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At The Federal Capital

Last week's correspondence contained a brief reference to the delegation of farmers who invaded this Capital in connection with the Military Service Act Amendments. It is said there were over five thousand delegates. As already stated, they filled the hotels to overflowing, they more than filled the largest public hall they could find in the city, overflowed in the streets, and finally marched in force to the Parliament Buildings. Their invasion of the Legislative halls was of a rather mild type. In their mass meeting one day they were addressed by the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden. As above intimated their object in swooping down on the Capital was to compel, if possible, the leader of the Government and his colleagues to withdraw from the position they had taken, relative to the conscription of the young men on the farms. In the great mass meeting, to which reference has been made, several of the farmer delegates made strong speeches against the position assumed by the Government. It may here be said that, as is always the case, the farmer's delegation received very considerable encouragement and assistance in framing their demands upon the Government. This encouragement came from some of the forces in opposition to the Government. Indeed it all came from that source, whether openly or covertly. Certain agitators, who always have some personal ambition to serve, took advantage of the situation and lent their talents, not inconsiderable in many cases, to the formulation of the demands of the farmer delegates. From what has been said, our readers will readily understand that the agitators, those who care not whether or not the farms are tilled, care not whether or not the Allies win the war, care for nothing beyond their own personal ambition; these, let it be said, were most assiduous in their attendance upon the farmer delegates, coaching them as to the best method to pursue in respect to their demands upon the Government. Notwithstanding these annoying conditions thrown around the farmers' delegation to Ottawa, the Prime Minister, Right Honorable Sir Robert Borden, had not changed the story he had to tell those assembled. He stood firmly by the position already taken by the Government in the grave crisis precipitated in connection with operations on the western front. In cool, measured, emphatic language he told the assembled farmers that, much as he regretted his inability to hold out any encouragement to them, much as he regretted the possibility of inconvenience and lack of assistance to some farmers and possibly the diminution of production, yet in the face of all these conditions, his first duty was to impress upon his hearers the all-important fact that men and more men, to strengthen our forces, was our first and imperative duty. As he had already said in Parliament and out of Parliament, he emphasized the position in which we find ourselves. Should the Hun break through and the Allied armies be destroyed, what would be the advantage to us of our farms, of our crops, of anything that we hold most dear. The Prime Minister's address was that of a great statesman, impressed with the serious-

ness of the position in which he found himself, and fully appreciating the responsibility of his office, while fearless in his expression of the one thing necessary under the circumstances.

The farmers no doubt felt disappointed, but they conducted themselves respectfully and made no unpleasant demonstration. This mass meeting took place in the forenoon. In the afternoon the farmers assembled again and formulated their plans for further aggression. They were assisted and encouraged by the agitators, of whom we have already spoken. Having relieved their pent-up feelings in orations more or less lengthy, more or less illogical and windy, they finally marched towards the Parliament Buildings. They had, through some friends, previously asked permission to be allowed to address Parliament, not the whole delegation, but representatives especially chosen to present their appeal to the assembled legislators. Two members it appears were chosen to appear at the bar of the House and address the Commons. Permission had been asked through the day, but it had not been granted. It was decided that they had had ample opportunity to make known their desires, and they had their representatives in Parliament. Parliament was extremely busy with matters of State and it was not considered opportune that representatives of this delegation should be afforded the opportunity to appear before the bar of the House and address themselves to Mr. Speaker and the Members. Foiled in this, they crowded into the galleries, as far as possible, during the evening sitting of the Commons. They did not remain very long, but withdrew, again assembling in their halls and speaking some more. Then they dispersed for the night. Not having achieved, in the way indicated, all the success they had hoped, with the assistance of the aforesaid agitators, they drew up a memorial for presentation to His Excellency, the Governor General. What effect this has had or how far it has gone towards affording the farmers any satisfaction, we have no knowledge. In connection with the invasion of the capital by the farmers, it might be pointed out that 5,000 able-bodied men spending, at least, three days away from their farm operations would mean 15,000 days for one man. That would be quite a number of years in farming operations, and it is not unreasonable to conclude that had all this time been devoted to agricultural pursuits, a very considerable amount of the difficulty expressed by the farmers would have disappeared. And then again it is likely that every one of those farmers spent several dollars in cash; suppose we put the amount at as low as \$2.00 a day, they spent at least \$6.00 each. We may assume very much more, but even that expended in their visit here would represent a large amount of capital which might be employed in engaging farm help of one kind or another. Altogether the invasion of the farmers passed off quietly, no one seems to be very badly hurt, but there are rumors in the press and otherwise that some of them are going to make matters disagreeable for their representatives in the House of Commons. However, it is possible that all will blow over, that an abundant harvest will be gathered in and our farmer friends will eventually find themselves quite moderated from their war-like propensities.

Another matter of very great importance came up in the Commons on Wednesday, the 15th instant. That was the question of rendering assistance to the Canadian Northern Railway. Our readers will remember that, during the last Federal Election campaign, considerable was said by the candidates opposing the Government regarding the Govern-

ment's attitude in connection with the C. N. R. Of course, as was pointed out at the time, the question was presented to the public by the opponents of the Government, in the most tortuous, misleading and false light. The truth of the matter is this: the C. N. R. was obliged to come to the Government several times for assistance to carry on their work. The Government made considerable loans to the Company, but still every year they appeared, seeking further assistance. The matter assumed very serious proportions, and the Government were not disposed to continue this financing unless some radical change were to take place regarding the ownership of the Road. Finally, at the last session of Parliament, the late Government, which had previously had possession of 40 per cent stock of the C. N. R., passed legislation that the remaining 60 per cent of the Company's stock become the property of the Government, in consideration of a price to be agreed upon. In this legislation provision was made that the price to be paid for this stock would be decided by arbitration, but that in no case was the amount to exceed \$10,000,000. Meantime, until the award of the arbitration would be announced, the road was to go on as usual, nominally managed by the MacKenzie-Mann company, but the Government having three representatives on the board of directors. As soon as the award of the arbitrators should be known the road was to be transferred to the Government and a new management put in charge. As said above, this was embodied in legislation of last session. Now the time was coming for the consideration of this question and new legislation was to be passed to confirm all that was foreshadowed in last year's enactment. Very considerable rumblings were heard in the political air. There was great dissension in some quarters, and it was feared that there would be trouble with the bill coming before Parliament. Let it be stated that this indication of trouble for the Government was not all in the Opposition ranks. There was in the House of Commons on the Government side, a group, not very large it is thought, who were called the "Ginger Group." It was said that these were just waiting to strike a blow at the Government, whenever this C. N. R. business came before the House of Commons. The notice of the legislation was on the order paper for sometime and questions were asked, especially by the Opposition, seeking information of one kind or another relative to the Government and the C. N. R. The information was promised from time to time. Finally it came on the 15th instant, when the Prime Minister, in a speech of two hours presented the case in full. The presentation was so simple, so admirable, so conclusive, that when he had finished his speech, it did not appear that there was anything more left to be said. He cleared up the whole situation, and anyone who might be disposed to raise opposition, seemed to have lost his occupation. The Leader of the Opposition, in a brief reply, admitted that there was a splendid outlook for the C. N. R. and that the position taken by the Government was the best that could have been assumed. Thus another bubble on which the opponents of the Government had staked their political faith burst, and the splendid presentation of the railway question put before Parliament by the Prime Minister prevailed. In this presentation a comprehensive scheme of Government ownership of railways was embodied sufficiently extensive to include the C. N. R., the Transcontinental, G. T. P., and the G. T. R. itself. All this will not be accomplished at once, but the C. N. R. part of the

program will be entered upon without delay. All the Government is waiting for now is the award of the arbitrators, and it is thought that this will be forthcoming by the first of July. Then, from time to time, as conditions will afford, other advances will be made in the Government's great scheme of railway ownership. In this connection let it be said that all those roads had been started, had been entered upon with extravagance and had compromised their credit and unloaded onto the Government serious responsibilities and strained the credit of the country, to the utmost, long before the advent of the Borden Government. The building of the G. T. P. and National Transcontinental was inaugurated by the Laurier Government, and was one of the most gigantic blunders in the history of the country.

The other matter that created some little excitement in Parliament was inaugurated before the week end of the 18th. It was the matter of the Yukon election. It will be remembered that the election in the Yukon did not take place on the 17th of December. It, with two or three others, was deferred. When the election took place, Dr. Thompson, the Conservative Member in the late House, was again a candidate, and Mr. Congdon was the Opposition candidate. When the civilian vote was counted, it was found that Congdon had a small majority. But when the overseas vote was added, it gave Dr. Thompson a considerable majority. Under these circumstances it will be said that Thompson should at once have been declared elected. But a technical point arose. The military soldier vote was polled between the 19th of November and the 17th of December, as called for by the Voters Act. In consequence of the soldier vote being polled before there were any candidates in the field in the Yukon, it was contended by the Opposition that this vote could not be counted. The matter came before the Government and was referred to the Committee of Privileges and Elections Committee. A Liberal member of the Committee, Mr. MacKenzie of North Cape Breton, managed to get through a resolution to the effect that the Committee refer the matter to the Supreme Court of Canada or to two Judges of the Supreme Court of Ontario. When this came to Parliament a resolution was moved to the effect that the matter be referred back to the Committee of Privileges and Elections for further consideration. It was pointed out that that committee had no authority to refer the matter to the Supreme Court, that the Committee was appointed by Parliament, and to Parliament alone could it report. This decision was combatted by the Opposition in the Commons. A considerable debate took place and two or three amendments were made and as many divisions taken, but in every case the Government carried their point with large majorities. The matter then went back to the Committee, and the Committee reported back to Parliament their finding, which was to the effect that Parliament alone should deal with the matter, and a lively debate took place, amendments were moved and defeated, and the Government triumphed as usual. The point at issue was this, that the overseas soldier vote for the Yukon should be counted. If these votes were not counted, three hundred soldiers would be disenfranchised. It was pointed out that the Military Act was not clear on the point at issue, but no technicalities should disenfranchise three or four hundred electors. That is what Parliament decided by a vote, taken after discussing the various amendments in the case. Now the possibilities are that in a short time, after the formalities are complied with, Dr. Thompson will be declared a Member of the House of Commons.

The attention of our young men is directed to the advertisement published today giving notice to those of nineteen years to register in writing to the Deputy Registrar under the Military Service Act, via Mr. W. W. Stanley Charlottetown. Read the advertisement carefully and then report.

Progress of the War

London, May 21.—After striking viciously at the enemy at various points along the western battlefield, meeting each other with a thunder of cannon fire and maintaining the mastery of the air in every sector from the North Sea to the Swiss frontier, the armies of the Entente Allies are preventing the Teutonic armies from quietly perfecting their preparations for coming battles. With the knowledge that the passing of each day brings new American legions to help crush the next German offensive, the Allies are finding satisfaction in the fact that the Germans have as yet been unable to launch a new blow in the struggle which Berlin had expected to be the decisive one of the war.

For the most part, the Germans have shown but little of their habitual fighting spirit along the line in France. They have been thrust back in four sectors and the allies have succeeded in winning ground which will be of great importance in the future, but the Germans have counter-attacked in only one instance and this movement was carried out so slowly and with such a lack of dash that it was easily broken up before the Teutons reached the new allied positions. The attacks by the French, near Loere, on the northern side of the Lys salient and of the Australians, before Amiens, which have already been repulsed now appear to have been more successful than was at first understood. Near Loere the French have not only taken strongly fortified points but they have made secure their lines on each side of Hill 44, which they recaptured from the Germans recently. The Australians, too, have won ground which is of tactical importance along the Amiens sector. They have gained higher ground which lends itself well to defensive tactics and will be valuable when the time comes for stern battle there.

The French still seem to be the most active of the forces of the entente nations. They have again engaged in raiding operations near Lassigny, on the flank of the German line as it stands since the advance toward Amiens. On the American front there has been the usual lively exchange of artillery fire, but no infantry fighting has occurred. The same is true of the situation in the Italian theatre of the war. A report from Athens states that Turkish troops in Asia Minor have mutinied and that a force sent to quell the disorder has deserted. It is said that there have been many desertions from the Turkish garrisons in towns along the Asia Minor coast.

London May 21.—A heavy counter-attack against the British lines northwest of Merville along a front of about two-thirds of a mile, broke down under the strong British resistance, according to Field Marshal Haig's report tonight from British headquarters in France. The French also reported an attack north of Baillieux. The statement says: "A hostile counter-attack launched this morning against our new position northwest of Merville was made in considerable strength upon a front of twelve hundred yards. A very heavy bombardment preceded the enemy's advance, but despite the intensity of his artillery preparation, his infantry only succeeded in reaching our positions at two points, where they were dealt with effectively by our troops in each case. Our whole line is intact. Two raids which the enemy attempted last night in the sector north of Baillieux were repulsed by the French troops. We secured a few prisoners and a machine gun this morning in a patrol encounter in the neighborhood of Boyelles." British casualties to the number of 36,677 have been reported in the week ending today. British casualties are divided as follows: Killed or died of wounds—Officers, 318; men, 8,815; wounded or missing, officers, 1,241; men, 31,308. The British casualties reports are still reflecting the recent heavy fighting, although the totals are beginning

to decrease. The figures last week were 41,612, the largest of any week since the German offensive began.

London, May 22.—Word that the German offensive has started may be expected at any hour. Air fighting during the last five days, in which the British alone claim to have destroyed 160 enemy machines, is indicative of the fierceness with which the coming great battle will be waged. On both sides of the lines the troops are being harassed by aviators using bombs, and mitrailleurs. Having set fire to the ruins at Bethune the enemy drenched the country with gas shells, generally a forerunner to an infantry attack. All along the west bend of the deep Armentieres salient the Germans are shelling the British positions heavily with occasional reconnoitering raids. Southeast the Bethune region the famous Hill 70, the enemy's artillery is reported active, while the bombardment grows violent east of Arras and at Albert.

General Haig's communique shows that the Germans are using shells lavishly along the 50 mile front running from the Metereon on the southwest of Kemmel to Albert on the Somme. The British and French continue their nibbling tactics, wrestling a position here and there, and strengthening their line of defence. Judging by the artillery fire, the enemy plans his next move north of the Somme with the hope of engaging the major part of the British forces. Though the Ypres sector is comparatively quiet, it does not follow that the enemy abandoned his hopes of taking this point. Major Endris, military critic of the Munich Neuste Nachrichten suggests that the next attack will come to the south of Ypres, and force the Anglo-French troops behind the Yser, Comines canal and possibly as far back as the Nieuport-Furnes-Steenvorde-Hazebroek line which runs a mile west of Poperinghe. There have been some lively gun duels south-east of Amiens, but the same relative stagnation on the northern front exists on the southern battlefield. Because Ludendorff hesitated so long there are already some skeptics who doubt whether

he intends to hit at all, just as there were skeptics before the March drive. But there have been people who prophesied starvation in Germany monthly since the winter of 1916.

London, May 23.—Both the Armentieres and Somme fronts have been decidedly active during the past twenty-four hours, the deluges of gas at Bethune and the violent artillery action east of Amiens featuring the reports of the Anglo-French leaders. Scores of reconnaissance raids and patrol encounters are reported along a wide battlefield. Both sides are showing anxiety for a test of the strength of the forces in the various sectors. This third attack. All along the west bend of the deep Armentieres salient the Germans are shelling the British positions heavily with occasional reconnoitering raids. Southeast the Bethune region the famous Hill 70, the enemy's artillery is reported active, while the bombardment grows violent east of Arras and at Albert.

The German counter blow near Merville was only a minor operation. The explanation of the lavish use of gas shells near Bethune may be found in the fact that the Germans intend to make a frontal attack on the town and they know that it is practically impossible to destroy the British defenses by the use of high explosives. A parallel is to be found in the tactics before Armentieres which Field Marshal Haig reported was evacuated because it was filled with gas. Bethune rests in a low country crossed by canals and ditches where the gas hangs heavy. Its capture would embarrass the British between Givenchy and Loos, and any considerable enemy success would lead to the turning of Vimy Ridge, which the Canadians stormed at Easter time last year.

Ludendorff has massed a gigantic weight of men and material by which he hopes to break through the Allied line at several points. His strategy calls for first the crushing of the British army

and the weakening of the Foch's reserves; second, in the capture of the channel ports and the destruction of British communication between Northern France and England; and the third the capture of Paris. Naturally he has a lot of secondary objects, such as the capture of Hazebroek, Arras, Donlans and Amiens, all of which are of little military value but represent definite things in the mind of the Germans as well as the allied powers. Those who are best qualified to judge believe that the new offensive will last longer than the first, and that it will not end until Ludendorff has exhausted his forces or obtained all of his objectives. They believe that it will run well into midsummer and that at its conclusion Germany will be ready for peace, and failing to obtain it she will fall back on the defensive.

Ludendorff will either win a great victory or lose the initiative perhaps for all time if America fulfills all expectations. Statesmen and soldiers have stated several times recently their belief that the war will end this year. The peace with Russia is far from being as satisfactory to the Jingo party in Germany as it is to the social Democrats. The agile Herr Ersberger flits about to the embarrassment of the stolid imperial chancellor Hertling and Ludendorff must give the fatherland some substantial nourishment during the next few months or the German internal situation is bound to prove troublesome before snow falls. Though the allied people view the future with anxiety, it must be remembered that the same anxiety exists in Germany.

When the German press was directed to combat the effect of rumors regarding losses and explain the causes of delay in operations, when half of the army believes that Hindenburg is dead, when the liberal politicians join the Socialists in their protests against food rations, when leading naval critics are sceptical over the success of the submarine campaign, when the inhabitants of the Rhine valley live under constant fear of aerial attacks, the German militarists must win something more than a tactical success. (Continued on page 3.)

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