

THE HOHENZOLLERN PLOT.

(Herr Thyssen's Revelation).

(Senator Owen in the course of a recent speech in the United States Senate put into the record a pamphlet written by a German capitalist, August Thyssen, who has violently attacked the Hohenzollern dynasty for precipitating the war. Herr Thyssen is one of the chief iron, coal, and steel magnates of Central Germany. He is seventy-eight years of age. Thyssen possessed until the beginning of the war huge mines, ironworks, docks, and even harbors, in British India, in other English colonial dependencies, as well as in France and in Russia, all of which have been sequestrated by the governments of these three powers as property belonging to a German foe. He has vast docks and shipbuilding works at Vlaardingen, near Rotterdam. He controls the Vulcan Iron and Steamship Building Company of Germany. Herr Thyssen's pamphlet is as follows.)

I am writing this pamphlet because I want to open the eyes of Germans, especially of the business community, to facts. When the Hohenzollerns wanted to get the support of the commercial class for their war plans, they put their ideas before us as a business proposition. A large number of business and commercial men were asked to support the Hohenzollern war policy on the ground that it would pay them to do so. Let me frankly confess that I am one of those who were led to agree to support the Hohenzollern war plan when this appeal was made to the leading business men of Germany in 1912-13. I was led to do so, however, against my better judgment.

In 1912 the Hohenzollerns saw that the war had become a necessity to the preservation of the military system, upon which their power depends. In that year the Hohenzollerns might have directed, if they had desired, the foreign affairs of our country so that peace would have been assured in Europe for at least fifty years. But prolonged peace would have resulted certainly in the break-up of our military system, and with the break-up of our military system the power of the Hohenzollerns would come to an end. The emperor and his family, as I said, clearly understood this, and they therefore, in 1912, decided to embark on a great war of conquest.

But to do this they had to get the commercial community to support them in their aims. They did this by holding out to them hopes of great personal gain as a result of the war. In the light of events that have taken place since August, 1914, these promises now appear supremely ridiculous, but most of us at the time were led to believe that they would probably be realized.

Promises of Vast Conquest.

I was personally promised a free grant of 30,000 acres in Australia and a loan from the Deutsch Bank of £150,000, at 3 per cent., to enable me to develop my business in Australia. Several other firms were promised special trading facilities in India, which was to be conquered by Germany, be it noted, by the end of 1915. A syndicate was formed for the exploitation of Canada. This

syndicate consisted of the heads of twelve great firms; the working capital was fixed at £20,000,000, half of which was to be found by the German government.

There were, I have heard, promises made of a more personal character. For example, the "conquest of England" was to be made the occasion of bestowing upon certain favored and wealthy men some of the most desirable residences in England, but of this I have no actual proof.

Every trade and interest was appealed to. Huge indemnities were, of course, to be levied on the conquered nations, and the fortunate German manufacturers were, by this means, practically to be relieved of taxation for years after the war.

These promises were not vaguely given. They were made definitely by Bethmann-Hollweg on behalf of the emperor to gatherings of business men, and in many cases to individuals. I have mentioned the promise of a grant of 30,000 acres in Australia that was made to me. Promises of a similar kind were made to at least eighty other persons at special interviews with the chancellor, and all particulars of these promises were entered in a book at the Trades Department.

But not only were these promises made by the chancellor; they were confirmed by the emperor, who, on three occasions, addressed large private gatherings of business men in Berlin, Munich, and Cassel in 1912 and 1913. I was at one of these gatherings. The emperor's speech was one of the most flowery orations I have listened to, and so profuse were the promises he made that were even half of what he promised to be fulfilled, most of the commercial men in Germany would become rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

The emperor was particularly enthusiastic over the coming German conquest of India. "India," he said, "is occupied by the British. It is in a way governed by the British, but it is by no means completely governed by them. We shall conquer it, and the vast revenues that the British allow to be taken by Indian princes will, after our conquest, flow in a golden stream into the Fatherland. In all the richest lands of the earth the German flag will fly over every other flag."

Finally the emperor concluded:

"I am making you no promises that can not be redeemed, and they shall be redeemed if you are now prepared to make the sacrifices which are necessary to secure the position that our country must and shall occupy in the world. He who refuses to help is a traitor to the Fatherland; he who helps willingly and generously will have his rich reward."

All sounded, I admit, tempting and alluring, and though there were some who viewed rather dubiously the prospect of Germany being able to conquer the world in a year, the majority of business and commercial men agreed to support the Hohenzollern war plans. Most of them have since wished they had never paid any attention to them.

According to the promises of the Hohenzollern, victory was to have been achieved in December, 1915, and the promises made to myself and other

(Continued on page 921.)