

NORTHCLIFFE ON A HOLIDAY

Outstanding Figure in This
Century's Journalism

He Defeated Germany?

Opinion of Colonel George Harvey
Who Credits Him With Changes
That Led to Victory

Commenting on the retirement of Lord Northcliffe from the management of the score or more newspapers and periodicals which he owns, Colonel George Harvey, one of the most brilliant of American publicists, expresses the opinion that Northcliffe cannot really retire. "He will die with his boots on," says Harvey. He also expresses the opinion that to Northcliffe and the London Times England owes the fact that Germany was defeated. Northcliffe was aware of the German peril. In 1912, in the course of a conversation with Harvey, he predicted that there would be war with Germany within three years. In 1915 he said that the war was not being won, and that it would be lost unless Lloyd George could be put in Asquith's place. He said that Lloyd George was the one man in England for the tremendous task. Those who believe that the war was being lost under Asquith and that the tide was turned by the coalition government must admit that Harvey's tribute to Northcliffe and the Times is justified, for to Northcliffe and the Times was due the downfall of Asquith.

Greatest of Journalists.

Lord Northcliffe is easily the outstanding figure in the journalism of this generation. He started with nothing, and in little more than thirty years made himself many times a millionaire—in pounds sterling—won for himself a peerage, and another for his brother, secured control of the most important newspaper in the world, the London Times, which he had the rare judgment not to either debase or uplift, and bought up a score of other papers and periodicals. He has made and unmade governments, and altered the policy of the war. It is not so long ago when Northcliffe was the best hated man in England. This was when he was attacking Lord Kitchener for sending shrapnel instead of high explosive shells to the front. Kitchener was the British idol. He had been made secretary of war largely at Northcliffe's behest. Now he was being accused of imperilling the British army because of his failure to understand that shrapnel was useful only for use against troops advancing in the open. Northcliffe was burnt in effigy in a hundred English towns. His papers were destroyed, and publicly banned with bell, book and candle. Yet he held on, and the high explosive was sent out.

Northcliffe and His Men.

A veteran journalist who worked on one of the Northcliffe papers for years and came often into contact with Northcliffe, says that he was the best employer a newspaper worker ever had. Since Northcliffe entered the field of daily journalism in London, some twenty odd years ago, the wages of writers have doubled, largely because Northcliffe paid large salaries to attract the men he wanted. It used to be said of him, as it has been said of his American counterpart, Hearst, that he lured men by high wages, squeezed them dry in a few months and then tossed them aside. To this it may be said that men are not squeezed dry of ideas in a few months. Thomas MacIver, editor of the Daily Mail, who succeeds Northcliffe as chairman of his various publishing interests has been editor of the Mail for twenty years. He evidently was not tossed aside. The journalist quoted, Frank Dilnot, says that the reason Northcliffe turned aside so many writers after a short trial was because they did not make good. They were "shines," mere flashes in the pan.

Didn't Want Cheap Content.

Northcliffe, he tells us, in the New York Sun, was always available to the men who worked for him. He encouraged them to make suggestions. Those who had good ideas were generously rewarded. If they were ill they were sent on long voyages until they recovered. Money was no object. He used often to stop his reporters and editors and question them. One young fellow who had been with him for three months was questioned one day on the shales as to how he liked his job. He said everything was fine, he was perfectly contented and happy. "How much are you earning?" asked Northcliffe. "Five pounds a week," was the answer. "Then you are not the man for me," was the retort. "I don't want any member of my staff to be happy and contented with five pounds a week." The writer does not say whether the contented young man was fired or given a raise.

Secrets of Success.

Mr. Dilnot tells a curious story about a motor accident in which the London Daily Mail offered a large reward for the discovery of the driver of an automobile which killed a child and then escaped before its number could be discovered. He sent his special reporters to work on the case, and after some clever sleuthing they learned that the car was owned by his brother, Hildebrand Harnsworth. However, the car had been taken out by the chauffeur for an unauthorized joy ride, and Hildebrand was found guiltless. On the same night there was a sensational murder, and when it was suggested that the Daily Mail ought to offer a reward, Northcliffe hesitated, and said, half aloud, "But where was my brother Hildebrand on that night?" One of the secrets of Northcliffe's success has been his ability to concentrate his mind on a single problem to the exclusion of all others. Thus, if one of his papers was not making good, he would take no rest and give no rest to his advisers until he had located the reason, and had taken steps to remove it. Apart from this he knows "What the public wants," and this, after all, is the secret of everybody's success.

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MONEY WASTED IN SHIP CANAL

Waterway From Great Lakes to
Montreal Would Not be a Success,
in Opinion of N. Y. State

Albany, N. Y., Feb. 14.—The contention that a ship canal from the Great Lakes to Montreal would not be a commercial success and that Congress, upon investigation, would find that any money spent in bringing it about would be wasted, was made by Lewis Nixon, superintendent of public works, in a letter to Governor Smith and submitted by the executive in a special message to the legislature.

Mr. Nixon called attention to the amendment to the River and Harbor bill now pending in congress which would provide that the International Joint Commission created by treaty between the United States and Great Britain be requested to investigate what further improvement of the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Lake Ontario is necessary to make it navigable for ocean-going vessels, together with the estimated cost, and report to the governments of Canada and the United States with its recommendation for co-operation of the United States in the improvement of the river.

The State of New York could not urge stably a selfish opposition on the ground that even if the proposed route proved desirable, it might injure cities or localities of the state while benefiting the nation as a whole, the letter pointed out.

Consumes Too Much Time.

Opposition to the amendment was based largely by the superintendent of public works on the ground that great ships, built for the open sea or Great Lakes, would not find it profitable to use the proposed canal because of the much greater time which would be necessary in traversing the shallow and narrow waters than the open water. The big ships, it was stated, run at about the rate of ten miles an hour, while a speed of five miles an hour would be the maximum for them to operate in the canal waters. Taking into consideration that lake vessels, costing large sums of money can earn returns for only seven months, they must make as many trips as possible, it was stated. A cargo of grain from Duluth to Buffalo could be made in about eight days at a cost of \$1,000. Assuming a high lake freight,

The trip would pay the vessels \$10,000. The return trip with coal would pay the ship's expenses back. But if the ship cost about \$1,500, and she would have no coal to take back.

"Instead of making twenty trips the owner could count on only about ten,"

wrote Superintendent Nixon, "so unless he could secure twice the freight from Duluth to Chicago, he would not engage in such service."

"We are looking forward to when government control of traffic ceases and the carrying of grain by steamer and three 18,000 bushel consortos to reduce the

cost from Buffalo to New York to one and one-half cents a bushel. We may dismiss the idea of ocean-going vessels using the Montreal-to-lake route. They cost more to run than lake vessels and the loss of time in restricted channels as compared with the open sea would mean a serious cut in earnings."

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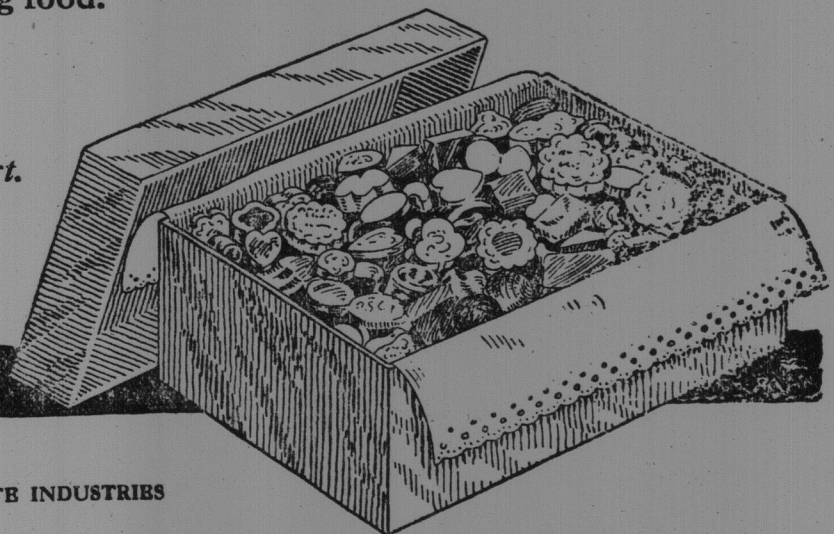
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