

PELICANIZING

A diversion much indulged in nowadays by a number of Canadians who would never do to be citizens of any country where real war troubles exist.



WISDOM is not the obvious characteristic of this plaintive bird, the pelican. Almost any ill-informed amateur ornithologist could tell you that the enormous growth of the clapper end of this feathered animal is due to the fact that he stores up there for future reference a whole cargo of minnows, water-bugs and other indiscriminate plunder, so that when he has a little more leisure he may decide which of them are worth sending down the long road to his corpulent interior. And any amateur philosopher can tell you just as accurately that the human pelican does the same thing with his opinions. This species of pessimist has no real opinions of his own. He is the victim of the worst delusions he gets from the opinions of other men. He goes about scooping them up. When any one tells him that Canada is on the road to blue ruin, that politicians are running the country now and forever, that profiteers are gobbling up what the politicians leave, that civil war is sure to come from conscription, that the only difference between the parties is that each one is worse than the other—he believes it all, so far as he is capable of anything so definite as a belief. If anybody came along and stumped him to have a real opinion of his own more lively than a craw-fish, he would only blink his little black pinhead eyes and say, plaintively, "Please go 'way and let me sleep."

MENDING OUR PART of the WORLD'S SHIP LINE

LOOKING closely at the photograph at the bottom of this page, you will notice that it is a peculiarly good picture of any old shipyard that you might come across by the score anywhere across Canada. It happens to be a preliminary scene to the launching of the Orleans, a new ocean freighter turned out a few days ago from a shipyard in Toronto. The tonnage of this boat is 4,600; her dimensions are 261 feet overall, beams 43 ft. 6 in., depth 28 ft. 6 in. She is expected to be on the Atlantic some time this fall, a fair mark for any German submarine that gets a chance to hit her.

Just how important it is to have this kind of thing going on all over Canada has to be remembered every little while, in the light of facts that stare at millions of eyes every day from the newspapers. Everybody nowadays reads about tonnage and its destruction by submarines. But every newspaper despatch does not contain the facts about the shipping tonnage of the whole world now and for the months past being sent to the bottom by submarines. Reduced to cold figures in millions, the total of the world's shipping afloat on February 1, 1917, the day before the unrestricted sub warfare began, was 40,000,000 tons. This is a vast amount of shipping. End to end the ships carrying it would reach many hundreds of miles. And it might be supposed that no submarine menace ever could whittle this down to a thin black line capable of being docked in a few of the world's biggest harbours. But it is estimated that submarines on their known record could sink this entire aggregate in about four years and six months, on an average of 9,000,000 tons a year. And of course that need not matter so much, if the world can keep on building ships fast enough to mend the gaps. As a matter of fact, however, it is estimated that the whole world's shipyards now in operation will produce only about 2,000,000 tons new shipping for the year ending Feb. 1, 1918, and about 4,000,000 for the year ending Feb. 1, 1919. How long it would take to send the last ship below is a case for a higher court of mathematics. But it is something to reflect that Canadian shipyards, in all sorts of unsuspected places, are doing their part to mend up the world's tonnage fast enough to defeat the object of the submarine terror. And we are just beginning.

Mending up the ship lines is only one part of the problem. Most people lose sight of the fact that the cargo sent to the bottom along with the ship—if she happens to be carrying a cargo—can't be put back afloat. The wheat, meat, clothing, munitions, or other means of life and death sent below are so much taken out of the world's aggregate that make the business of feeding and maintaining not only our armies at the front, but ourselves on the rear, the greatest economic problem ever undertaken in the world. All the food controllers are telling us about this. For the first time in history we are conscious that the world's total yearly supply of things to sustain life and comfort is becoming almost a known quantity. War puts us nearer and nearer the point foretold by Malthus many years ago, when he said that some day the world would have too many people for the food it could produce. Malthus was nearly right and altogether wrong. If the world had let war alone such a thing never could have happened. But in a time when the world is engaged in killing as many people as possible "population pressing in subsistence," as Dr. Malthus called it, becomes a very obvious fact.

Here, again, it is something to reflect that Canada, which normally exports more foodstuffs than any other country in the world, according to population, is doing her share. And this is quite as important a work at present as sending more armies abroad to fight.

