

Indeed it might be tightened by a concentration in the West, where the stakes can hardly be considered as permanently vital. That Germany should maintain any sort of perpetual hold upon Belgium and France is now admittedly unthinkable, but that she should maintain a permanent hold upon the East is by no means unthinkable. Indeed it is what she will unquestionably do unless, and until, it is wrenched from her by force. Therefore, says the Easterner, let us obey the military axiom and attack at the point that is not only most vulnerable, but also most vital. Let us concentrate upon Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey. Let us cut the railroads in the Balkans, isolate Turkey, and invade Bulgaria. Let us deprive Germany of her only hope of territorial gain.

The argument of the Easterner is still further and most potently reinforced by the fact that illimitable treasure has already been expended in the East and that it must be written off as an utter loss unless that campaign is now pursued with a vigour that shall to some extent compensate for miscarriage and blunder. For Gallipoli there can of course be no compensation, but there is still the army at Saloniki that for some insurmountable reason has remained a quiescent spectator of the overthrow of Roumania, and that has absolutely nothing to its credit except the taking of Monastir and a not very impressive participation in the wearisome and inconclusive bickerings with the King of Greece. There is no use in speculating as to the causes for such a paralysis as this, or for an assent to the rather wild idea that Russia and Great Britain are unwilling for dynastic reasons to violate the "divinity that doth hedge a king." But at least we know that there

must have been divided counsels, and that as a result the Saloniki army has been far too large to be wasted in futileities and far too small to be an effective military factor. We are now to see whether that division of counsel still continues or whether we are to see some determined effort to strike a blow at the only point where that blow can be decisively effective. For it may be said once more that Germany, commercially speaking, is now fighting for the control of the Balkans and for nothing else. It was for the control of the Balkans and of the transcontinental railroad that Austria first struck at Serbia, that she wanted to strike at Serbia a year before she actually did so. If the Allies were willing to permit a Teutonic control of Serbia and the status quo so far as Bulgaria and Turkey are concerned Germany would be delighted to make peace to-morrow, and she could then assert with some show of truth that she had emerged victoriously from the conflict. And it is for such reasons as these that we may continue to believe that the Balkan situation is actually the centre of the war, and that no matter what may happen in the West, short of a great German catastrophe, it is to the East that we must look for a final and permanent decision.

But no matter what tardy energies may now unfold themselves in the East, we need not doubt that the imminent fighting in the West will be of the most determined character. For even the Easterner does not suggest that the Western field be neglected, but only that the main emphasis be transferred to the Balkans. To whatever extent this may be done it will be none the less necessary, indeed it will be all the more necessary, that the Western push be

heavy enough to prevent the transfer of troops and to engage the greatest possible German strength to prevent a catastrophe. And it is nearly certain that the British and French will not confine themselves to so narrow a front as that of the Somme. To do so would be to waste a large part of the forces that have certainly been accumulating during the winter, since only a limited number of men can find a fighting place upon any given front. Cautious reports from the British army in France speak of intense activity in the construction of railroad lines parallel with the front, and perhaps we may find here an explanation of the hurried consignments of rails from Canada. The German reports are also of a similar tenor, and in all likelihood they indicate an intention to transfer the attack with great rapidity from point to point or to carry out an attack at many points simultaneously. The British are now holding ninety miles of the Western front as against 240 miles held by the French, and this includes a part of the line taken over by the British toward the end of last year. But the respective responsibilities of the two armies is not to be measured with a yardstick. As a matter of fact the British are confronting greater masses of Germans than are the French. Certain parts of the lines held by the French are unassailable on account of the nature of the ground, and therefore they are weakly held on both sides. Moreover, the soil in the north is more greatly affected by the winter weather than that elsewhere and must be more strongly defended. But this, after all, is a matter for decision by the French commander-in-chief, who can make whatever disposition he pleases of all the armies, French and British alike.

# INSPECTING CANADIAN SHELLS

OVER a dollar every three seconds for ten hours out of every twenty-four is the price the Imperial Munitions Board pay to examine the shells made in Canada. If the total cost of government inspection of Canadian shells from the time they are forged to the time they are hurled at the enemy was figured out it would be at least fifty dollars per minute.

Canada is manufacturing shells in a gigantic way. It is estimated that during this year Canada's munition output will average a million dollars a day for seven days each week. It is new business for her and has made her exports far exceed her imports. Making shells is no longer an experiment in Canada. Twenty months ago more money was lost than made in this line of business. Now, with the exception of a few factories, the dividends are large and the prospects are greater than the present realizations.

There is perhaps no business where greater care is required than in the manufacture of munitions. Care is required for a two-fold purpose. Shells are made for defence. They are made to destroy the enemy. There are shells, hundreds of them, that do not destroy the enemy, not because they happen to fall where no damage can be done, but because they are defective. These shells cost just as much as any others, but that is not the all-important point about them. Being defective they explode at the wrong moment. Battery after battery has been blown to pieces by these defective shells that burst at the cannons' mouth instead of scattering the enemy. This is why 4,000 men, members of the Imperial Munitions Board staff, to say nothing of the thousand "shop" inspectors, watch every operation from the forgings to the "finals" of every shell manufactured. There are the forging inspectors, that nearly melt while the steel is taking on its shape in a rough state. After this the shell goes through many processes. It goes through the "cut off," the "rough turn," the "finish turn," the "rough bore," the "finish bore," and twenty other operations, finishing up in the varnish room, where the shell goes through perhaps the most important and most difficult process in its manufacture. At all these numerous stages the shell requires critical examination.

The "final" examination is not the last examination. The inside of every shell is covered with a coat of varnish. This is to cover up any rough bits of steel—to keep the filling from touching the steel

***Fifty dollars a minute or four and a half millions a year, is the figure paid by the Imperial Munitions Board, just to be sure that the shells made by Canadian workers are up to standard requirements***

By SYDNEY HOOD

sides of the shell. The chemicals used to explode shells condenses like shoe blacking after being packed, so that by the time the shell reaches the cannon there is often a space between the steel and the filling. As the shell leaves the gun its revolutions number thousands per second. It can readily be seen that the jellied chemicals, when a little loose, will not revolve at the same rate as the steel covering. Consequently, if there happens to be the least bit of loose steel or dirt in the shell the chemical will strike against and explode before or at the time of leaving the cannon, sending our own men, battery and all, to destruction.

This is the reason why these thousands of men so closely watch the shell through every operation in its manufacture. Happily, these inspectors with eye and gauge detect eccentricities, bits of dirt and rough spots, and the shell is sent away to do its destructive work amongst the enemy.

But why not let the companies manufacturing these shells bear this cost of inspection? They are being paid—well paid—to turn out perfect work. Why should the government be at an additional expense far exceeding a thousand dollars an hour?

In the manufacture of shells, as in the production of any commodity, the monetary side stands out more prominently before the proprietor and superintendent than the requirement for perfect workmanship. The government inspector takes the opposite view. So far as he is personally concerned it does not matter whether the firm he is stationed with gains a single dollar or not in its enterprise. His salary goes on whether the firm make shipments or not.

The workman, too, is apt to err on the wrong side. In most cases he is paid under the piecework system. If it were not for the independent government

inspector many a flaw would slip by the workman and also pass the shop inspectors, who know that unless shells go out they will soon be looking for another job.

The government inspector holds a difficult position. He realizes that a slight slip on his part may mean the lives of many soldiers. He also knows that the soldier is in dire need of shells. He knows that when he turns down shell after shell that the firm he is with is apt to think he is too strict. He knows that if he lets imperfect shells pass that he will hear about it in a very rude way when they are examined in England, and he also knows that if they are found to be imperfect, even a few in a series (a series contains 250 shells), the entire shipment will be returned and a new inspector will be given his work.

When the government spends approximately four and a half millions of dollars a year in the upkeep of its army of inspectors it is not done merely to add cost to the munitions, but as an assurance against imperfect shells, to reduce the number of casualties amongst our own men, and to drive the enemy back more effectively.

## The Suitable Diversion

LOOKING for suitable plays, take Bayard Veiller's "The Thirteenth Chair," a melodrama of crooks and faked spiritism; or better yet, "Cheating Cheaters," a burglar farce, full of surprises and laughs, or even "The Harp of Life," by J. Hartley Manners, with his wife, Laurette Taylor, as the star, mother of a youth of nineteen, in the play, which is a drama well-meant if somewhat dreary, that yet may have a beneficent influence; its subjects are mother-love, youthful romance, eugenics.

There are musical comedies, too: "Her Soldier Boy," with a plot touching on the war; "Have a Heart," very beautifully staged and supplied with girls, and hence with no unnecessary plot; "Love of Mike," and some other in which Anna Held, who has not been seen for a long period, wears a considerable number of unbelievable gowns.

As for the dancers, we have Pavlowa, with her marvelous grace, amid Babst settings; Nijinsky, staged by the interesting Robert Jones (they think of producing an American ballet soon, possibly adapted from a tale of Edgar Allan Poe); Maud Allan, in various more or less interpretive interpretations, and Ruth St. Denis, who, with her husband, is contemplating dancing some of the Bible!