

## America's Part

THE beginning of the second year of participation in the war has been made the occasion by the American public of careful examination of the progress of war plans, and a frank recognition of the fact that, while much has been done that may be regarded with satisfaction, in some important respects what has been accomplished has fallen far short of what had been expected. The truth is that, although for a year or more there had been much talk of America's "unpreparedness" for any war, when the moment for action arrived very little real and effective preparation had been made. The men who talked in a general way of the lack of preparedness did not have in view an early war with Germany. The American people clung to the idea that they were not at all likely to be drawn into the great conflict that was raging in Europe. Even after the sinking of the Lusitania and the sending of the dispatch informing Germany that she would be held to "strict accountability" if further loss of American lives occurred, it was still assumed that America could keep out of the war. So, when the crisis came and the American people were made to see that they could no longer remain neutral, the nation was sadly lacking in the means of carrying on war effectively.

Once the plunge was taken, and war declared, the Government set to work with characteristic American vigor, calling in many able men to assist them in the great task before them. It was inevitable that war preparations begun under these conditions would be marked by haste, confusion and overlapping. Perhaps, having regard to these things, the wonder is, not that there has been so much disappointment, but rather that so much effective work has been done. Under the keen inquiry and criticism of both Houses of Congress the weak points of the work of preparation have been revealed and steps are being taken to ensure better results. Probably the greatest disappointment has been in a line in which the greatest efficiency was promised. A vast sum was voted to enable the American inventors and craftsmen to produce a fleet of air machines. Press reports widely distributed told of the great success that was attending this work. The wonderful power of the "Liberty motor" was proclaimed. But an investigation privately ordered by President Wilson disclosed the fact that this branch of the war business was in a deplorable state, that not a single American airplane had been sent to Europe, that the "Liberty motor" was still in the experimental stage, and that considerable time must elapse before the machines could be supplied. There is now a speeding up of all the American work, and it is believed that the American army now in France, the size of which is disappointingly small, will soon be large enough to play a more important part in the conflict which at this moment seems to be nearing its decisive stages.

It is worthy of note that Captain Perseus, the Berlin naval writer, has warned the German people that they are making a mistake in underestimating the extent and power of America's part in the war. The Germans are by this time satisfied that the American army is one that must be counted on to strengthen very materially the forces of the Allies, whenever it reaches the battlefield in considerable numbers. Hence the German plan will be to press for decisive results on the Western front before a large American army can arrive on the scene.

## The Busy German

DESPATCHES of the last few days give evidence of a very general offensive movement on the part of the Germans. They are everywhere aggressive. The attack on the British and French lines on the Western front, in both France and Flanders, has been made with a vigor that indicates long preparation and resolve to make a desperate effort for a striking success. If it has failed to accomplish its main objectives, it has, nevertheless, been successful in some respects, enough so to give much encouragement to the German people. At the same moment the offensive has been taken in other directions, showing that it is the Germans' purpose to put forth all their power now. The mysterious long-range gun has again bombarded Paris, and done some damage. Paris is again visited by German airplanes, dropping bombs. London, too, has another visitation of the same character. The submarines, we may be sure, are doing their worst. And reports come that there is an activity in German naval circles that suggests an intention to risk another naval battle.

Germany is thus putting forth tremendous efforts at this moment to win sufficient success to induce the Allies to consider peace proposals. These efforts afford evidence of Germany's remarkable strength after three and a half years of war, carried on under many difficulties. But they may also indicate that Germany has reached a point when she realizes that she must win now or not win at all. Hence she collects her forces for a desperate struggle all along the line. If in this great moment she fails to achieve her main objectives, she is not yet beaten; she can and will fight on for a while. But her people will realize more fully than they have in the past that the end, though it may be delayed, must be defeat.

## Davy Crockett at Ottawa

A NOTABLE feature of the new political situation at Ottawa is that it makes for an increase of independent thinking and speaking, a wider freedom of debate, and, on the part of the Government, a larger degree of sensitiveness to public opinion. One is reminded of that interesting page in American history which tells us that the fame of Colonel Davy Crockett as a marksman was so great that when he levelled his gun at an old raccoon, the animal cried out, "Don't shoot, Davy, I'll come down." On two important occasions lately, in which the Government were menaced, they gracefully surrendered.

Colonel John Currie gave notice of a motion designed to arraign the Government for an alleged lack of vigor in the enforcement of the Military Service Act. The Premier asked the gallant colonel not to shoot at once, to delay a little, and when the colonel again levelled his gun, the Premier met him with an Order in Council (a weapon that is being turned out in large quantity in the Ottawa factory), declaring that all the vigor that anybody could desire, and more too, would hereafter be used.

Mr. McMaster, member for Brome, P.Q., and Mr. Nickle, member for Kingston, Ont., had a race to see who could be first on the order paper of the House with a motion condemning hereditary titles in Canada. Mr. McMaster won by a neck, but with the generosity that is always so becoming to a victor, he gave place to his competitor. The two zealous

reformers united their forces upon the Nickle motion, which came up in due course a few days ago. The Nickle-McMaster gun was raised, but before the moment came for actually firing the shot in the form of a vote, the Premier produced the latest product of the Order-in-Council factory—a declaration against hereditary titles that, as one of his colleagues remarked, went much further than the motion before the House. While the motion only demanded future abstention from the conferring of such titles, the Government Order-in-Council suggested that means be found—by legislation, perhaps, in England—for cancelling the hereditary coupons attached to the titles already given.

If there is an amusing side to these proceedings, there is also a serious side. The loosening of party ties to a sufficient degree to allow and encourage greater freedom of discussion of public affairs is certainly beneficial. It is well also that the Government, which is so strongly supported in the House, should not count too much on its strength, but should have its ear to the ground, so that it may understand, and, as far as reasonably possible, respond to the public opinion of the country.

## Is Robertson Coming Back?

A FEW weeks ago the British public was disturbed by reports of the retirement of General Sir William Robertson, the gallant soldier who had risen from the ranks to the first position in the military service of the Empire, that of the chief military official at the War Office in London. There were, at first, remarks that undue influences had been at work against Sir William. However, when official statements came out, it appeared that Sir William had differed from the Government on an important part of military policy, and had tendered his resignation. The Government, it was explained, had decided, in conjunction with the Allies, to establish at Versailles a Council which would have supreme control of the forces. This policy, of course, would transfer the command of the British army from Sir William Robertson to the Versailles Council. The Government offered Sir William the position of British representative on the Council, or to retain him in his position at the War Office in London, subject to the conditions created by the new order of things. Sir William seems to have disapproved of the Council arrangement. He declined to accept any responsibility for it. He preferred to retire to a modest command in England.

The latest moves in military affairs seem designed to supercede, in fact if not in form, the Versailles Council. Sir Henry Rawlinson, the British representative on the board, has been transferred to the front to succeed Sir Hubert Gough, recalled, and only an "acting" member, Major-General Sackville-West, has been named to succeed Sir Henry. The French General Foch has been made Generalissimo of all the armies of the Allies on the Western front. If, as seems likely, the Versailles Council is to be virtually set aside, it is not unreasonable to expect that Sir William Robertson, whose disapproval of it led to his resignation, will soon be restored to his former position at the War Office in London. Sir William enjoyed in the largest degree the confidence of the British public, and his return to his former high position would be viewed with much favor.