

# Delegates Beginning to Arrive.

KEENLY INTERESTED.

Washington. (By Canadian Press.)—With conferences beginning among the United States delegates to the Limitation Conference, and the advance guard from other countries beginning to arrive for the conference, speculation as to its outcome is heard everywhere. Talk over the prospects is the great subject in the official and diplomatic circles here and beyond a doubt the U. S. is more keenly interested in the results of the conference to-day than in any other subject unless the reduction of taxes, combined with a outlook for overcoming the depression in business.

On the whole, there is much hope here as the time draws close for the conference to begin. It is a mistake, however, to regard the expressions of optimism as official or Congressional opinion. The real leaders of the conference are the men in the administration, the men who are to be discussed frankly here, and the men who are to be discussed in the Far Eastern problems.

There can be no doubt of the sincerity of the Harding administration. Secretary of State Hughes of the U. S. delegates in general, and the conference in particular, is coming more and more to be discussed frankly here, and the men who are to be discussed in the Far Eastern problems.

It is a world situation if the conference will not yield to treatment and if the effort to reach agreements to reduce armaments comes to nothing.

Apprehension here is real that if the conference does not succeed, the situation will be worse than it is now. It is now that after the conference is over there will be danger of drifting into another great war. Almost unthinkable as another conflict may be, there is a serious precedent for what is contemplated in this instance provided the conference fails. One has only to recall that in the years just preceding 1914 in Europe, Great Britain made real and sincere efforts to get Germany to stop in the building up of armaments at sea. Germany refused to listen seriously to proposals for halting or reducing armaments, and things grew worse instead of better. A prominent London journalist who has just arrived to attend the conference commented on the British experience with Germany.

He very frankly wondered whether the present instance the United States was to go through with Japan with the same experience Britain had with Germany. He pointed out that there was a hopeful sign in the fact that public sentiment in Japan is evidently a great deal stronger in favor of reduced armaments than it was in Germany before 1914. He saw in this the possibility of beneficial results coming from the conference.

The very fact that not only the United States delegates but the delegates of other powers cannot fail to recognize that failure to agree at the conference would mean a new era of increased preparation and that it would spell added tax burdens for the present nations is certain to be a powerful force at the conference. It is very sufficiently powerful to overcome the grave obstacles which can fail to perceive ahead of the Limitation meeting.

Marvellous Eyes of Tiny Insects.

On the top of a fly's head, set above between the huge compound eyes, are three little eyes, whose usefulness has long been a puzzle.

It is a result of recent experimental study, it is believed that they are for long-distance vision, thereby supplementing the compound eyes, which are adapted to be for close-at-hand magnification.

The three "ocelli," set in triangular arrangement, are not peculiar to flies; many species of insects have them. They are simple eyes, like ours, whereas the compound eyes are made up of thousands of tiny eyes massed together, each with its own cornea, lens and optic nerve.

Strange it seems that nature should give a fly with a seeing apparatus so much more perfect than ours, and yet the compound eyes of a fly are so much simpler than that with which a human being is equipped.

It is true, as supposed, that the compound eyes of a fly are powerful instruments, the insect must be able to distinguish things which are visible to us only by the aid of a microscope.

It has often been said that the human eye is a very imperfect optical instrument. So it is, undoubtedly, but it is an excellent all-round instrument for general purposes, adapting itself to a great variety of uses.

Apparently, of all the mammals man has the best long-distance vision. A man can see better in the dark owing to the wide expansion of the pupils to admit as much as possible of what there is. In absolute darkness, however, he would see no better than a man who knows does not know that they are near-sighted.

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## Dereelicts.

According to the United States Hydrographic Office, eight vessels are on the average wrecked yearly in the North Atlantic by collision with derelicts, and the average number of derelicts afloat at any time in that part of the ocean is not less than thirty.

A derelict is a wreck that does not sink at once. Such a vessel, if loaded with lumber or some similarly buoyant cargo, may remain afloat for weeks, even months. She may lose all her top hamper and so be rendered almost invisible. But the worst, and most dangerous of all derelicts are those which have been burnt to the water line, and such a wreck is more dreaded by sailors than icebergs, fogs, or storms.

Such was the Taurus, a Norwegian barque, which was sighted eighteen times before she was sought out and destroyed. Two ships actually collided with her, but happily without receiving serious injury.

The Dunmore, a 3,000 ton Cardiff steamer, abandoned off the Newfoundland coast early in 1906, wandered about the Atlantic for more than two months before she was at last brought to book.

Quicker stories of derelicts are to be found in the shipping records.

One day in 1914 a settler living on a small bay in New Caledonia, woke early in the morning to see a large sailing vessel in the bay. She was veering about in an odd manner and did not seem to be under control. Taking his boat, the man pulled out to find that there was not a soul aboard her. She was the British barque Dumfriesshire, a vessel of 1,150 tons, with a cargo valued at 25,000 pounds.

The explanation came later. Sailing from New Zealand to New Caledonia, the barque had struck a reef, and as she seemed to be sinking her crew abandoned her and pulled ashore. But she was not so badly holed as they had thought and she drifted into the bay, where the lucky settler picked her up.

Could a true history of vanished ships be written, the truth would surpass the wildest efforts of imagination. We have all read the story of the Marie Celeste, picked up off Gibraltar sound and seaworthy, with all sails set, yet with not a soul aboard.

Here is an incident which occurred near the south coast of England, yet stranger still. On November 30, 1888, a large barque was seen off Deal, standing towards the Goodwin Sands. She was about five miles out, the weather was clear and moderate, and the big ship stood out clean-cut against the gray of the sky. Suddenly she seemed to flicker and vanish.

A number of luggers put out, and for five hours cruised about that tract of water. Yet all they found was an empty, nameless ship's boat.

And here is the strangest part of the whole strange business. The soundings hereabouts are nowhere more than seven fathoms (42 feet) and had a ship of such size sunk in such shallow water her masts would have remained above the surface.

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## A Fool-Proof Railway.

SCHEME THAT MAY MAKE COLLISIONS IMPOSSIBLE.

A demonstration of an invention by Mr. A. R. Angus for preventing railway collisions was given before a party of engineers and journalists recently, at Dyke, on the London, Brighton, and South-Coast Railway. Two engines and a section of railway line were fitted with Mr. Angus's apparatus, and an attempt was made to run one engine into the other. Fortified by the assurance of the inventor that this was impossible, a number of the party crowded into one of the engines. When it arrived within the danger zone, the whistle sounded, the brakes were applied, the steam was shut off, and the engine was pulled up. This took place without any action on the part of either driver or fireman, the whole device being entirely automatic.

## Safety in Fogs.

The secret consists in supplying to the track rails electrical energy, and coils on the locomotive are placed in inductive relation to the rails. The current thus induced is taken to an electric magnet, and ultimately the movements referred to above are performed by the mechanism. The inventor claims for the system that it provides for all possible traffic operations. Trains may proceed through a dense fog with perfect safety. They may enter and leave large termini controlled and directed by a signman without the latter seeing them, and there can be no danger of the engine running into the platform buffers or into another train standing at the platform.

Trains will also be protected against derailment at curves and dangerous facing points by the automatic slowing down of the speed. It is also claimed to eliminate errors by signmen. It is proposed to fit the system experimentally on a section of the Metropolitan Railway between Moorgate Station and Finsbury Park Station.

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