequate margin of raw material or labor or factory capacity or bank capital, the crafts that minister to luxury or pleasure must, to that degree, do without.

But in this country that degree is yet indeterminate and is easy to exaggerate. Neither is it wholly easy to define with precision just what shall constitute "luxury." There is no design to crush or even to derange more or less "non-essential" activities that are already in full being; their only danger is the extent of their infringement on "war work." And sometimes such an industry may itself be diverted to war uses. A typical case in all these phases is that of the passenger automobile.

SEA CONTROL.

(Ottawa Citizen.)

Bismarck saw the real difficulty of Germany's position, just as Napoleon did that of France in his attempt to conquer Europe. It lay in the non-possession of sea power. Both leaders understood economics as well as they did military strategy and tactics. They appreciated that only the nation in possession of naval supremacy could dominate the world and they realized, perhaps too late, that not military strength was the real factor in world power but economic superiority. "Our future lies on the sea," said the kaiser when urging the construction of the German navy nearly two decades ago. And in a multitude of foolish words the kaiser uttered some startling truths which betrayed a keen mind and a grasp of facts hidden from his contemporaries.

The end of the German dream of world power will come in the collapse of the nation in an economic sense. The test is at hand and of the outcome there can be no doubt. Neither Germany nor any other country is self sustaining. That sounds like the old doctrine of free trade, but, analyzed the economic theory of free trade is unanswerable and this war is in a fair way to demonstrate that fact.

THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY.

(Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post.)

For twenty years the number of newspapers and periodicals in the United States has been steadily declining, relatively to population. In the last decade or so the number of daily newspapers has notably decreased. A contemporary reports that, though the population of the fourteen largest cities in Michigan has doubled, the number of daily papers has fallen from forty-two to twenty-three.

No doubt like causes have produced a like effect elsewhere. Quite recently consolidations of dailies in first-class cities have attracted attention. The number of considerable cities with no morning paper and of still bigger places with only one morning paper appears to increase. Within our recollection, five morning papers have disappeared from Chicago, though the population of the city has much more than doubled.

The cause, of course, is the steadily increasing cost of establishing and publishing a newspaper. The investment which formerly would have launched a daily paper in Chicago or New York now hardly suffices for Kalamazoo, and operating costs are so high that a paper must win very substantial support or lose a lot of money.

War has greatly increased operating costs by raising the price of paper, other materials and labor. Probably these war costs have been a governing motive in some recent consolidations.

We should not be surprised if two daily papers in a city with anything less than a hundred thousand inhabitants became the exception rather than the rule.

WHALE MEAT AS A FOOD.

(The Wall Street Journal.)

A peculiar advertisement appearing in a Vancouver daily a short time ago was that of a group of grocers of that city who endeavored to educate the public to the desirability of whale meat. A striking headline stated: "Is more nutritious than beef and just as wholesome." The fact was pointed out that the whale is captured many miles at sea, away from all shore contamination, in perfectly clear blue water, and that the whale advertised fed exclusively on live shrimps.

Several methods of preparation were published, such as "pot roast of whale," "curried whale," etc. It sold at 10 cents a pound.

SHYING AT WORDS.

(Southern Lumberman.)

Strange to say, there are persons who shy at the words "drafted" and "conscript." The suggestion has even been made that "chosen" should be used as a sort of poultice to those whose feelings are made raw by what they regard as the harsher words. Thus we should call the great body of young men, now gathering in defense of democracy, the "chosen army." Somebody has set forth this quotation from the Bible: "I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go."

But, after all, "conscript" is a good word, devoid of sinister meaning; its literal significance is merely "a writing together"—that is, an enrollment. And draft comes from a word that means to draw. There is no ignominy attached to having one's name written and then to have it drawn for a particular purpose. "Conscript Fathers" was a name applied to the Roman Senate — because their names were written in the Senate's register.

LETTERS FROM HOME.

(Washington Herald.)

There is one insatiable, constant demand from soldiers in trench and training camp — the demand for letters and more letters from home. It is not soldierly to talk of loneliness — so there is never a word of that in the letters from camp — but the longing is expressed in the plea — over and over — "write often — letters are best of all." Mothers and sisters and friends of soldiers can perform as great a service for them with the pen as with the knitting needle. Sweaters and socks at best mean but physical comfort — while letters strengthen the heart. If our soldiers are to fight their best we must keep them secure in their faith in our appreciation of their sacrifice, and aware of the beauty and worth of the homes for whose freedom and happiness they go to battle. Letters to soldiers should be pictures of home, and letter writers should spare no effort to make them cheerful and inspiring. The veriest commonplace of family life are dear to these exiled lads — the news that mother is making pickles, that father was on the soliciting committee for the Liberty Loan — that sister is secretary of her high-school debating club. And don't forget the clippings from the home paper — and the snapshot of mother feeding the hens!

OLD KING COAL.

(Pulp and Paper Magazine.)

He may be a jolly, warm-hearted soul, but he has fits of being very severe with his subjects. The dusky old monarch is reigning with a tight hand and closed fist this winter. He is not the genial generous giver of heat and power in abundance and to spare. His palace is in the mines of Pennsylvania, West Virginia and the Central States. His servants, with their petty squabbles, do not move him out as fast as his subjects would like to see him come. And when he is out the railroads find him so big they can hardly move him around.

The people up in the northwestern states said King Coal was going to Canada too much, so Uncle Sam persuaded him to make Minnesota a visit and cheer up the people there. This was done as requested, but tied up so many boats in the Lakes that Uncle Sam decided the king had better look out a bit more after the Canadians, so now we shall have enough of his mineral majesty to keep things going this winter.

Fixing the price of coal will not bring any more from the mine. Perhaps a pinch will wake us up.

Old King Coal is a good friend to us all. Let us not waste his bounty any longer.

CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION.

(Boston News Bureau.)

Canada has no more to lose by a German victory than has the United States. What has Canada done to win the war? From a population half a million smaller than Pennsylvania's, Canada has raised 430,000 troops, of which 333,000 have already crossed the sea. The man loss among those sent "over there" has been 50 per cent. Canada's war debt exceeds a billion dollars. When the United States has 5,000,000 men in uniform, 4,000,000 in Europe and a casualty list of 2,000,000, we shall have matched what Canada has already done.

MYTH MAKING IN WAR TIME.

(Chicago Tribune.)

Mr. Tumulty, private secretary to the president, is alive and well in Washington. Remarkable, not to say creepy! Only the other day he was arrested as a German spy, tried, convicted, and shot. Hundreds of perfectly sane Americans believe it.

Kerensky—delicate, puny, and a T. B.—slipped out of Petrograd last week, hid no one knew where, and defied detection when most wanted. Again remarkable! He is Lord Kitchener.

Somewhere in France American troops have arrived without the loss of a man. Wonderful! Outward-bound transport loaded to the gunwales with American troops have been sunk by the half dozen. People tell this with a straight face.

Early in the war a large Russian army took ship at Archangel, landed on British soil, and crossed Scotland and England by train. That army was seen. There are people in England who still believe that it was seen.

Twenty years ago or thereabouts a distinguished theologian brought out a book called "The Gospel for an Age of Doubt." It is now gathering dust on a top shelf, for ours is no longer an age of doubt. It can swallow anything and lick its chops. It can set going the most fantastic rumors — that Mr. Tumulty has been shot, that Kerensky is Lord Kitchener, that our first line trenches in France are manned by troops already drowned, that the Red Cross is an organization of grafters, humbugs, and thieves, that whenever our forces suffer a reverse the war department "conceals it in its cheek like a damask worm." It begins to appear that the age of doubt, if there ever was such a thing, released enormous masses of credulity which are now seeking investment on the smallest provocation — such, for instance, as the arrival of gossip at fourth hand, more or less in the style of "I seen a man that seen a man that said he seen the devil." Andrew Lang wrote "Myths and Myth Makers" and devoted the entire volume to the ancients. It was most unjust. When it comes to myth making, antiquity has nothing on modernity.

NORTHCLIFFE ON REVOLUTION.

(Cleveland Citizen.)

We have a more kindly feeling toward Lord Northcliffe, now that he has been in Cleveland and spoken his piece, than we had before he came.

Although owner of the ultra-Tory London Times, Northcliffe talks like a real democrat — he sees that merry old England is again laboring in revolution and evidently realizes that he and his class can't stop it. Asked by a reporter as to what will happen in England after the war, Northcliffe replied:

"The greatest social revolution in British history, greater even than Magna Charta, the Civil War, or the Reform Bill of 1832.

"Labor has behaved magnificently and labor will never go back to where it was before the war started. The present high wages, the result of a more equitable distribution of wealth, which is apparent in this, as well as in other countries, will endure after the war."

Speaking of the socialization process now going on in Great Britain, the editor said:

"The country has taken over every essential thing the nation possesses. The people have seized the mines, the mills and the railways.

"Any storekeeper who overcharges can be put out of business. The fines for profiteers are enormous.

"One farmer who overcharged for potatoes only last Monday was fined \$25,000. In addition to the fines, there are heavy jail penalties and the man who gets a jail sentence in Great Britain serves every day of the sentence.

"There are no such things as suspended sentences in England. Any fine imposed is paid forthwith or the prisoner immediately taken to jail."

Perhaps we great democrats can learn something even from a British Tory. At least the English appear to be several years ahead of us in the matter of abolishing capitalistic waste and dispensing justice.