

EDITORIAL

SIR MAX AITKEN might as well get the London High Commissionership as not. That ambitious ex-Canadian and would-be Englishman seems keen about the thing and though he has for some time been out of touch with Canadian affairs at first hand, he would probably be as useful at 17 Victoria Street as anywhere else. His appointment, too, would release a really good man—Sir George Perley—for a man's work here at home. For some queer reason people seem to think the London High Commissionership is an important post. So it may be, but its real worth to Canada has yet to be demonstrated. Sir Max may be able to do it. Perhaps not. He has money, discretion, tact—and a cabinet minister at elbow, Bonar Law. He could be trusted with errands to Downing Street, he could keep up the standard of affluence demanded by his position and take bond-selling people from Winnipeg to lunch now-and-again. But this talk of Sir Robert Borden taking the post is surely not serious. Sir Robert is too valuable to be spared from this country just now. He knows and understands Canada. We need him, either as Prime Minister or leader of the Opposition, and we need Perley. Sir Max, having graduated from Canada, is fascinated by London. Why shouldn't he have it?

HATE IS BAD for good shooting. It disturbs the nerves. One piece of German inefficiency is revealed in the time they waste hating England. Your successful fighter seldom hates; rather, he pities his enemy for being such a fool that the world has to be rid of him.

At this distance from France we are in danger of hating. We don't keep busy enough, and nursing a lusty hate often feels as though it were really injuring the enemy. Of course it isn't. And though the school trustees swear by all the gods of re-election they will cut off the study of German in Toronto high schools, all they are showing is hate. They would sacrifice, not German interests, but the interests of Toronto school-children and future citizens, on the silly altar of hate. Some would have the teaching of Russian take the place of German. This is quite as wrong-headed. We need the Russian language because we expect to develop trade with Russia. We need also the German language because it is a rich language, full of treasure, intellectual and otherwise, and because after the war we can watch this enemy and loot his artistic and scientific treasury if we understand his language. But why, for the mere sake of hate, should we refuse the key to this wealth? No one can accuse London of being pro-German, but in London the outbreak of war was the signal for a renewed interest in German productions. Last winter in the popular Queen's Hall promenade concerts in London there were regular Wagnerian concerts at which British officers on London leave were always to be seen. About the same time Toronto was gravely exercised because a travelling virtuoso played a German number on his piano.

LABOUR TRUST is the latest contribution of the United States to the gayety of nations. With the Steel Trust and the Standard Oil Trust supposedly disbanded, three powerful railway unions, or brotherhoods as they are called, have taken up the trust tradition, and at the time of writing have just succeeded in forcing the American Congress to compel the American railways to meet all the demands of the three unions. They made no plea of necessity, right or justice. The brotherhood leaders candidly disclaimed any other reason for demanding increases in pay, admittedly high already, than Opportunity: "We can tie up the commerce of one hundred million people if you don't yield every tittle of our demand." They scorned arbitration. Mr. Wilson and Congress became mere instruments in their hands.

IT IS NOT UNPLEASANT to see Labour, for once, dictating terms. It has long played under-dog. Nevertheless the danger of concentrating great power in the hands of a few men such as the Brotherhood officers, is as great when it controls mere man-power as when it controls oil-wells and blast furnaces—greater in fact. The railway brotherhoods in this case dictated terms to the American republic and were obeyed. What may they not achieve when next their interest or cupidity is aroused? Combinations of capital have nowadays to be effected secretly or must subject themselves to strict laws backed by the hostility of the great mass of people against capital trusts. But labour trusts, springing from the people themselves and opposed only by capital—capital that has but meagre sympathy from the public—are abetted by public opinion. There are very serious possibilities in this trend. What is to happen when Americans realize that the three brotherhoods have merely laid a tax on the whole of the United States instead of reducing the profits of the railway owners? Will public opinion turn against the labour trust? Or will other branches of organized labour be forced into defensive alliances—labour against labour? Or will the United States public, finding itself hampered

by increasing cost of railway service, be driven to demand some form of state control?

PERHAPS THE GRAVEST ASPECT of the labour trust is the matter of leadership. The test for labour union leadership is not whether the candidate is public-spirited, wise, clean-hearted and just, but whether he has been successful in advancing the interests of the men. In national elections a multitude of interests are in conflict. They modify one another in the public interest. Not so in union politics. The demagogue has the honest man under a handicap and it is to the great credit of union labour that it has so far been so moderately led. But the attitude of the Brotherhood leaders does not speak well for the future. Labour, united, but moved only by self-interest, is as dangerous as a hungry lion running amuck in a circus crowd.

NO ONE DISSENTS—save the Central Empires—when Asquith announces the Entente's determination to fight until "the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed." But few agree that fighting alone will suffice. A defeated Germany does not mean a dead Germany. The thing Napoleon left for dead lived to capture Paris. And though we used to blame the Kaiser, then his war lords, then Prussia for the present war, we have learned that the Kaiser is merely a German, that so long as the spirit of Germany remains unbroken so long must the world sleep with a gun under its pillow.

Viscount Grey has faith in establishing the control of the German government by the German people because, he says, "a German democracy will not plot and plan wars. . ." Premier Asquith, in referring to the murder of Captain Fryatt, hints at removing the Hohenzollerns in the words, "His Majesty's Government are determined to bring to justice the criminals, whoever they may be and whatever their station." The Paris Conference plans an economic alliance against the Central Empires, excluding them from world trade. Everyone speaks confidently of indemnities and the breaking up of the German navy.

Not one of these things is in itself sufficient. One of them, the suggestion of trade exclusion—though not the suggestion of trade co-operation among the allies—is absolutely wrong since such an exclusion would force economic independence upon the Central Empires, would foster the maximum development of their resources, strengthen their organizations, cheapen their products and their cost of living by limiting their markets, and stimulate their determination to overcome their enemies. "To take up economic warfare against Germany," says the famous old Yves Guyot, editor of the *Journal des Economistes*, "would be to maintain its agglutination." This shrewd thinker insists on the "moral dissolution" of the German Empire. This, he believes, is to be achieved by diminishing the military charges, lightening the personal service to the state, replacing war pre-occupations with productive preoccupations, in short by breaking down German insularity, letting their war-like fulminations escape into free air, rather than collect as potential explosive. This seemingly kinder method would bring a really deeper retribution on the Teutons.

PUTTING EDITORS IN JAIL is sometimes a good way to establish the freedom of the press. A good editor in jail is sometimes a better editor, even if he is not a better man, when he comes out. A term in jail may only confirm him in his determination to utter his opinions on behalf of an unmuzzled press. Edward Beck, editor of the *Winnipeg Telegram*, and Knox Magee, owner of the *Saturday Post*, were sentenced by Justice Galt last week each to a month in jail and a heavy fine for contempt of court in criticizing the Commission at present probing into the affairs of the Manitoba Agricultural College and in refusing to explain or retract the criticism when summoned before the court. They are both at liberty on a writ of habeas corpus. No doubt each regards himself as a champion of the rights of the people to have their opinions of public matters, including Royal commissions and judges, expressed in print by the voice of the editor.

In any case whether these editors are right or wrong, they are not the kind of men to be deterred from expressing their views by the prospect of a term in the common jail. They are the kind of men to whom that kind of experience would be a legitimate part of an enterprising modern editor's programme. The jail often clarifies a man's point of view. He sees things more clearly "far from the mad-ding crowd." If he has convictions when he goes in he probably has more when he comes out. *Pilgrim's Progress* was written in jail. If either Beck or Magee could produce a *Pilgrim's Progress* by going to jail—probably either of them would consider it will worth his while. But the editors are at liberty. There will be no *Pilgrim's Progress*. And the freedom of the press still stands.