

RECONSTRUCTION IN GREAT BRITAIN

An outline of the remarkable preparations being made in the United Kingdom to maintain and improve its commercial position after the war

Organization, co-operation and combination are the guiding principles in the remarkable preparations which Great Britain is making for reconstruction. In the industrial, commercial and financial world the common impulse is towards the close association of banking, trade and business interests. A new industrial machinery is being created, so constructed that Great Britain will be able to maintain and improve its commercial position in the face of intense and highly organized competition.

The United Kingdom is considering changes in economic policy which may have far-reaching influences on world affairs. It is correcting surely the mistaken policies of the past which left it dependent upon other countries for essential commodities. Not only are new basic industries being established. The impetus lent to land cultivation by government and public activity has gone far to correct the dependence of the United Kingdom upon other countries for foodstuffs. It is estimated that for this year sufficient food will be produced to feed the population for 40 weeks as against provision for 10 weeks before the war. The area under wheat is now one and a half times what it was in 1914. The supply of home grown cereals in 1917 was more than 850,000 tons greater than the previous year, and the potato crop showed an increase of 3,000,000 tons. By the middle of

February this year some 1,200,000 fresh acres had been brought under the plow in addition to the fresh acreage recorded in 1917. At the end of May, the Director-General of Food Production for England and Wales published an interim report on the result of the year's campaign for increasing home grown supplies. It estimated that the area of land under corn crops this year in the United Kingdom will be more than four million acres greater than that of 1916, and that the acreage under potatoes in England and Wales alone will be 50 per cent. larger than in 1916. Both these figures would constitute a record in the history of British agriculture. They do not take into account the produce of allotments and private gardens, of which the former have increased in England and Wales by not less than 800,000 since 1916. Much of the greatly increased production is due to the work of women; 316,000 being employed on the land of whom 300,000 are village women, and 16,000 in the land army. Indeed, not only agricultural but industrial and national life have been affected by women war workers who are now estimated to total 4,500,000 of whom nearly 1,500,000 are doing men's work. No fewer than 1,000,000 are employed on munitions, while many thousands are to be found in banks and financial institutions, stores, shops, railway employment and other occupations.