

# Editorial Comment

## BLOCKADED

A mouse once approached a lion in the forest. He stood erect, pulled his whiskers, endeavored to look as fierce as possible and then squeaked in his loudest tone "You are my prisoner! Let all the world know you are my prisoner." And so that settled it. Have you ever heard anything so ridiculous as this cry of the German Admiralty to Great Britain, "You are blockaded! Let all the neutral nations know it! You are blockaded." That settles it.

## HOW LONG?

The question now is this: If the war is to "begin" in April or May, how long will it likely continue? There can be no answer to this. It will take some time to drive the enemy out of France and Belgium, and after that it is a question of getting the general public of Germany to understand the situation. If the only way to victory were through the taking of German fortresses, the war would necessarily be of some duration; but of course there is a shorter and surer way. The desperation of the enemy just now indicates that something may happen even before the war "begins."

## BREAD

Wheat now one dollar and sixty. Nobody knows where it will end. In some countries they are coming to rye and maize. Here in the home of wheat we need think of no substitutes. Yet would it not be wise if our people were to begin to think more of cheaper food? What a variety of vegetables grown here! Nothing could be more wholesome. Potatoes, turnips and a little meat make a good dinner. Even if bread is high the cost of living need not be excessive. It may be that necessity will prove a good mistress in driving many to make use of means that were hitherto despised. The war may develop good cooks.

## GRATITUDE

In expressing our gratitude it is not necessary to wait till the war is over. To tell a young man that we appreciate his sacrifice and heroism may do him good; it will do us no harm. To tell his parents that we are thankful may make their burden no lighter but it may make them feel they are not alone in their anxiety. Let us not forget. And there are other ways of expressing gratitude than in words. It is one thing for our country to spend large sums for the support of an army. It is another thing for one to do some little thing to help those at the front, or those dependent upon them who are left behind. Directly or indirectly everyone should contribute to the patriotic fund. It is a fitting thank offering.

## BILLY SUNDAY

He seems to strike men so differently. One sees in him a buffoon, a clown, a vulgar egotist; another sees in him a lover of purity, justice and right, a man with a heart and soul yearning for his fellows; a man who in his earnestness despises all the tricks of oratory and all the niceties of diction. He is a fisher of men, and cares not what bait he uses. A dirty slimy worm is sometimes more effective than a costly "Jock Scott" or "Royal Coachman." Why not give Billy Sunday the benefit of the doubt? If his work is on the whole making for the permanent welfare of society, what does it matter whether he follows the customary church routine or not? The founder of Christianity in his time was called some pretty hard names by the religionists of his time. Yet his work remains and theirs does not.

## ADAPTATION

One of the first lessons a newcomer to the West has to learn is to adapt himself to new conditions. This is a very hard lesson for many, especially for those brought up in older lands. Farming here is not similar to that in England. Nor is business the same, nor politics, nor preaching. Some people who have never learned the art of adaptation blame the country. A farmer finds fault with the soil; a man in business says that everything is flat; a preacher that the people are not responsive nor intelligent. It is necessary to adopt another attitude. Here is a country with problems different from those ever presented to mankind. The solution demands original thought and penetration. To transplant ideas and methods is no easier than to transplant flowers and shrubs. Those flourish best which are indigenous to the soil. We have had many clever men fail in Western Canada. They failed in spite of their cleverness because they could not get into the life of the country, because they could not adapt themselves. There is a lesson here for preachers, singers, farmers, and business men of all classes.

## THE FARMER'S TURN

Speaking before the Experimental Farm Superintendents recently assembled in convention at Ottawa, Mr. Geo. H. Clark, Dominion Seed Commissioner, sounded a note which is of special interest at the present crisis in Canadian agriculture. In prefacing his address he said: "Unfortunately farming during the last ten years or more has been less attractive to young men of good ability and to capital than other industries in urban centres. The problem of farm labor has been an exceedingly perplexing one and in consequence farm systems have been modified so as to require the minimum of labor for the maximum yield of net returns. City industries have completely outbid the farm in the matter of labor, and it is probably true that at least one-third of city working men have had experience in farming. I would like to say to those men now that if the opportunities in the city looked brighter during the past ten years, the next ten years, in my judgment, assuredly belong to the farm, and the sooner they realize that the better for themselves and for all concerned."

## A TRIUMPH IN ENGINEERING

People become so absorbed in reading about wonderful things abroad that they fail to note what is occurring at their own doors. Recently, for example, there has been completed at Transcona, near Winnipeg, one of the most unique achievements in the history of building. A great elevator holding 20,000 tons of grain, owing to weak foundation, began to sink at one side until it was very far

## THE GERMAN BLOCKADE.

The New York Evening Post in a recent issue makes significant comment.

"The Berlin Post to-day goes beyond the exact terms of the Government order, and declares that, after the date notified, February 18, men and freight not only on British ships, but under a neutral flag, are doomed to sink! If this is not braggadocio, it is brutality. It is also arrant stupidity, for, if it were not held to be sheer piracy, it would be an act of war against neutrals—or, at least, an act which if not instantly apologized for, with an indemnity offered, would lead straight to war. And even in their maddest moments of exultation and recklessness, German rulers can hardly wish their country to be regarded as *hostis generis humani*."

from perpendicular. By jacking up one side and jacking down the other, working on the centre of the building as a pivot, the whole building was worked back into position, with the floor a little lower than at the beginning. The new supports are on bed-rock. This may not be quite a correct statement of what was done to restore the building to its form, but it is the best that can be said in a brief sentence. A full account is given in the Scientific American. If we examine into the triumphs of engineering in Canada we shall find much reason for congratulation. It is well that it should be so. It requires more than money to develop a land like this. It requires trained intelligence. It is not without significance that in all the Western provinces great care has been taken by the universities to arrange for the very best instruction in engineering in all its branches.

## MURDER NOT WARFARE

Somebody has remarked that the Ten Commandments are not sound in their teaching because they are found in the Bible, but that they are in the Bible because they are sound. So is it with rules laid down by peace conferences. The raiding of defenceless towns, and the slaughtering of non-combatants are not unthinkably monstrous acts simply because international councils have so decided, but the councils have arrived at their decisions because they have had regard to the laws that men everywhere recognize as necessary. The action of the German nation is not primarily an offence against international law; it is a direct violation of laws which are intuitively recognized by all peoples who have passed the stage of extreme

barbarism. If the practices mentioned were permissible for nations, they would be permissible for individuals. Let any one try to imagine family quarrels being settled after the German fashion. Well has it been said that the slaughter of women and children is not warfare. It is murder. The only right punishment for those taking part in it is that meted out to murderers. The suggestion from Petrograd seems to be eminently just, even if it may not be wise to put it into practice immediately.

## HOW GOES THE BATTLE?

It does us no harm to know just where we stand in this war. The Colonial Secretary has given us the best summary up to date—February 10.

"On the western frontier this line has remained stationary for several months. In the eastern theatre of war Germany has met with no greater success, and the Russians everywhere more than hold their own. The great effort essential to the success of Germany has been foiled, and except for one success in East Prussia, she has gained no single victory; she has lost two and a quarter millions of her best and bravest soldiers, and any fresh effort will now have to be made with greatly inferior and disheartened troops.

"Thanks to the work of our navy, Germany is now feeling economic pressure in many ways. In Austria there are still considerable forces in the field, but her troops have suffered severe reverses, both in Serbia and Austria, and she cannot longer be counted on by Germany as a really powerful ally. Of even less account is Turkey, who has suffered severe defeats from Russian forces, and results have been the same for her as regards the British forces in Mesopotamia and on the Suez canal within the last few days."

Considering next the attitude and condition of the Allies, the Colonial Secretary has this to say:

"The soldiers of France and Belgium, fully confident in the justice of our cause, are burning to clear the soil of their native country from the hated invader. Russia, whose troops have long fought with indomitable courage, is preparing herself for further great efforts. At sea the British navy is supreme, and has recently inflicted a severe defeat on the German navy. Aided by our gallant Japanese allies, most of the German colonies have already been captured. The power of Great Britain and her allies increases daily in strength, whereas the power of her enemies is distinctly on the wane. The existing situation has been brought about without the vast resources of the British empire having yet been called into play."

There is still another side to the matter. The whole empire is more united than ever. Britain because of her devotion to principle has the goodwill of the world, and being conscious of her own rectitude maintains her self-respect. In addition to this, people everywhere are losing themselves in the larger idea. The pronoun I is changing to the pronoun We, and the most important part of the We is the man at the front and those he left behind in need of support.

## CONSCRIPTION

There are two sides to this matter of conscription as one can readily understand. First we can reason that conscription means militarism, and militarism is the very thing we are aiming to destroy. Conscription means casting out Beelzebub by the use of Beelzebub. But in the second place we can urge that if defence is necessary then it is unthinkable that the best and bravest should take up arms—and these are always the people who go—while the poorer material remains behind to father a new race. It is said that in some parts of Scotland where the men formerly were all over six feet, it is now scarcely possible to find one that height. The best and strongest went to war. The weaklings remained behind. Conscription would settle that.

Whatever view is held ultimately it seems that Mr. Carpenter, writing in the English Review, has said something worthy of consideration.

It may, however, be said—in view of our present industrial conditions, and the low standard of physical health and vitality prevailing among the young folk of our large towns—that physical drill and scout training, including ambulance and other work and qualifications in some useful trade, might very well be made a part of our general educational system, for rich and poor alike, say between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Such a training would to each individual boy be immensely valuable, and by providing some rudimentary understanding of military affairs and duties of citizenship and public service, would enable him to choose how he could be helpful to the nation—provided always he was not forced to make his choice in a direction distasteful or repugnant to him. In any good cause, as in a war of defence against a foreign enemy, it is obvious enough, as I have said, that there would be plenty of native enthusiasm forthcoming without legal or official pressure.