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GREAT BRITAIN'S ACHIEVEMENTS.

The danger of not being able to see the wood for the trees therein is no new one. The perspective of time is usually necessary before a true or just appraisal can be made of the importance, value or extent of any particular achievements. The war is no exception to this rule. The stage is so crowded with figures, some useless as well as many useful, as democracy buckles down to an unfamiliar job of mammoth proportions, that only the instructed spectator can grasp the real significance of the movements under way and realise the importance and significance of what is being accomplished, slowly perhaps but more the less surely, and step by step. In the admirable review of financial conditions in Canada, the United States and Great Britain, issued by the Canadian Bank of Commerce, attention is drawn by the compiler of the British section to several aspects of British war finance and activity, whose importance and significance only the trained mind can appreciate as they are in process of development, while they are not known as they should be on this side of the Atlantic.

First of all, there is the matter of the cost of the war. It is an elementary maxim of sound finance that taxation must go hand in hand with borrowings by Governments. The gross British expenditure from the beginning of the war to the end of the present financial year at March 31st next has been estimated at £3,883,000,000. The amount required has been raised by taxation and by various forms of war loans in a manner in which it probably could not have been accomplished in any other country. The amount produced by taxation during the first eight months of the war was £172,000,000, and for the fiscal year ending 31st March, 1916, £337,000,000, while it is anticipated that for the year ending 31st March, 1917, the amount will be £502,000,000, aggregating £1,011,000,000 for a period of two years and eight months. That is to say, after deducting advances to the Allies and the Dominions, which amount approximately to £800,000,000, payment of which will be arranged after the war, one-third of the total British war expenditure to 31st March, 1917, will have been raised by taxation. The United Kingdom will thus have provided by taxation not only for ordin-

ary expenditure and interest on war loans, but also for a large contribution to the cost of the war. Contrast this with the fact that Germany has not yet dared impose a cent of additional war taxation, and a standard is provided by which something like a true appraisal of the importance of Great Britain's accomplishments in this particular can be arrived at.

Take again the matter of British imports and exports. The average excess of imports into the United Kingdom over exports is in normal times £125,000,000 annually. At present, the excess is about £330,000,000 not including the Government's purchases of war supplies in the United States, etc., which are not included in the figures, but bring the adverse balance up to about £850,000,000. These figures, it must be recollected, are swollen partly through high freights and high values of food products. The increased excess of imports is not due, amazing as it may appear, to any falling off in the export trade. British exports last year were almost at the same level as in 1913. For the whole of 1913 they were £634,820,326; for ten months of 1916, they were £508,583,000. Admittedly, prices are much higher in the latter year than in the former. But even so, the showing is nothing less than astonishing. Hardly less than four million men can have been transferred from civil occupations to military life in the United Kingdom since war broke out. In spite of this, in spite of scarcity of tonnage, in spite of the submarine menace, there is no decrease in Britain's export trade. What gall and wormwood must these figures be—in Berlin!

"In the greatest war of all time," says the Bank of Commerce chronicler, "Great Britain has been called upon to assume financial burdens which it would at one time have been thought impossible for it to support, and under this supreme test has succeeded in sustaining in all respects its great traditions of financial supremacy and resourcefulness. The extent of the country's resources and its financial strength have been so clearly demonstrated by what has already been accomplished, that there is no lack of confidence in the ability of Great Britain to carry its share of the financial burden of the war until such time as victory is assured to the Allies."