

and directing the financial affairs of 170,000,000 people. Mr. Bark, in May last, said:

Prohibition of vodka has had a wonderful effect on the moral and economic conditions in Russia. Savings banks deposits have been augmented by leaps and bounds. The increase had been from 34,000,000 roubles in 1913, to 84,000,000 roubles in 1914. But the moral effect was even more considerable. The output of factories has enormously increased. Home life has become more beautiful and more secure. Throughout Russia crime has diminished to a dwindling point. Even if I desired to remove this prohibition I should not be allowed to do so. The people would refuse to allow this evil thing to come upon them again.

These are the words of the Finance Minister of Russia, spoken officially and as a result of an experience of almost a year of prohibition. I need not remind the House that the liquor business in Russia, prior to the outbreak of war, was a Government monopoly yielding a revenue of \$500,000,000 annually. This huge revenue was wiped out by one stroke of the pen, because it was apparent to the Czar and his advisors that the efficiency of the nation had been so undermined as to make them incapable of doing their part in this war.

I have further statements by Mr. Bark, which I wish to read. On March 1 of this year he again referred to this question. The words I quoted a moment ago were uttered on May 15, 1915, and surely if the prohibition of vodka was of any injury to the nation, it would have been felt during that period of nearly a year. On March 1 of this year, just about six days ago, in introducing the Russian Budget officially in the Douma, he made the following observations:

Bank deposits reached the unprecedented figure of 800,000,000 roubles.

Something that was never known in the history of Russia before.

And a little later on you will see what brought that about. The Finance Minister, explaining the Budget, said it was expected to realize more than 500,000,000 roubles from new sources of revenue created by the state of war. He had such confidence in the spirit of the Russian people to make permanent—

I ask the House to mark this:

—the advantages gained by temperance, he added that he was loading himself with the heavy responsibility of drafting urgent legislation and devising taxes to cover the diminution of receipts caused by the cessation of the sale of liquor, so as to avoid all temptation to return to the past. War expenditure would compel the nation to face heavy deficits, but there existed means of restoring the Budget ballot by strict economy and by development of the nation's production of resources. To this end the Government was devising taxa-

tion of such a nature as to give free scope to the economic independence of Russia. The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of the enormous increase in the savings bank deposits, which was observable among all the states of the nation.

In another statement given to the Associated Press by the Russian Minister of Finance—I must apologize to hon. members for wearying them with these quotations, but I think they are of sufficient importance to warrant our consideration—he had this to say of the capability of Russia to deal with the situation:

"Russia's finances rest upon the most solid foundations in the world," said the minister—"the economic prosperity of the Russian people, which is now greater than was ever conceived possible before the beginning of the war. Thus, while the masses of the German people are reduced by war to poverty, every month of the war has enriched the Russians.

"The optimistic statements concerning Germany's financial status have deceived but few. On the other hand, there is nothing illusory or specious about the Russian's prosperity. It rests upon the incontrovertible fact of the Russian peoples' increased earnings and savings.

"This is accounted for principally by the growing thrift and economy of the peasants since the enforcement of prohibition, by their greater earning powers and the higher wages they command."

Let us now give a moment's consideration to the situation in the Mother Country in connection with this problem. Last summer a large deputation of British shipmasters and ship owners waited upon the Government, and particularly upon the Right Hon. Lloyd George. According to the White Paper in which the record is given, not a single member of that deputation was a teetotaler, and yet they made the statement soberly and upon their responsibility as owners of large ship-building concerns, that eighty per cent of the lost time in the ship-building yards was due to drink, and they urged upon the Government the necessity of introducing prohibitory laws. It is well known that the Government of Great Britain did introduce some restrictive measures, but it has been pointed out to the British Government time and again that these measures are not sufficient to deal successfully with the problem. In reply to that delegation the Right Hon. Lloyd George made the famous statement:

We are fighting Germany, Austria, and drink, and so far as I can see the greatest of these deadly foes is drink.

I have the names of that delegation here, but I will not trouble to read them. Representing, as I have said, the leading ship-building concerns, they pointed out to the Government that the restrictive measures