

# Oil Control Propaganda

**British Interest are Engaged in Making Grandiose Statements of their Accomplishments—The American Press Repeats these, Breeding National Hate.**

An item which appeared in the "Sunday World" of London and has been followed by many similar paragraphs in the press of both the United States and Great Britain, aroused the anger of F. W. Gray in the Canadian Mining Journal of last week. The United States papers have taken their cues very well from the British writers on the subject of oil control and seem to be endeavoring to arouse the American people by repeating and re-asserting that Great Britain has control of the world's supply. So, while some of the British press are giving the self-satisfied Britisher every reason to throw out his chest with pride in the glory of his country's achievements, the American press is repeating the statements and reaffirming them to arouse the pride of the Americans and breed anger against the British interests, who, they assert, have cornered the world's supply.

The following is the item which appeared in the Sunday World:—

"Sir. E. Mackay Edgar, in explaining Great Britain's control of the oil resources of the world, says that within a few years the United States will be paying British oil interests \$1,000,000 annually for oil for the United States Navy and for home consumption.

"With the exception of Mexico and, to a lesser extent, of Central America, the outer world is securely barricaded against United States invasion in force," he said. "There may be small, isolated sallies, but there can never be a massed attack. The British position is impregnable."

Sir Mackay declares that all known oil fields and all likely or probable oil fields outside the United States are in British hands or under British management or control, or financed by British Capital.

## Great Harvest Certain.

"We shall have to wait a few years before the full advantages of the situation begin to be reaped," he said, "but that the harvest eventually will be a great one there can be no manner of doubt. To the tune of many million pounds a year the United States before very long will have to purchase from British companies and to pay for in dollar currency, in progressively increasing proportion, the oil she cannot do without and is no longer able to furnish from her own stores.

"Apart from Mexico," Sir Mackay Edgar continues, "it is almost a case of the British first and the rest of the world nowhere. I should say two-thirds of the improved fields of Central and South America are in British hands. In Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador a decisive and overwhelming majority of petroleum concessions is held by British subjects, and will be developed by British capital. The Alves group, whose holdings encircle practically two-thirds of the Caribbean Sea, is wholly British, working under arrangements which insure that perpetual control of its undertakings shall remain in British hands.

## Properties Widely Distributed.

"No United States citizen and no United States group has acquired, or ever could acquire, any such position in Central America as that which enterprise and personality have secured for Mr. Alves, or take again that greatest of all oil organizations, the Shell group.

"It owns exclusive or controlled interests in every important oil field in the world—in the United States, Russia, Mexico, the Dutch East

Indies, Roumania, Egypt, Venezuela, Trinidad, India, Ceylon, the Malay Straits, North and South China, Siam, the Straits Settlements and the Philippines."

Commenting on this, F. W. Gray writes under the heading "Propagandists of Hate,"—

"Propaganda may be cunningly disguised, but it is usually possible for the discerning reader to distinguish the well-timed and recurrent contributions of the propagandist from the ordinary news of the dailies and periodical press.

"It is not difficult, therefore, to detect in the unusual amount of space that the newspapers of the United States and those of the British Empire are devoting to oil occurrences and their exploitation the influence of the powerful rival groups of interests that seek the domination of the oil occurrences of the world.

"There is nothing that is inherently wrong, or even novel, in this quite apparent condition, if the protagonists of the competing interests will confine themselves to proper limits of discussion. In astuteness and vision, the financiers of the United States and those of the British Empire are a fair match. They have many times in the past pitted their wits against each other, or have combined them against a common rival, as may have seemed to them at the time desirable, without rancor, and according to the ethics of this business game. All they have hitherto asked has been a fair field and no favor. Each has placed a premium on brains, and has been willing to pay good men for services rendered.

"Latterly, however, another and a less worthy spirit seems to have obtained prevalence, although it has not yet obtained predominance. This spirit is traceable to injudicious, provocative and short-sighted propaganda, emanating from private interests, but purporting to express national and racial ambitions. Strangely enough, this overdone and false expression of national aims is a product of the war. It might have been thought that the example of the Prussian, who discussed world trade in terms of military strategy, and made such an awful mess of his grandiose plans, would have cured the other nations of a similar wicked obsession, but on the contrary, the virus has spread, and those who before the war were business friends and won the war together, now see their comradeship endangered by newspaper writings that dilate upon ordinary competitive business affairs much as an Economic Committee of the Prussian General Staff might have reported to their War Lord.

"There are some phases of a nation's internal economy that call for publicity, and the inculcation of a national concern; such as for example, the fuel problem of Canada. This is a question of national defence, because it is essentially a question of national existence. Public discussion of such matters is desirable, and should be frankly undertaken in the open. Our friends in the United States—that is all those whose friendship is worth having—will take no umbrage if Canada undertakes to become thoroughly self-supporting wherever it shall prove possible. They will admire us for so doing, and conversely they will secretly despise us if Canada unnecessarily places herself in a mediant attitude. On all such questions open discussion is possible, because the matter is one of public interest.

"But apart from pressing matters of our own internal economy, of which coal is the most typical

instance, nothing is to be gained, and much may be lost by irresponsible discussion in the newspapers of the supposedly high strategic aims of the political leaders of the United States and the British Empire, aims that do not exist, but which, correctly interpreted, will be found to bear on the real aims of rival oil interests. Apparently these people do not care whether they embroil the United States and Mexico in war, or whether they split the alliance between Britain and the United States that won the war, but it looks like losing the peace; causing some people to wonder whether civilization can even yet be saved, and whether it is really worth saving, if all the people of North America have gained from their fighting comradeship has been the absorption of the Prussian viewpoint.

"The journalist, or paid propagandist, who endeavors to cause friction between the United States and the British Empire is a most dangerous criminal, and he is especially dangerous to Canada. We suggest that cables from London Sunday newspapers, which appeal to an audience which is not representative of the sentiment of the British Empire, and is certainly not representative of Canadian sentiment, should be read with large allowances; and that, similarly, items appealing to similar audiences in the United States, relating to the malign purposes of the British in securing oil concessions in the Himalayas or round the Great Slave Lake in Canada, for example, should be generously discounted. Also, it would be much better for the oil interests, and for the peace of the world, if these gentlemen would be frank about their commercial aims, and would discontinue their pretence to pose as the champions of national aims, and as the exponents of grandiose schemes that are not one whit better morally, and just as likely of success as the proposals of Von Bernhardt in 'Der Naechste Krieg'.

"Bolshevism is originally a reflex of the disillusionment of deceived men who have seen their genuine love of country prostituted to base uses by rulers who dreamed and planned wickedness. This is the grain of truth behind the puzzling belief of labor that capital caused the war, and those who play fast and loose with patriotism for purely commercial ends are toying with the same forces which were unloosed in a recent war that is still running its course despite official peace treaties."

## A British Mine-Sweeping Invention.

H.M.S. Vernon is the home of the engineering training and experimental school of the British Navy at Portsmouth, and we are only now beginning to learn something of the remarkable devices which originated from the officers attached to that school. One of the simplest and most ingenious was the recording depth meter designed by the Mining School. In mine-sweeping it is essential to know that the sweep—the wire which is swung between two mine-sweeping vessels, is always below the level of the deepest mine, and it was to meet this condition that the apparatus was invented. It consisted of a small torpedo-shaped arrangement with a piston working against a spring. The deeper the instrument happened to be, the greater the pressure of the water on the piston and therefore the more the spring would be compressed. This movement was transmitted to a pencil moving on a revolving drum, and by this means a record of the depth was obtained. The instrument was successfully employed at a depth of 360 feet.

Eleven hundred cheques, totalling \$550,000, have been issued by the provincial government under the Rural Credits Act this year. The Government is taking over some of the loans made by banks during the earlier period of the Act, when the banks advanced the money.