

undertaken is quite groundless. So, too, is the argument based on the pretension that direct or indirect relief given to unemployed was burdensome to the public authorities in the occupied parts of Belgium. Everyone in the latter knows—that it is necessary that neutral countries also should know it—that the funds set aside by the National Committee for Relief are to a large extent provided from many voluntary givers inside and outside occupied Belgium, so the expense thrown upon Belgian local boards is negligible. As for the German Administration, it has not contributed a *single centime* to the expenses of public charities in Belgium nor given any help whatever to men deprived of work by its own actions. The sums spent on helping unemployed persons amount to 10-12 million francs per month.

If there existed, as the German authorities allege, any necessity for sparing Belgian local finances already grievously strained, the burden of fresh "unproductive" expenditure why do those authorities continue to crush the finances by a *permanent* war levy of 40 million francs monthly? In the first instance, though it can at any time be reduced or rescinded.

Why, on November 20, 1915, did the new orders increase from 40 to 50 millions of francs monthly? Every contribution which the German Government itself has already December 14 in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* declared to be the maximum amount that could be wrung from a country? (See the German *Freie Presse*, 1914, and the quotation from the *Freie Presse* in Chapter I. p. 51.)

This increase, be it noted, was levied on the provinces along with the obligation to provide the indemnity *in the shape of loans*, and is also exacted from the sums distributed monthly among the unemployed.

When making the two series of decrees of August 14 and 15, 1915, and May 2 and 15, 1916, the authorities had only one end in view—to exclude Belgian labour from employment on Belgian work; and to limit it only German factories and yards engaged on German work. The direct purpose was to bring about general unemployment in Belgium and so have labour to enlist or deport.

The decrees of May 2 and 15 were in force four months only, a period long enough to paralyse the last attempt of the Belgian organisation and artificially make the problems of unemployment insoluble. So on October 3, 1916, there appeared the decree of German Great Headquarters which, pretending anxiety about