

The power of the United States to lend, when we remember that the gold pool of 100 millions established to protect her own credit with foreign countries was dissolved only in January last, is one of the surprises of the war, but we must also remember that this power to lend will be sharply tested as the war proceeds. A rough estimate of the amount of securities sold and credits established shows that the sum of at least 800 million dollars has already been placed directly at the credit of the Allies, while the indirect credits and the contracts outstanding are beyond our calculation. Large loans have also been made to neutral countries, and something has been lent even to Germany.

Our Products in Demand.

In Canada the building of almost all private or public works, causing a lock-up of capital, has stopped for the moment; individuals are buying less extravagantly, even if there is not sufficient effort to economize; everybody who has not enlisted can find work to do; and for a very large part of our national production, from the farm to the machine-shop, there is a persistent demand by the Allies. All this tends to produce a condition of prosperity, with ease in the money market, and if, like the United States, we were a neutral country instead of one engaged in the war, our national wealth would be increasing at a pace undreamed of in our past history.

We are proud, however, that we are not among the neutrals, but among those who are fighting for the liberty of the world, and for this, in addition to the loss of life which our honor roll represents, we ourselves must bear now and must ask our children to bear, a great cost in money. A year ago we were greatly pleased because Great Britain had undertaken to lend us for the moment the money with which to pay for our share of the war. By midsummer the Dominion Government also needed money for other expenditures, because ordinary revenues had been disorganized by the war and many public works could not with wisdom be closed down. Accordingly a loan of 45 millions was obtained in New York last July, and this was a happy accomplishment for the following reasons: London was ill-prepared to bear any load not absolutely necessary, and Australia needed help which could not be obtained elsewhere; New York was the only market well supplied with money, and it is in any event the point where our international settlements are mostly made; this was our first Government loan in the United States and the new market was desirable. Apart from these reasons, the value in New York, and therefore in Canada, of the pound sterling in London had by this time fallen so low that we could not afford to use the help for war expenses placed at our disposal by Great Britain. We have, of course, no actual knowledge of the facts, but it is probable that from about this time the Dominion Government ceased to use the funds put at their disposal by the British Treasury for war expenses, and very soon the possibility of floating a war loan in Canada was under discussion. A Dominion loan offered in Canada is as great a departure from the past as one offered in New York; and although we are still in the midst of moving the greatest crops in our history, in volume and in value, and are doing it with our usual machinery more or less paralyzed, because of the state of the foreign exchanges and the scarcity of tonnage, yet, when a domestic loan of 50 millions was offered in November the subscriptions exceeded 100 millions.

Munitions and Credit.

Concurrently with the discussion of this loan, we were sharply made aware that if we make munitions for the Allies we must to some extent give credit for such munitions in the same manner as has been done in the United States. We cannot take securities in payment for as large a percentage of the cost as the United States is able to do, because we are ourselves bearing the cost of war and because we have so little accumulated wealth upon which to draw, but to some extent as yet unascertained we shall doubtless have to take Treasury or other Government securities in order to facilitate such purchases. Therefore, in view of the great success of our domestic war loan, the Minister of Finance, with the unanimous concurrence of the country, accepted subscriptions for 100 millions, instead of 50 millions, with the intention of using temporarily the additional sum thus secured to finance the payment for munitions on behalf of the Allies.

The Great Crop.

A year ago everybody in Canada was urged to put into his particular effort in life an energy and seriousness of pur-

pose adequate to the needs of the great war. If we cannot fight we should help in the countless other ways that are open to us. Nature smiled on our efforts, and we have been blessed with the greatest crops ever known in any new country. This has silenced the pessimists, and our great West is more sure of its future than ever. Indeed, for loftier reasons all Canada feels much more sure of its future than it has ever done before. That overgrown youth, leaning upon his mother, has suddenly found himself, and to the call to play the man has responded so well that his place among the younger nations and his influence in the greatest empire in the world are assured. The war, however, is still at its height, and there is little sign of such an end as we must attain if we are to follow our natural course in peace. We cannot afford to relax our energies for a moment; such efforts as we made in 1915 should be increased in 1916, and the need for personal and public economy is not lessened a particle by the prosperity incidental to the war. I notice that when some citizen takes the trouble to indicate particular forms of economy he is met with criticism. Of course, economy for one man would be a great indulgence for another, and each must settle for himself the scale on which he can lessen his expenditure. We are exceedingly fortunate that such an income tax as that in Great Britain does not settle the question most drastically for each of us. It must be clear that every time we buy something outside of Canada we weaken our national finances, unless our purchases consist of material which will in some form or other be exported again. This does not mean that we can avoid making large purchases abroad but that we can avoid unnecessary purchases. It must also be clear that when any man avoids expenditure which it would be quite natural to make in times of peace, he can invest the amount saved in war loans, and every dollar saved and thus invested is a blow struck on behalf of the Allies. So well is this need for personal economy understood in England that some of the great banks who have not heretofore had savings departments like those in Canadian banks have now established them.

A year ago we described at length the various arrangements made by the Minister of Finance at the beginning of the war for the protection of our financial situation, and we referred to some of the moratorium legislation, by provincial governments. The mere power to do certain things, if necessary, has, as usual, prevented the necessity from arising, and only a very moderate use has been made of the Finance Minister's wise provisions. As to moratorium legislation in the provinces, to the extent to which it has been a hardship to the creditor, the need has already passed, and while the provisions affecting the power to foreclose where there is no default except as to principal will doubtless be retained, many of the other features will, we hope, soon be repealed.

Clearing House Returns.

The Clearing House returns show a further decline from \$8,074,978,000 in 1914 to \$7,797,430,000, a decrease of 3.44 per cent. for the year just closed. In all western cities the decline is very marked, except in Winnipeg and Brandon, where the figures show an increase. In the East there is a moderate decrease in Toronto, Montreal is almost unchanged, and at four other points there are increases.

The contraction in ordinary business, which began in 1913 and was greatly increased by the war, is most forcibly illustrated by the figures of the building permits in our four principal cities. For the last four years they are as follows:—

	1912.	1913.
Montreal	\$19,642,000	\$27,032,000
Toronto	27,401,000	27,038,000
Vancouver	19,388,000	10,423,000
Winnipeg	20,475,000	18,621,000
	1914.	1915.
Montreal	\$17,619,000	\$7,495,000
Toronto	20,672,000	9,651,000
Vancouver	4,484,000	1,593,000
Winnipeg	12,160,000	1,826,000

A drop from \$87,000,000 to \$17,500,000 in three years is so great as to affect severely almost every branch of trade, particularly those directly connected with building, but it is a matter for congratulation that we have been able to withstand this sharp readjustment and still maintain our prosperity, the very thing we feared we might not be able to do with credit to ourselves.