

The latest reports from our Arctic coast have brought no further tidings of the Stefansson expedition. Stefansson and ten others of his party have now been missing for about a year; and it is now proposed to send out a relief expedition equipped with flying machines, in the hope of finding them.

Figures show that in America, of every four million persons travelling by railway, one is killed; and that this is eighteen times as many as are killed on the railways in England, in proportion to the number carried.

The last rail of the Canadian Northern line between Lake Superior and the Pacific Coast was laid last month, and before many months the ballasting will be completed. There is yet an uncompleted link in this system north of Lake Superior; but we may expect that before very long all three of the transcontinental railways,—the Canadian Pacific, the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern,—will be in operation from coast to coast.

One of the worst earthquakes known in modern history occurred last month in Italy. It is estimated that forty thousand people were killed, and as many more injured. Fifty or sixty towns and villages in the centre of the kingdom were destroyed. In the city of Avezzano, which had twelve thousand inhabitants, three-fourths of the number were killed, and a majority of the survivors injured. Yet this frightful loss of life seems but a trifle, when we compare it with the number of those who have lost their lives on the battlefields of France and Belgium and Poland, since the war began.

Six months of the Great War have passed, and, except for the early success of the Germans in overrunning Belgium and northern France, neither side has won any great advantage. Perhaps not military force, but economic pressure, may finally decide the conflict. Germany's commerce is interrupted by the superiority of the British fleet. The German government has found it necessary to seize all the supplies of wheat in the country, and will probably take over other food supplies. They claim, however, that they have food enough to last until the next harvest, even if all foreign supplies should be cut off. Another serious shortage for them is in the supply of oil, as the part of Galicia which yields that product is now in the hands of the Russians.

France, it has been said, is fighting to save her territory; Russia is fighting to preserve her national life and her religion; Germany is fighting to impose her order on the rest of the world, for she really believes that her government is the best in the world; Britain is fighting for disarmament and universal peace.

While the winter has not stopped the war, it has, of course, seriously interfered with military operations. Lord Kitchener is reported to have said that he does not know when the war will be over, but it will begin in May. At different points along the western battle line, where both armies are entrenched, the French have made slight advances; but the Germans have driven them back at Soissons, and are now within a short distance of that important city. Where the British hold the line, in the vicinity of Ypres, several violent German attacks have been repulsed. A second British army, in which the Canadian troops are included, has been landed in France,

where they may be ready to meet the Germans if they should attempt to make another advance in force before the winter is over.

The part of the battle front held by the British extends but a fifth of the whole distance between the Swiss frontier and the coast; yet both the French and the Russians are satisfied that Britain is doing her full share in the war, at sea and in the field. A French writer says: To find men, and even to train them, is nothing; but to officer and equip them, while keeping General French's army in ammunition, while working for the Belgian army that has lost all its arsenals and revictualing centres, and for the French army that has lost its chief industrial departments, that is a giant's task, of which England alone is capable.

A new phase of the war is to begin in the spring, when Lord Kitchener will have a new army of two million men in the field; when the French also will have new forces of more than a million; and when, it is probable, more than one of the neutral nations will have entered the war on the side of the Allies; but it will be a very difficult task even then, to drive the Germans out of Belgium.

Another field of war in which colonial troops are employed is on the Egyptian frontier, where the advancing Turkish forces have reached the Suez Canal, though not in large numbers, and have been defeated in a battle in which the New Zealand contingent had its first engagement.

The Germans are said to consider this chiefly a war against Great Britain, but to the people of Eastern Europe it is a war between Russia and Germany. Along the Russian frontier, unchecked by winter weather, the fiercest fighting of the war thus far is now in progress. Winter, indeed, seems to be of some advantage to the Russians; for the freezing of the lakes and marshes which form the natural defences of East Prussia has opened a way for a Russian invasion in the north. The second attempt of the Germans to capture Warsaw seems to have failed; and in the south the Russian armies have taken possession of the most important passes of the Carpathians. Yet the Germans seem to have men to spare for strengthening the Austrian forces for another invasion of Serbia. The winter campaign between Turks and Russians east of the Black Sea has apparently ended in a decisive victory for the Russians.

Another raid upon the English coast was prevented by a battle in the North Sea, in which four of the largest German ships were met and defeated by five large British vessels of the swiftest type. One of the German ships was sunk. It is the first time in history that ships of this size have ever met in battle.

Fifty-seven natives of Fiji have recently passed through Montreal on their way to England, where they expect to enlist in Kitchener's army.

More than eighteen thousand dollars in money has been contributed to the Patriotic Fund by the Indian tribes of the Dominion, and a considerable number of the Indians have enlisted in both first and second contingents.

The Dominion Parliament now in session will probably take measures to raise a hundred and fifty million dollars in war taxes. This will help us to realize that it is our war, and not one at which we are mere onlookers.

A German named Werner Horn has been arrested in Maine for attempting to blow up the railway bridge at