

printed pamphlet printed in brown. It was inscribed on the outside with these words: "Memorandum regarding National Trade and Commerce Convention. By F. G. McAllister, B.A." The title page described it as an "Outline Plan of Preparation" for the said Convention, and referred to the Convention as being likely to take place "in October."

"Now just look at it," cried the boiler-maker, fuming over my shoulder. "Look 't. First of all, there's the usual Blue Book formalities. Then there's a reprint of Foster's 'Call to Action.' Then what?"

WE read: "The memorandum herewith submitted alternately assumes two standpoints from which the problems before the business interests of the country may be studied, viz.:"

"Now, what the devil do I want with alternate standpoints?" demanded the boiler-maker. "Look, the rest's the same. Sounds the way my boy Johnny used to talk the first year after he got out of college. Look. There's a list of our imports included. Now, what's the need to waste government money reprinting THAT?"

Let us leave the boiler-maker there.

Ottawa has seen many others like him, eager to help, and dismayed at the lack of co-ordinated thinking in the Capital.

Be it noted, it was the boiler-maker, and not I, that condemned the Memorandum by F. G. McAllister, B.A. McAllister, B.A., is a young university graduate upon whom C. A. Magrath, of the International Waterways Commission, stumbled one day. Magrath needed some sort of statistical work done, and McAllister did it well. Hence, when Sir George Foster tossed off his little "Call to Arms" and promptly invoked the aid of C. A. Magrath—with others—to do the work incidental thereto, Magrath dug up McAllister, B.A. If McAllister's work were not so juiceless it would stand up as the best thing that has yet been done toward helping Canada to prepare for Peace. Before it was printed the Department of Trade and Commerce had sent out various circulars to various classes of people. They were something like S.O.S. calls, child-like requests for help—from anybody. Even the raw products of the universities were asked to send their views to the Department, and a legend has sprung up to the effect that thousands of these earnest young men have replied and that the letters are still lying in Sir George Eufas Foster's office awaiting a reading—whether they can ever be analyzed or ever be acknowledged is another matter. Circulars were sent also to the newspapers, indicating the sort of articles that might be prepared with a view to interesting the public in Sir George's "Call to Arms." But McAllister's effort was the first really constructive thing turned out. It is as tasteless as saw-dust and as uninspiring as a soft drink in a lumber camp. Its approach to the mind of a reader is about as friendly and inviting as the rear entrance to a gaol. But by prayer and faith it can be worried into yielding up its gold. And it has gold in it.

The first thing McAllister wants done, apparently—

and his idea is a sound one—is to have a study of the Canadian Home market made by "a committee." Whether it should be studied by a committee or by the members of Premier Borden's Government—who have been putting far too much work onto the shoulders of committees and commissions—may be disputed. But there is extremely sound sense in the suggestion that we should find out somehow or other the why and the wherefor for our enormous imports. In 1914 we imported "butter, cheese, lard and other provisions" to the tune of almost three million dollars. Of "meats" that year we imported over five million dollars' worth. Seeds—\$1,671,000! Soap (an animal by-product)—\$1,323,010! Vegetables (in a land whose "destiny is agriculture")—\$3,306,930! Fruit and nuts (the greater proportion being of the kind produced in Canada)—\$17,233,223! Fish—\$2,172,900! Grain and the products of grain of the same kinds as those grown in Canada—\$6,307,578! Paper (in a country with enormous raw materials for paper-making)—\$8,043,368! Wool and woollen goods—\$31,438,223! In short, we imported, in 1914, about four hundred million dollars' worth of goods, and McAllister, having stated the fact, leaves it to wise Canadians to say, WHY? This is one of the first questions to be laid hold of by any businessman's conference. Can Canadian manufacturers not handle their own home market? If they can't, why not? Are labour conditions wrong? Is the tariff to blame? Are raw materials difficult to obtain? Are foreign makers possessed of any advantage in selling to Canadians goods that Canadian manufacturers could not in time be enabled to make under some reasonable form of "protection"—tariff or otherwise—to be devised with due regard for the interests of the consumers? Although McAllister's questionnaires would numb any mind but that of a school-master, they are shrewdly devised so as to get a sort of plebiscite from all the Canadian masters of any one trade, as to what their chief difficulties, hopes, aspirations and grouches may be. Classified and analyzed the answers to McAllister's questionnaire would yield invaluable information. A wise government, Grit or Tory, might read a summary of such answers with profit to themselves and the country at large.

IT is only after having studied the Canadian home market that McAllister would consider export problems. Again he has prepared questionnaires. First he would have the Business Man's Conference find out—he has more faith in the conference than anybody else in Ottawa—what are the chief lines of produce in which we have surpluses? Obviously wheat comes first, but there are other things than wheat. McAllister would have us find out what other things we now produce in surplus and what things we could most easily produce in surplus if we went about it scientifically. McAllister does not say that we should try to select lines of "finished products" as against lines of raw products for special encouragement, but it is of a piece with his general argument. At all events, having discovered first what things we can and could best produce for export, he would then

have us find out which are the most likely markets for these products. Which are good customers and likely to grow? Which are poor customers and likely to grow? Which are good customers and likely to dwindle?

McAllister then takes up the question of transportation facilities—though he makes the mistake of nominating only one committee to consider both inland and outland transportation. He would then have a committee on credit facilities and banking facilities abroad. He raises the question of training commercial representatives for Canadian firms for export service and the question of technical education for labour; immigration and colonization; industrial equipment, plants and public facilities; industrial research laboratories and raw materials. In short, having started well, he becomes the victim of his own momentum and is rolled off into the maze of inquiry which might well occupy an army of students for several incarnations. What is needed, in reading McAllister's report, is a sense of "First things first." Let the manufacturers be shown in clear and unmistakable language that opportunities for such and such lines of trade exist in certain quarters. Let them be encouraged to capture their home markets first, then their foreign markets. Let them be shown "HOW." But if these main leads are attended to, then the question of foreign banking facilities, for example, can be settled secondarily, and so with other subsidiary questions. McAllister's report is like a Chinaman's reading of Browning. The pronunciation may be perfect, but he gives no inflection to the work. He does not indicate the values. It is all told in a deadly monotone.

ALL good Canadians should pray earnestly that no Business Man's Conference be called. It is safe guessing that Sir George Foster himself does not want one unless it be in very modified form indeed. The Tower of Babel would be backed off the map as a piece of real confusion. A further prayer might be added to this effect: that no committees be appointed as per Mr. McAllister's suggestion, for the machinery would stop of its own weight. Committees and commissions are notorious for achieving nothing. They amass information, but almost invariably fail to reduce it to any useful form. If action is to be taken it might well be taken by private government enquiry. Sir George Foster's keen analytical mind might far better be occupied directing a dozen well-trained and well-educated investigators, and sorting their data, than speech-making in Paris and Manchester and hob-nobbing with Dominions Royal Commissions. In Sir George Foster, Canada has a man of rare ability, if only he could be got to work—and work steadily on this gigantic problem of How to Prepare for Peace. Let him busy himself with study along the lines McAllister has suggested—or better lines if he can find them. Let him work in silence till he has reached his conclusions. Let him then come out and tell this country the things he wants done. In so doing he has his chance to give Canada a new National Policy.

PROBLEMS OF THE EAST FRONT ANALYZED

By SIDNEY CORYN

THE vital nature of the struggle on the Roumanian frontier and in the Dobrudja is shown by the almost frantic exaggeration of the bulletins. When Mackensen took Tutukai and Silistria we were told that his victory was a decisive one, and we were asked to observe the Roumanian armies in headlong flight and rout. The Roumanian armies had certainly fallen backward, but there was no flight nor rout, as was evidenced by the fact that they made a stand at Constanza in defence of the railroad line and bridge, and that they have not only made good their position there, but even compelled Mackensen to withdraw from some of the territory that he had won. The Roumanian forces were, of course, steadily reinforced by the Russians coming southward, and we may suppose that those reinforcements have been steadily arriving ever since. In all probability the armies of Mackensen are being foiled and will continue to be foiled. Time is against him here, since he can not be reinforced to any considerable extent, while his enemies can draw upon the almost inexhaustible resources of Russia. Mackensen had the alternatives of a quick success, or failure, and therefore we may assume that he has failed so far as his main project was concerned. At the same time he

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has interposed himself between the Russians and Bulgaria, and has delayed the blow that must otherwise have fallen. The reports show that the battle still continues to the south of Constanza, but it is not likely that Mackensen will be able to do more than hold his own.

Another example of exaggeration was furnished by the bulletins of the Roumanian raid across the Danube to the rear of Mackensen. At first we were told that the raid was a success, and that the Germans were evacuating Tutukai and Silistria. This was contradicted by the Bulgarians, who said that the Roumanians had been driven back with heavy losses. The Roumanians, on the contrary, asserted that their men were still crossing the river, but a few hours later admitted that they had withdrawn to the other side of the Danube, but without the loss of a single man. The truth is probably to be found about half way between the rival bulletins. If the pontoon bridges by which the Roumanians crossed to the east bank of the Danube had actually been destroyed by Austrian monitors, as was claimed, the Roumanians would not only have been defeated. They would have been exterminated, and we should have been informed as to the number of prisoners that had been taken. We may suppose that the Roumanians