

1915--THE YEAR OF PREPARATION--1915

THE DOMINATING THOUGHT.

In reviewing the salient features of the story of the year 1915 now drawing to a close, we are forced to regard the war as dominating everything. Twelve months ago we had the experience of five months of war, and these months were the most anxious of all. At that time it was felt that Germany and her allies could not attain that world supremacy she was battling for, and twelve months of fighting has strengthened that feeling. It has, however, become abundantly clear that those who spoke of a three years' task before the allies in rendering Germany powerless to be a menace to western civilization, had correctly sized up the situation. These first five months of war had shown that great as the momentum was which Germany put into her initial operation, she had been unable to cripple France or crush Russia by the end of 1914. Great as was her rush of millions of troops, well equipped for the fray, and sustained by abundant reserves of munitions and men, her blundering diplomacy had brought Britain into the fight, and her strategy for speedy victory was brought to nought.

GERMAN REORGANIZATION.

Germany, however, quickly accommodated herself to the new conditions. She marshalled her financial resources by forced borrowings from her banks on the property of her people, to whom she gave written words of acknowledgment, and led them to believe that the latter would be redeemed out of the immense indemnities she would wring from the nations she intended to conquer. Her non-military engineering shops were speedily organized for the purpose of turning out artillery and shells, machine guns, automatic rifles and cartridges, bombs, liquid fires and poisonous gases. She started reorganizing the dispersed armies of Austria and succeeded in inducing Turkish ships of war to bombard Russian ports, and thereby forced Turkey into the war. Twelve months ago she had the greater part of Belgium in the toils and a large section of Northern France. But it was not so much the extent of territory on the Western front that made up her gains. The value was due to the fact that these territories contained valuable deposits of iron and coal, and on these coal and iron-fields were the chief iron works and engineering shops of both Belgium and France. These losses seriously handicapped both France and Belgium in the subsequent resistance, and account largely for the delay in active offensive by the Entente on the Western front. With these new resources in her possession, with a ready marshalling of her finances, inventors and munition toilers, she was ready for the struggle of the twelve months, now about to be reviewed.

LOSS OF SEA COMMUNICATION.

Germany had, however, sustained severe losses. The greatest of all was the loss of communication by sea. All her colonies were isolated, one from the other, and all from the mother country. She had lost her colonies in the Pacific, and she could send no aid either to South West Africa, East Africa, Togoland or the Cameroons. She could draw no supplies from the neutrals who were separated from her by the sea, except such as her enemies allowed her, or she obtained by chicanery by way of the neutrals on her border. Her mercantile marine are tied up at the wharves of the ports she controlled, interned in neutral ports or prizes in the hands of her enemies. Admiral Sturdee had avenged the defeat of Admiral Craddock off Coronel, and the victorious squadron of Von Spee had been annihilated. An isolated raid had been tried with battle cruisers to the east coast of England and had escaped scot free, so far as British cruisers chasing them was concerned, thanks to a fog, but it resulted in serious damage to the Von der Tann. She had met with some success in the torpedoing of some old battleships and cruisers, but with no success in the efforts to destroy enemy dreadnoughts. So ended 1914 so far as the Central Powers and Turkey were concerned.

SEA WAYS OPEN TO US.

These were months of grave anxiety for the Entente, battling against odds on the two fronts, and particularly for the small British forces at the front. There was, however, one source of intense satisfaction. Britain was supreme on the seas, and the French Navy added to that ascendancy. That was the salvation of the Entente. The shores of the British and French Empire were safe and sea communication was open with friend and neutral alike. These advantages enable the Entente to mark time while stabilizing finance against the plotters who tried to create a financial crisis in London by "runs"

on banks and "wellspring" in the exchange. In those five months, the dislocated exchange was put into working order, the moratorium raised and trade and commerce placed on a firm footing. The Kitchener recruits were brought together, new armies were put in training to take the place of those sacrificed to save the Straits of Dover and Paris; and steps were taken to overcome the adverse results of the losses of the Belgian and French mining and engineering districts. These were indeed trying times, but they paved the way for laying the foundations for the task of 1915, which might well be summed up, as a year of holding the enemy at bay, whilst making preparations to overcome in as short a time as possible, the Military Proves Germany had spent a generation in perfecting.

SEA SUPREMACY.

No more important question can be put at the end of 1915, than that which asks whether the sea supremacy which served us to such good stead in the first five months of the war, has been impaired. The answer is clear and emphatic. There can be no doubt, no manner of doubt whatever, that we are stronger at sea to-day than when the war began, or ever in our history. Not only have cruiser commerce raiders been swept from the oceans, but the battle cruiser raid, which secured some success in December, 1914 by bombarding English east coast towns, was attempted only once in the twelve months of 1915. The raiders did not reach the English coast on that occasion, January 24th, 1915. They were sighted and chased with the loss of the Bleucher and the crippling of the Seydlitz and Derfflinger. For the past eleven months the German battle cruisers have joined their dreadnoughts in remaining at home under the protection of their forts and mine-fields. The German process of lessening the extent of naval supremacy over them by the process of attrition by submarines has been a complete failure. On the other hand the Entente naval superiority was improved in May last, when Italy joined the Entente, and added her fine navy to their strength. Moreover, all the Entente Powers have been completing dreadnoughts and super-dreadnoughts and other units and putting them in commission. It would be well within the limits of the facts to state that the Entente Powers have since war began, with the addition of the Italian Navy, added to their naval strength an aggregate of units, far more formidable than the whole naval strength of the enemy to-day. The greatest success of the year in regard to the Admiralty is the way the Navy coped with the attempted submarine blockade of the British Isles. As a blockade it has proved a complete fiasco, and the main result of the attempt has been to embitter the relations of Germany with the United States, through the loss of American lives by the sinking of the Lusitania, Arabic and Hesperian. The success of the Admiralty was largely due to the co-operation of skippers and seamen taken from the mercantile marine.

THE BRITISH ARMY.

Although the British Navy was ready and capable of dealing successfully with the world-wide problems confronting it, the British Army was not capable of filling the demands made upon the British Empire. The British army was far too small for this purpose. It was highly skilled and most efficient so far as the units went. The drafts made upon its strength during the first few months of the war decimated it and the problem confronting Britain was how to mark time, while an army sufficient to aid the allies in crushing Germany, was being enlisted, trained, clothed and equipped, and while arms and munitions were being manufactured to face the concentrated machinery fighting into which this war had developed. On these accounts, the year 1915, so far as the allies are concerned has been mainly a year of making the best defense possible, while preparations were being made for an instrument of offense commensurate to the task before us. An army of less than three quarters of a million men, is in process of being converted into an army of about five million men. The United Kingdom is providing four million of these men and already three millions have been raised there, without counting the men who have attested under the Derby scheme and have not yet been called to the colours. The raising of these men in the United Kingdom has taxed the recruiting resources there. Until a few months ago, recruiting was done directly by the War Office, and the new armies were known as Kitchener's men. Then the Secretary of War was relieved of the task, and a great campaign was waged under a civil commission, of which Earl Derby was Director, and in which the member of the Parliamentary Labor Party and

leading Trade Unionists took a prominent part. The understanding was that the scheme was to test the ability of the volunteering system to enlarge the army and keep up the supply of reserves to maintain a strength of four million men from the United Kingdom. The first batch of men attested under this scheme are to be called up within a fortnight. These are the unmarried men between 19 and 22 inclusive. Although no official announcement has been made of the results of these attestations, it is understood that they have not been satisfactory so far as unmarried men are concerned, and the Cabinet is at present devising a scheme of compulsion to force the attestation of unmarried men who did not attest under the Derby scheme. Lord Kitchener is understood to have declared that the time is now ripe for conscription. While the United Kingdom has been engaged in this task, the rest of the Empire has not been idle. What India and the Crown Colonies are contributing in men is not known, but it is understood to be large. The Dominions also have done well, but not at all in proportion to what has been done at home. But they are all willing to do more and are indeed increasing their forces. The number of men raised outside the United Kingdom is probably about half a million, and this will probably be doubled within the year.

MUNITION PROBLEM.

These enormous bodies of men have to be clothed, fed, and looked after medically. This calls for a large expansion of the commissariat and medical services, particularly when they are ready for the front. But even then they are not equipped as fighting men. Artillery of all kinds has to be furnished, artillery calls for shells. Rifles are wanted and cartridges for them. Grenades, bombs and gases and masks must be got ready and the men and officers trained to make use of them. Aeroplanes have to be built and men trained to use them for all kinds of purposes. These and many other things must be provided before the units can be put in the field, and the increased quantities of machine guns and artillery used in the concentrated fighting of 80-day constitutes a severe task on the supplying department. The rapidly increasing size of the armies, the increasing use of munitions by all the units, has severely taxed the resources of an Empire, whose munition plants were few at the beginning of the war, and which had as a first measure of safety to keep the growing navy well equipped with guns, shot and shells. These demands led to a division of labor, and a special department was organized under the stirring stimulus supplied by Lloyd George as Minister of the Department. The latter is far from satisfied and is calling for an additional three hundred and eighty thousand men. Eighty thousand of them to be skilled, and he is asking trade unions to modify their regulations in order that skilled men may be relieved of work which unskilled men can do, in order that the skilled men may be concentrated on skilled work. France is doing much the same under the direction of M. Thomas. Russia is much handicapped in this respect because of the small development of her engineering. The United States has been utilized largely to add to the supplies of this nature. But her engineering firms, like the engineering firms which have been pressed into service in the United Kingdom and France, were for a long time handicapped by lack of suitable machinery and particularly of gauges for guns and shells. Time is however, permitting this obstacle to be overcome. In the matter then of munitions, 1915 has been mainly a year of getting plants ready to turn out guns, shot and shells on a scale sufficient to overcome the advantages the enemy has derived from his forty years of preparation. Although Lloyd George says we have not yet established a superiority in this respect, he is confident that very soon we shall establish an ascendancy which will become more and more marked as the months go by.

MONEY MAKES THE MARE GO.

Just as 1915 has been the year of preparation for the marshalling of men and munitions, so it has been the year of marshalling of financial resources. The three M's, men, munitions, money are the trinity of war, and the three are united and dependent one on the other. Money is needed to feed and clothe the fighting men and those dependent on him, money is wanted for building, fitting out and running munition plants; and in the marshalling of financial resources. Britain has played a most important role, especially in making loans to those nations less strong than herself financially. Since the War began Great Britain has raised one thousand million sterling by loans, France about the same, Russia about

Six hundred million and Italy about One hundred million. The relative financial strength of Britain and Germany may be seen by the fact that the people of the United States demand from Germany 7 1/2 per cent interest, while they ask 5 1/2 per cent from Britain. One of the most difficult questions the Government has had to face has been caused by the extraordinary large purchases of supplies, foods and munitions from this side of the water. This affected the sterling rate of exchange, as the sovereign depreciated in purchasing value in New York. To meet this large quantity of gold bullion and coin were sent across the ocean. American securities held in Great Britain were purchased in London and sold in New York, and some very large loans were floated in New York. These measures have stopped the slump in Exchange, which really meant an additional drain on British resources by increasing the cost of these imports.

MILITARY OPERATIONS.

While the year has been a time of preparation and mainly of defensive operations on the two great fronts, there have been operations of a character which would have been regarded as formidable in the past. The most complete and glorious was the expedition under General Botha which led to the complete subjugation of German South West Africa. The United Government undertook the operation by itself and met with brilliant success. This achievement led to the return of General Botha's Government, which has been encouraged thereby to send 10,000 men to England, and to organize an expedition to operate in German East Africa. Another highly successful operation was that in the Cameroons, in which British, French and Belgian co-operated. All the railroads and other means of communication are in the hands of the Entente troops and the campaign is drawing rapidly to a close. After Turkey entered the war Russia asked to be relieved of some of the pressure which Turkish forces could bring to bear upon her. Leaving out of account the repulse of the Turkish attack on the Suez Canal in February last, an offensive was undertaken in two directions against Turkey. One in the Dardanelles, the other from the Persian Gulf. The results achieved in the Dardanelles campaign are most disappointing. No land forces were available at the time the operations were commenced by the Navy, although it was regarded as essential to success that land and naval forces must operate together to ensure success. Even when the transports with the land forces reached the vicinity, they had to be sent back, owing to bungling in the transport arrangements and reloading in a way suitable to what was wanted. Meantime the Turks had sufficient time to fortify and man the commanding heights of the Gallipoli Peninsula, and from these commanding positions they have not been dislodged. The Survia Bay and Anzac operations have been abandoned and our own Regiment has been removed along with other regiments elsewhere. At present we are maintaining a precarious hold on the tip of the peninsula. The military value of the forcing of the Dardanelles would have been enormous, but the military advantage already gained are negligible. The operations have been most costly, in casualties and sickness, and particularly in the latter respect has the Newfoundland Regiment suffered. This disastrous campaign has, however, been relieved by brilliant feats of gallantry in which the troops from Lancashire, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland have especially distinguished themselves. The operations along the Tigris have met with a great deal more success. The lower valley of the Tigris and Euphrates are in our hands and the Turks have been driven out, but the success which seemed to be in the grasp of General Nixon a few weeks, viz., the taking of Baghdad was not achieved and the British forces, mainly Indian, had to retire before superior force to the entrenchments at Kut el Amara. In the Balkans, Serbia has been overrun owing to the treacherous attitude of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, and the plottocracy of King Constantine in refusing to help Serbia, according to treaty arrangements. The allies are now safely entrenched around Saloniki and waiting until they are strong enough for a forward movement. In the East, the year has been a trying one for our Russian allies. They have lost Poland and a large slice of Russia, but according to Lord Kitchener's words of two months ago the German blow in the East is spent and the events of the last few weeks have confirmed his declaration.

The fight around Lens and in the Champagne last September was a experimental one and gave the allies confidence that at the proper time, when they had sufficient men and munitions, they could drive the Germans back. In this regard the future is with us. Germany has now reached the zenith of her strength and the future in men and munitions is undoubtedly with us and against her. While her forces will diminish ours will increase and the work of the year 1915 has consisted mainly in making preparations to this end.

1915 IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

Turning now to a short review of the year in Newfoundland, we find that amongst those who died during the year were persons prominent in various aspects of life in the Colony, notably were the Honourables John Ernie Ayre and James Baird. They were important figures in commercial circles and both were for many years members of the Legislative Council. Another well known and respected citizen was Mr. John Henderson. Almost at the outset of the present year occurred the death of Judge J. G. Conroy, though far away from the land of his adoption. He had been ailing for a considerable period and went to Montreal to recuperate where the end came. He was Judge of the Central District Court for many years. He was a brilliant lawyer and was commonly regarded as the "walking encyclopedia."

A most exemplary man to cross the Bar was Judge Knight, who for some years was Clerk of the Peace, but just as the goal was reached and he was appointed to the Judgeship, the grim reaper claimed him. His successor as Clerk of the Magistrate's Court was Mr. M. A. Devine, who had scarcely become acquainted with his new post when he received the final summons. Amongst the victims who succumbed to the outrages of the brutal Huns was Miss Ellen Carberry, an esteemed lady of this Island and a noted poetess. She was a contributor of the Telegram and was one of the last to view our boys in the Old Country before their departure for the Front. She was returning home on board the Liner Hesperian when that ship was torpedoed by a German submarine and Miss Carberry died from the shock she received. A popular and highly esteemed cleric also entered into his rest during the year in the person of the Rev. G. R. Golden, M.A., who for many years was Rector of St. Thomas's Church.

HON. W. C. JOB LEAVES NEWFOUNDLAND.
In the month of November, the Hon. William C. Job left here for New York where he took up quarters to carry on the business of his firm. He always took a deep interest in the affairs of the country, hence his departure is sorely missed. His name was a household word, as he was popularly known and esteemed from some of his old associates and wielders of the willow. With equal regret is the departure of Mrs. Job, who gave much of her vocal talent for charitable and patriotic purposes. Both Mr. Job and his estimable wife rendered yeoman help in connection with the Grenfell Association.

CONSECRATION OF ARCHBISHOP ROCHE.
On June 29th, the Roman Catholic Church was in fête in celebration of the Consecration of His Grace the Most Rev. E. P. Roche, D.D. The ceremony was performed by His Excellency Most Sacred Papal Delegate to Canada and Newfoundland, and was attended by distinguished ecclesiastical visitors from abroad, as also the Bishops and Priests of the Archdiocese. Amongst those who attended was Rev. Mgr. Sinnott, who has since been made Archbishop of Winnipeg.

CONFERRING THE PALLIUM.
On Sunday, Dec. 12th, the ceremony of conferring the Pallium on His Grace the Archbishop took place in the Cathedral, Rt. Rev. Bishop March officiating. This ceremony was attended by the clergy from the nearby outports and was witnessed by a large congregation.

RT. REV. MGR. McDERMOTT, V.G.
Quite recently Rev. Fr. McDermott, who, following the appointment of His Grace, was made Administrator of the Archdiocese, has been granted the title of Monsignor and appointed Vicar General. In again extending congratulations to the new Monsignor, we predict for him a long and successful term of office.

THE FISHERIES.
The seal fishery of 1915 was practically a complete failure, the total catch being less than 50,000. The S. S. Bonaventure, Capt. Bob Bartlett, which prosecuted the voyage in the Gulf, was the first arrival. She had 26,500 seals, which was more than all the rest of the fleet combined notwithstanding the fact that the Pagle on the front had a total catch of 12,000. The S. S. Bloodhound which had to be towed to port owing to having lost her propeller, brought home "the key."

The success of the codfishery and the high price paid for cod the past season in a great measure offset the failure of the seal fishery. The bank fishery was exceptionally good, and on the Southern Shore and other parts of the Island the trap voyage exceeded that of any year within the

remembrance of our oldest fishermen. At the opening of the season the prospects for a good Labrador fishery were none too bright, but before the conclusion of the voyage practically all the fleet obtained saving catches.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

In the Assembly two important measures were introduced, viz., The Newfoundland Products Bill, and a Bill to prohibit the importation, manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors. Both these measures created a great deal of discussion in and out of the House. The latter, being referred to a plebiscite, was carried by a substantial majority much to the surprise of the electorate because of the percentage clause put in by the Government when framing the Act. A unique feature of the debate on the Products Bill was the hearing of W. K. Howley, Esq., K.C., representing certain land interests before the Bar of the House.

GENERAL TRADE.

In the early part of the year trade was somewhat dislocated because of the high rates of exchange which handicapped the securing of markets for our staple products. The problem

of importation, particularly that of coal, presented many difficulties because of scarcity of tonnage, brought about by the taking over by the Admiralty of ships suitable for transport purposes. Happily, however, thanks to the vigilance of our Navy conditions improved later in the season and the Christmas trade this year has been one of the largest known on Water Street for some twenty-five years.

OUR STEEL SHIPS.

The year that is now passing has witnessed the departure of our steel fleet, the ships Bruce and Lintrose owned by the Reid Mld. Co., the Beothic and Nascopee, owned by Job Bros. & Co., Ltd., and the Adventure, Bellaventure and Bonaventure owned by the Venturers Steamship Company, being purchased by the Russian Government for ice breaking in the Baltic.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

In concluding our sketch of the year of Preparation, we wish our readers A Happy New Year in the hope that it may be followed immediately by the fulfillment of our hopes, and that the dawn of 1917 may usher in an era of Peace and Prosperity.



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