

Kaiser Grasping at the Austrian Peace Offer

New York, April 23.—Officials of the Allies are studying the purpose and possibilities of Austria's offer of peace to Russia. On its face, this latest movement is doomed to failure, but I find an appreciation of the fact that far-reaching results may follow the action.

It shows primarily that Austria, and perhaps Germany, too, realizes the hopelessness of war against almost the entire world and that she is eager to take advantage of what she believes is the unsettled state of affairs in Russia, to obtain relief in that quarter. It is evident that Vienna sees the end is near and is anxious to avoid possible results now.

Some profess to see the hand of Prussianism in the offer. They declare it is a trick of the Kaiser to separate Russia from the Allies and so concentrate his efforts on the crumbling western front. Then Prussia would have a better chance to offset the entry of the United States.

On the other hand, some assert that it is an indication of a break between Austria and Germany, which has been rumored persistently for a long time, fore-shadowing similar offers of peace to the other allies.

But this argument is refuted by the

fact that Austria, following the leadership of Germany, recently made the significant break with the United States.

Everywhere confidence is expressed that Russia will remain true to the "pact of London" and will not make a separate peace because the sentiment of the people is against autocracy. In fact, the provisional government announced that in fulfillment of the agreements it would pursue the war to a victorious peace.

The British have interpreted the recent Russian manifesto, stating that the country was fighting in defence of liberty, as intended for home consumption and not conflicting with the purposes of the Allies.

It is understood, of course, in such unsettled times that it is necessary to unify all factions. Leaders in Russia on all sides realize that she cannot afford to desert the Allies and must have some friends at the end of the war. It is unbelievable that she would quit now when victory is near. It all looks as though the Central Powers were grasping at a straw, the Kaiser demanding and utilizing the Austrian Emperor as his tool for protection from the house he has pulled down upon himself.

GENERAL SMUTS

Soldier, Statesman and Philosopher.

THE EMPIRE CABINET

(Manchester Dispatch.)

General Smuts, who is a commanding figure at the Empire Conference, has so many names, titles, honors, and offices that it would take quite a long time to write them down in full. But he is known among his own people, in South Africa as "Jan" Smuts, and thousands who never spoke to him in their lives call him "Jannie".

Jan Smuts has developed through trial into a man of action, but probably if he could have governed his destiny he would not have led it into this path. He is a philosopher. His spiritual home is not in Germany. He would acknowledge no other home, spiritual or material, than South Africa. Yet he can appreciate Kant as well as Gerson, and loves abstract lines of thought that are not immediately practical. Left to himself, and not subjected to the tossing of fate, he might have been an acute lawyer, respected by a multitude of clients and escaping into the country whenever the law would let him, there to soar through the cold heights of abstract speculation modified by the warm influence of his happy domestic life.

When he went back to South Africa from Cambridge and London, however, he found lots to be done. He was caught up into Transvaal politics, which, in their turn, made him not only a soldier but a leader of soldiers. During the Boer War he fought England with as good a will as he has recently been fighting side by side with her. The pale-faced, shaven lawyer and thinker grew quickly into the grave and bearded doer of rapid deeds.

The chance to anybody who knows Jan Smuts seems superficial rather than essential. It was aided by two prime factors. The first is "knowledge of country" which Smuts learnt when a boy on his father's farm; the second, and more important, is his possession of the strategic sense.

"Strategy lies in Smuts' brain." He devotes it now to winning an election, now to conquering East Africa. You must rise early to circumvent him, whether he be a political opponent or a warrior German. His mind, thanks to its varied training, is adaptable. It is the same mind all through, but it can turn easily from one task to another. And his many tasks have so occupied him that he has never found leisure to master the minor arts of smiling easily and being accessible to every man. Always, or almost always, he stands a little aloof, minding his own business, not too humanly concerned with that of other folk.

He is a man who acts like lightning on a decision. Fear of consequences does not trouble him. When he saved the Transvaal gold from Lord Robert's forces advancing on Pretoria; when he arranged the deportation of the Labor leaders from Johannesburg; when he silenced Bourke's death warrant after the Beyers rebellion; when he laid his plans for driving the German forces in East Africa—in these and a dozen other crises of his career he took risks with an easy courage. Doubtless he is made of flesh and blood like the rest of us, but he reminds one of elastic steel.

Canada's First Citizen

There are few greater missionaries of Empire than the Canadian Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden. He has summed up his life work in the motto he gave to his own Dominion, "One King, One Flag, One Empire."

He preserved the Empire from disintegration by his great and successful fight against American reciprocity, with its inevitable consequence of absorption. It was highly appropriate, therefore, that he should have been the first Dominion statesman to sit at the Cabinet table at Downing-street.

Sir Robert Borden's political record since 1911, when he became Premier of Canada in succession to the silver-tongued Laurier is statesmanship without a flaw. Apart from his pertuacious efforts to bring the Colonies into practical administrative touch with the Motherland, he will be for ever gratefully remembered for his magnificent achievements in equipping and dispatching army after army of Canadian troops to the front in France.

Sir Robert is purely English by descent. His family emigrated from Kent to New England in 1633, and he was born in 1854 in Acadia.

Before he entered politics he was a school teacher and a barrister. He

made a great success in the law, rising to be leader of the Nova Scotia Bar and one of Canada's foremost pleaders. He had been two years president of the Nova Scotia Barriesters' Society and the head of a flourishing legal firm when, in 1896, he entered Parliament at Ottawa. In five years, time so rapid was his progress, he became leader of the opposition in the Laurier Government.

A tall, handsome man with white hair, dark moustache, and large fine eyes, Sir Robert Borden would stand out in any crowd. On the platform

he is perfectly at home. A quiet, easy speaker, he can be on occasion tenderly, burningly eloquent. His manner is charming and sympathetic and transparent; honesty breathes in his every word.

Colonel his Highness the Maharajah of Bikanir, A.D.C. to the King, is one of the most notable and powerful of the Indian princes, and his selection to take part in the deliberations of the Imperial War Cabinet has given the greatest satisfaction in India.

As ruler over a State of 23,815 square miles and 700,000 people, the Maharajah has been in a position to lend substantial aid to the Empire during the war. He has given that aid enthusiastically, like the true and generous patriot that he is.

Sir Ganra Singh Bahadur, to give him his native name, is an imposing looking man of thirty-six. He was only seven when he succeeded to the rulership of his wealthy State. At the age of twenty he joined the British army, in which he has seen a good deal of active service. He commanded his own Bikanir Camel Corps in the campaign against the Chinese Boxers, and was mentioned in dispatches and decorated. His Camel Corps has done valuable service in Egypt during the present war.

"Bikanir," as the Maharajah is styled by army men, has always been popular among our soldiers in India. He is well known in London society, and was a conspicuous figure at the Coronation of King Edward. He served for a year on Viscount French's staff in France, and was mentioned in dispatches.

The Maharajah is a noted sportsman as well as a soldier. An excellent horseman and a crack shot with both the rifle and the gun, he has been a successful hunter of big game, his bag up to date totalling seventy tigers and numerous lions, panthers, bison, and bears.

An administrator he has won his subjects' respect and confidence. His State being admirably managed and equipped with all modern conveniences. The result of his enlightened rule is that Bikanir has entirely regained the condition of prosperity which it lost in the great famine of seventeen years ago.—Manchester Dispatch.

OBITUARY

The death took place yesterday morning, following a short illness, of Edward Cotter, 449 Main street. The deceased, who is well known in the North End, where he resided with his son, John, L. C. K. brakeman, was a naval veteran. He had been a pensioner for some forty-six years. Mr. Cotter was a native of Cork, Ireland, and came to St. John in the eighties. Besides his son, he is survived by one daughter, Mrs. Fred Stewart, North End. The funeral will take place on Wednesday morning at 8.45 o'clock.

Ottawa, April 23.—John Bright, Dominion live stock commissioner and president of the Central Canada Exhibition Association, died at his home here last night after an illness of three weeks. He was in his first year and was appointed to the important federal position five years ago. He came to Ottawa from Myrtle town.

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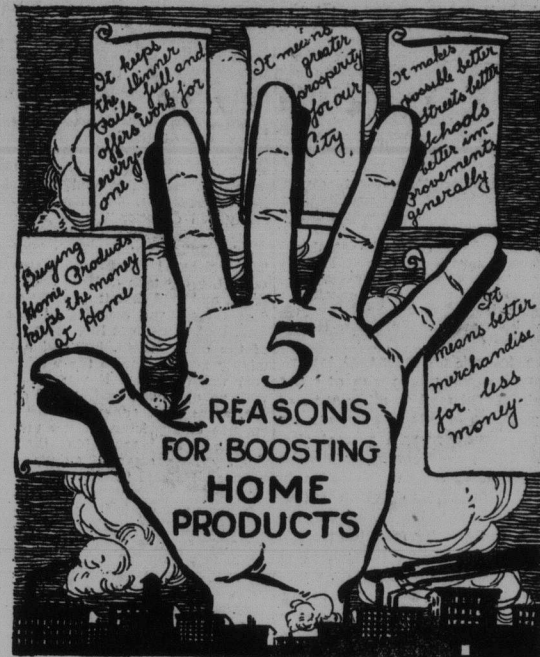
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