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Three Great Powers Fighting for Oil.

With the resumption of the Lausanne Conference, oil once more will become one of the great issues before the world. What company is to have the vast oil concessions in Turkey, or in other words, what foreign power is to be the economic master of Turkey for at least a generation? The question is of tremendous importance and may affect the peace of the world; indeed the peace of the world may well be shaken again before it is settled. The powers engaged in this rivalry are the United States, Britain and France. Britain at the moment occupies the strongest position. She is in possession of Mosul, which is supposed to be the centre of the vast oil fields, and moreover, she is in legal possession by virtue of a decision of the League of Nations which gave her the mandate for Mesopotamia, or Iraq as it is now known. A British force is in Iraq to protect the Arabs who inhabit it from a possible Turkish attack, and as long as that force remains, it is out of the question that either France or the United States should lay hands upon the half-hidden riches of the district.

The Chester Concessions.
 As regards the good-will of the Turks, the United States is in the most favorable position, or rather Rear Admiral Colby M. Chester is in the most favorable position through the tremendous concessions that have recently been granted him.

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His story is an interesting one, and begins properly in 1908, when as an American naval officer he visited Turkey and was struck with its need of harbors. His investigation showed him that there were great natural resources to be developed in Turkey and he set about securing concessions. He drew up a plan for a port and railway lines with concessions of all the mineral rights lying within a certain distance from the railroad. His application for this concession was not granted because Turkey was in confusion and chaos following the revolution, but an American corporation was organized to work the concession when it was eventually granted, which Chester believed to be merely a matter of time. In 1910 the Turkish Minister of Public Works officially approved the project which then awaited only Parliamentary ratification.

Canadians in It.

Then followed the war with Italy, which was followed by the two Balkan wars, all of which held up the Chester plans. The grant as approved by the Grand Vizier contained a clause which provided that in case of delay to "force majeure," the company might on due notice being given the Turkish Government delay its operations, and the Government was thus notified, Chester believing that thus he kept the concessions valid. Then came the Great War and for eight years the Chester plan was forgotten except by the Admiral, his two sons and a few capitalists who were associated with them. In 1922 there was a reorganization of the Chester company. New life was introduced by the election of Gen. George W. Goethals as president, and C. A. Barnard, a Canadian, as secretary-treasurer. The latter with Major K. E. Clayton-Kennedy, also a Canadian and whose father-in-law is J. W. Clayton of London, who is supposed to have been putting up the money, took up the promotion of the affairs of the company. These two Canadians with Arthur Chester, Admiral Chester's son, are now representing the company at Constantinople and Angora.

British Right Challenged.

The Angora Assembly has now approved the Chester concessions. The latter have been enlarged since being first planned and include the construction of a railroad covering 2,400 miles of Asia Minor, with mining and mineral rights for 30 kilometers on each side of the right of way, a total territory of some 98,000 square miles. Mosul and a considerable area of the Irak lies within the Chester concession, so the clash with British interests is obvious. Turkey made the grant as a formal challenge to the right of Great Britain to be in the province of Mosul and Bagdad. This question was discussed at the Lausanne conference, and it was proposed that if the boundaries had not been settled within a year the League of Nations would undertake to settle them. This was not agreed to, and the dispute will be re-opened by the conference that held its first session yesterday. One thing is certain and that is that as long as the British remain in possession, Admiral Chester's concessions in the Irak will be purely academic.

Act Like Soviets.

The French claims are based on an original concession for a railroad in Anatolia granted before the war broke out. It is asserted that on this understanding a loan of half a billion francs was made to the Turkish Government then in power. There are also claims put forward under the so called Bouillon treaty, whereby France surrendered Southern Cilicia to the Turks as well as a strip of Northern Syria along which the Bagdad railway runs as a boundary. The Turkish position is that the present Government, that controlled by Kemal Pasha, is not responsible for any of the acts of any preceding Government, and that it is approving the Chester concessions not because they had been approved by one of its predecessors, but because they offer Turkey the best bargain that has yet been proposed. In short it repudiates after the manner of Soviet Russia, and if its repudiations are not acquiesced in it threatens war. It will be the desire of the

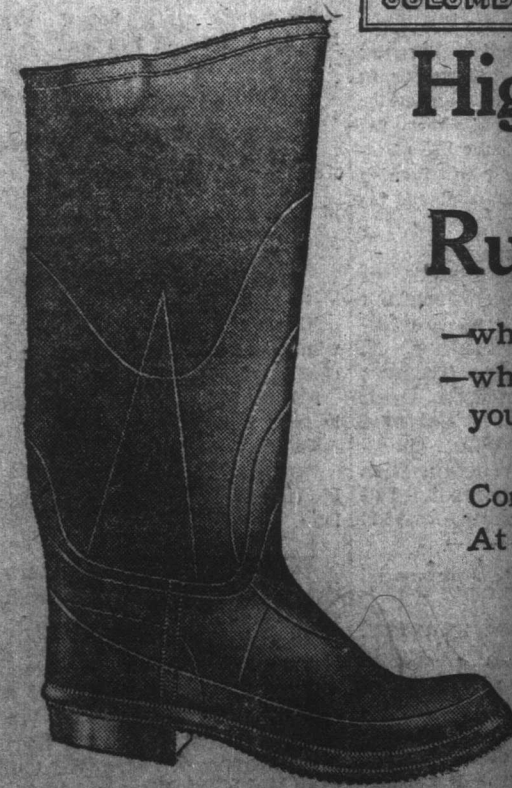
three foreign powers interested to prevent war, but on every other point as regards Turkey they are likely to find themselves seeking different ends—Toronto, Mail and Empire.

(Note: Major K. E. Clayton-Kennedy visited Newfoundland in 1920 and entered into negotiations with the Government for a cross-country aerial mail and passenger service. He also interviewed the various mercantile firms connected with the Seal Fishery and made plans for aerial observations at the icefields. Major Clayton-Kennedy received un-enthusiastic reception when he was the purchase of the airships from the British Government and both the Nfld. Government and the sealing owners refused to have anything to do with him. He was also President of the Air-Transport Association of Canada.)

craft Mfg. Co., Ltd., of Canada, and after selling stock for this Company for which the scrip was never issued, he and the Company completely disappeared. Before his departure from Newfoundland in April 1921, he was held for sometime by the Justice Department, but was subsequently released.—Ed.)

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