



War Bunkum Abroad

WE are somewhat fed to sufficiency upon the peculiar newspaper commodity known as "war bunk." Of course none of our newspapers have deliberately misled us about the war. We have no Imperialized press as they have in Germany. For a long while and up till about a year ago we were conscious of getting a high percentage of strictly reliable truth in our news of the war. We still believe that in the citation of facts, if the heading writers would let it go at that, we are getting just about what happens. It is not the facts that are to blame for the unstable condition of the public mind concerning the war. It is the use made of the facts, the colours and garbs and faces the facts are made to wear in order to make them palatable. Where there is no deliberate attempt to bamboozle as there is in Germany, our headliners feel that they must as far as possible please us. So the show window artist gets in his work. A small advance, a few hundred prisoners, an enemy attack repulsed, are made to look like significant victories. On the front they are but a flash in the pan. The "victory" was all in the headline. Somebody in Bavaria wants the German Emperor deposed. That some one is probably a crank who if caught will be shot with Prussian bullets. There are cranks even in England who would like to see George V. deposed. But that gives very little comfort to our enemies. There is a relative scarcity of some kinds of food in Germany. The headliners wish us to believe that Germany is starving. Germany has been starving more than a year now. The fact is, that ever since we have been forced to wage the kind of war we like least, we have been taking particular incidents for general principles. In the absence of first-hand news our correspondents have fed us up with opinions. There are more opinion-mongers abroad over this war than there were soldiers in Europe five years ago. From Belloc down these experts have played upon our optimism. They know which way the cat likes to be rubbed. And they can sell that kind of treatment better than the opposite. But a large percentage of it is "war bunk," and it's that kind of buncombe that keeps a lot of us from putting the last ounce into the prosecution of the war.

The New "National Government"

WHAT is this national government of which so many editors and publicists are talking? We understand that Sir Robert Borden is to be asked by the new national party to resign from the Premiership until after the war; that Sir Wilfrid Laurier will automatically resign as leader of the Opposition for the same period because there being no political party government an Opposition would have no function; that a new national party will be formed of business men, the big interests who will form a national Board to take over the business management of Canada for the purpose of winning the war and saving the country.

This is the main outline of the most amazingly revolutionary programme ever undertaken in Canada. In a time of revelations and upheavals we should not be alarmed at this. If we feel that Canada is withholding her real strength from war-winning by party government, let us turn everybody out and put in these supermen who are supposed to be bigger than politics, these men who from purely patriotic motives will nip away all the trammels of partyism and let this great young giant of a country exert her full impact on the business of winning the war and saving the country.

But let us first of all examine the programme. Let us not be misled by mere evangelizing enthusiasm. Above all, who are the men that can occupy this position of National Commissionership above politics and without parliament? Some names have been mentioned—Lord Shaughnessy, Mr. J. W. Flavelle, Sir Edmund Osler, Sir Thomas White. There

are others; these will do as examples. - We might add Sir William Mackenzie, Mr. Grant Hall and half a dozen leaders in manufacturing, finance and other big business. What entitles these or any such men to be considered as super-men big enough to win the war and save the country without party politics? Are these men of the type who can emulate Lloyd George and his War Council and Cabinet? If we are following England's lead let us follow it. Where did England get her Lloyd George? From politics. Her Milner, Curzon, Bonar Law and Henderson? From politics. It was the political big man who had the public confidence, who was in touch with the people in public business that got the national confidence in a crisis and made it possible to retire Asquith, Haldane, Churchill and half a dozen other giants of administration and political business.

Where in Canada have we such men? All the men mentioned above are men who have big private business. They are not public men. They are not super-men. They are big businessmen who perhaps should long ago have turned their great talents in the direction of public affairs but did not do it. The people do not know these men as public administrators. The people will not easily get to know them in a time of war as super-statesmen.

Much as we admire these men we do not regard them as nation-savers over and above the men who have been trained in the business of national service. We admit that our politicians have played the game of politics too well and that they have too often been mere dilettanti in statesmanship. But they were and are the men whom the people chose in a time of peace to do the national business. They were and are the men who must be expected to get big enough to conduct the nation's business in a time of war. Parliament is our natural house of national business. If Parliament is inept let us reform it and as quickly as possible. But if we abolish Parliament for the time of the war how shall we return to it in a time of peace? Let us get the weak men out of Parliament, the small men out of Cabinets, and let our national machinery do its work. Let us, if need be, put any of the nation-saving supermen we can find into national service, into the Cabinet, into Parliament, where they can dynamize our lawmakers and administrators into higher national service.

But for the love of the country—let us not admit that in fifty years of Confederation, in the semi-centennial year of responsible government, a united Canada has produced nothing but a set of party politicians that in a crisis must be replaced by representatives of the big interests.

Our So-Called Prosperity

WE all believe in war time economy in order that we may prevent waste that weakens a nation and that we may have money to give to war funds and war loans. But we don't all believe that economy begins at home. A casual look at a lot of the new limousines lined up at our munition fronts does not put the accent on wartime economy. The furs people wear, the gowns they display, the expensive amusements they go to—but why enumerate? The fact is that wartime economy isn't practicable past a certain stage. People ran to cover when the war started. They were afraid of the unknown. Those who paid rent for separate houses doubled up in smaller houses or went into flats. Houses were a glut on the market. Munition orders came along. Factories became busy. Languishing industries revived or were replaced by new ones. Labour got bigger wages. More money circulated. People had the power to buy more. They bought. Prices of everything went up. The people paid them because they had to and because most of them had the money. And what is called prosperity returned to the country when most of us had to be told what it was in order to recognize it. Now a number of our experts predict that the country will fall flat

when war orders cease along with the war. The same experts never would have told us that by two years after war broke out we should be uneasy because of our prosperity in a time of 50 per cent. increase in the cost of living.

Two Pictures

AT a certain Toronto corner stands an empty hotel. It is not a cheerful spectacle. One imagines the ghost of old convivialities leaning over the dusty bar within that dusty window—sobbing. Industrious, brilliant little engineers in grey lay lines of silk trestling from cornice to cornice in the deserted rooms, and dust falls on the gay beer calendars and piece of a broken glass, and the worn spots in the floor where men's heels once dangled while they sat and smoked and spat. . . .

But across from that dead pub. stands a row of small tradesmen's shops: a druggist, a butcher, a bakery, a shoe store. They fairly reek with prosperity. If you ask the druggist, or the butcher or the shoe man, you will learn that trade was never better; they are beginning to sell goods to people who never had money before. If you ask why, they will point across at the pub. "That place used to take a thousand dollars per Saturday!"

But don't ask the baker anything. He, too, is more prosperous. His cakes are better and the jam on his jam tarts even a little redder than before—brilliant creations. As you walk past his store you may hear him whistling down in his cellar whence the fumes of his trade and the whistling issue by way of a grating. HE used to contribute a bit of the pub's thousand—more than he should. He is still growling about prohibition at intervals. But the intervals grow longer between whiles.

Russia's Un-Nationalized Mass

RUSSIA continues to disconcert us. Russia persists in disappointing and defeating herself.

We may talk until we are black in the face about the vast unroused and arousing national consciousness of the Slav that is going to mean so much to the Entente in winning the war and in reorganizing the world for peace after the war is over. But the fact remains that the great Slav aggregation which comes to a head on the Neva is a million miles from anything like effective national organization. No doubt if the people had their way there would be no Germanized, "penetrated" bureaucracy; just as long ago Moujiks and Nihilists would have abolished Siberia. But the people didn't have their way because as a general thing the people of Russia haven't any will. The only will they have is epitomized in the Duma; and the Duma at Petrograd is a poor match for the Reichstag at Berlin when it comes to dealing with a Germanized Petrograd warlordry that is supposed to be managing the war. Had the masses who were supposed to be able in the words of the Czar to smite the "ramshackle empire" of Wilhelm II. been half as mighty as their millions indicated, we should long ago have had weight enough on the eastern front to defeat Germany on the Danube as we have beaten her on the Somme and the Aisne and the Marne. But those masses are not organized nationally. And as long as the war party is penetrated by Germanism they will not be so organized. It is the relative national weakness of Russia in spite of her vast man strength that has prevented the war from being won now. As long as Germany can play her eastern cards the game will not be all in our favour. And it was a wise old plotter by name of Bismarck who forty years ago, as he himself confessed, began to accomplish the Germanizing of Russia as part of the Berlin foreign policy.