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Special Articles

Cattle Loans Versus Grain Loans.

By H. M. P. Eckardt.

The Flow of Capital After the War.

By W. W. Swanson.

Agricultural Devastation in France and Allied Countries.

By Ernest H. Godfrey, F.S.S.

Conditions in the West.

By E. Cora Hind.

The Decline of the West Indian Sugar Industry.

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The Dominions and the Paris Conference

SOME British writers, including one or two London correspondents of the Canadian press, seem disposed to make use of Premier Hughes, of Australia, who is now in London, as an instrument to assist them in worrying the Asquith Coalition Government. Mr. Hughes, perhaps, has not been as discreet in his London speeches as one in his position should be. If reports are correct he has put forth, on behalf of Australia, some views which, to say the least, are premature, and some claims which may prove embarrassing to the Imperial Government at a time when everything having such a tendency should be avoided. According to one report, Mr. Hughes contends that it is necessary to establish at once "a definite, immediate anti-German economic action, thus undermining German credit which rests upon expectations of export trade after the war." In another report we are told that Mr. Hughes asks to be admitted to the forthcoming economic conference at Paris, and that he informed the Imperial authorities that "the Australians' opinion was that the Dominion should be directly represented in the conference which might profoundly affect the Dominions' policy." It is hardly probable that Mr. Hughes has made such claims in his formal discussions with Imperial Ministers, but if he has given the correspondents any ground for their reports he has not manifested the highest wisdom.

For the moment the winning of the war is the paramount question. All else must be laid aside. If there are policies or theories of the past which stand in the way of victory they must be over-ruled. But the making of a commercial policy for the Empire, to apply after the war, is a rather large order, the consideration of which will require time and study and perhaps more light than is at this moment available. In the British House of Commons, a few days ago, a speaker proposed that the delegates to the Paris conference be instructed to declare a permanent boycott of Germany in matters of trade. Mr. Lloyd George replied in terms which are deserving of attention:

"If we are to organize trade for generations to come, it must be done deliberately and carefully. It is not merely a question of tariffs. If we lose the war, the setting up of any fiscal system, whether free trade or protection, will be wretched consolation. There are things bigger than fiscal questions; things which go to the very root of human life and liberty—everything that constitutes the self respect of men.

"We must not subordinate human liberty and honor, self respect and civilization of mankind, to any trade policy.

When we consider trade, the first thing to be done is to obliterate any idea of revenge. Let us do the best for the millions of people of this country. But I do not think that we can ever have the same conditions as before the war."

This is an admirable expression of the correct British attitude. Many things will be changed by the war, and our world will have to adapt itself to the new conditions that will arise; but in the making or shaping of these new conditions, the desire for revenge will be a poor ground for action, even in the case of an enemy as base and unscrupulous as Germany has proved to be. Germany in many ways will have to pay the penalty of the dreadful wrong she has done. She will have no claim to consideration of any kind from Great Britain or the Allies. One of the penalties will be a crippling of her trade from which she will not recover for many years. But Germany will still have her place in the world. She will have some things which the rest of the world will desire to purchase. She will need things that the rest of the world will wish to sell. The terms and conditions on which, in the new order of things, the British Empire will be willing to trade with her will have to be considered in the light that may then come to us all.

The claim, if Mr. Hughes made it, that the Dominions shall be directly represented at the coming Paris conference, may easily prove a cause of friction between the Mother Country and the Overseas Empire. There will undoubtedly be, in the not distant future, some form of Imperial reorganization in which the status of the Dominions will be somewhat different from that of to-day. The process of evolution, through which the Dominions have gained increased recognition and power, will not cease. But it is the events of to-day and those of the immediate future that are to be the subject of consideration at Paris, and these must be dealt with, so far as our Empire is concerned, under the constitutional position as it is.

The Paris conference is to be a meeting of representatives of sovereign states. The Dominions are not sovereign states. They have no desire to be such. They are parts of the British Empire, important parts. In all matters which touch the relations of the Empire with foreign nations the Dominions are properly represented by the Ministers of His Majesty's Government in London. In the present instance the Empire is to be represented by Mr. Runciman, the President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. Bonar Law, the Colonial Secretary. The appointment of the latter, no doubt, was made in order that Colonial interests should be represented. But if the Dominions are not officially represented at such a conference by their own delegates, it does not follow that their interests are to be affected adversely. In olden times the Imperial Government conducted negotiations and made treaties for the Empire without stopping to