

Bluffing the Germans

WAR SECRET SERVICE METHODS—SIR REGINALD HALL'S DISCLOSURES.

"The great mistake the Germans made during the war was that they never gave us credit for any intelligence; they never saw our side of the question," said Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, M.P., Chief of the British Naval Intelligence Department during the war.

Sir Reginald was described by the late Dr. Walter Hines Page, the American Ambassador to Great Britain during the war, to the President of the United States as "the one genius that was developed; neither in fiction nor in fact could you find any such man to match him."

Sir Reginald added:

Of course our whole object was to prevent the Germans from giving us very much credit for intelligence. When President Wilson published the famous Zimmerman telegram containing the German overtures to Mexico, I was very anxious that there should be no suspicion in the German mind that we had anything to do with it.

It was then that The Daily Mail, at my request, published a stinging leader passing severe reflections on the British Intelligence Service. The Daily Mail was of the greatest assistance to us, and even now it would not be right for me to go into the details of how it helped us throughout the war. It is a tradition in the Intelligence Department that we never say anything about our work, and had it not been for the publication of the Page letter, I should say nothing now.

KEY TO SECRET CODE.

The British Admiralty, he explained, knew all the movements of the famous German submarines Deutschland and Bremen, and the British Government allowed German messages to be sent over British cables. What the Germans did not know was that the British possessed the German secret code and deciphered every message as it was sent across.

"This one thing shows the difference between the British and German generally," he remarked. "I am sure, if the position had been reversed, the British would never have been so stupid as not to have suspected that the messages were being deciphered."

Continuing he said:

If I had disclosed the actual wording of the Zimmerman telegram, the Germans would have suspected something at once. I had to wait until we got a copy of the telegram actually sent, which was differently worded from the one from Berlin.

TRICKED THE GERMANS.

It was Bernstorff's telegram that I exposed. The Germans actually thought that there had been a leakage between Bernstorff and Mexico, which was what I wanted. Right until the end of the war I do not think the Germans suspected that we knew as much as we did of their intelligence service.

Dr. Page and I laughed when we read Bernstorff's message from Mexico. In explaining how it was deciphered, he said that he had kept the message in a sealed safe in Magdeburg. The code for opening it was known only to Bernstorff. When the message was afterwards burned to ashes, the ashes were scattered.

All the time we had complete copies of those very messages—Daily Mail.

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