

Current Topics

New Light on Constantine

Some time ago there appeared in the press of this country a manifesto sent by Constantine to the United States in justification of his policy. In a new book, *Turkey and Greece and the Great Powers*, Mr. G. F. Abbott has much to say which gives color to the King's pleading on his own behalf. His comments on the policy of the Allies which found Constantine a hero among his people and left him a martyr is frank to rashness in days when to tell the truth is proclaimed a sign of madness. He points out that both Constantine and Venizelos were actuated by a patriotic desire to serve their country. Constantine was ready to participate with the Allies provided that they planned their Eastern operations with a reasonable chance of success. He opposed the naval assault on the Dardanelles which he and all sane people knew to be impregnable, and offered his whole army to assist in an overland march to Constantinople. If this had been done every man in Greece would have been heart and soul with the Allies.

The Russian Debacle

Mr. Stead protests vehemently against the injustice of calling the Russian soldiers cowards because they are giving way before the Germans now. He says it is the blackest ingratitude to abuse the men who met von Mackensen's wonderful armies with sticks and stones and fought on when they had neither food or arms or ammunition. They are not cowards in any sense. They have made a declaration that they want peace without indemnities or annexations, and they truly believe that there is nothing to warrant them in fighting an enemy from whom they wish to take nothing. The revival of late was hailed with a joy that was proof enough of the shortsightedness of the critics. No army could fight without a properly organised government behind it, and to hope for a mighty offensive from the soldiers of a disorganised nation was absolutely ridiculous. The fate of the future depends largely on the Russians still. A knock-out blow to them would leave the Central Powers free to mass larger forces on the west; on the other hand an attempt at such a blow might have the result of consolidating the Russians and making them more formidable than ever.

Rumania

It is said that the Rumanian Army has been reorganised and likely to give a good account of itself in the future. However, it must be borne in mind that the disorganisation of Russia also affects Rumania very nearly. Supplies must come over the Russian railways, ammunition must be made in Russian factories, and the guns must come across Siberia. A crippled Russia then means a crippled Rumania. It is estimated by some that the Rumanian Army numbers half a million, but others say that the number is more likely to be about 250,000. The enemy took over 100,000 prisoners last year, and few civilians were able to get away from Wallachia owing to its geographical position. To count on very great help from this quarter until the Russians have shown signs of organisation would at present be very rash.

The Military Age in America

The American Emergency Army Bill provides that the draft shall be based on liability to service of every male, who is not an alien enemy, and who is a citizen, or has declared his intention to become a citizen, between the ages of 21 and 30 years. Each State has to contribute its quota. On July 1 there were in the United States 10,078,900 men between 21 and 30. As the number asked for in the first draft is 680,000, it means that only one out of every fifteen is to be called on at present. At present there are about 20,000 men fighting in France. America, having learned by the

mistakes of England and France, will select the men with due regard to the carrying on of the work of the country. Realising that the men behind are just as important as the men at the front the principle of selective draft has been established by the United States. Exemptions will be made through two Boards of Review, one of which is the local board in charge of the registration in each country. As a further protection to individuals there are other boards which "shall review, or approve and affirm, modify, or reverse, any decision of any local board within their district." The District Boards are composed of citizens only. No member can be connected with any military establishment.

War and British Finance

Since the war began Great Britain has raised £1,124,529,986 by revenue, and has borrowed £3,332,307,389, a total of £4,446,837,375. This was the figure up to the 28th April of this year. On May 2 Mr. Bonar Law gave the following statistics of loans advanced by Great Britain to the Allies:—

August 1, 1914, to March 31, 1916.

Loans to the Dominions	£ 88,000,000
Loans to the Allies	288,000,000

Total	£376,000,000
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1916-17.

Loans to the Dominions	£ 54,000,000
Loans to the Allies	540,000,000

Total	£594,000,000
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Total to March 31, 1917.

Loans to the Dominions	£142,000,000
Loans to the Allies	828,000,000

Total	£970,000,000
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It is estimated that for the current year the loans to the Allies and the Dominions will amount to £400,000,000. But it may be taken for granted that that figure will be exceeded, as the Allies' demands have always exceeded British expectations. At present Great Britain is calling on America to help her financially, not merely by buying stock, but by lending her money.

The War Loan

In our advertisement columns full details will be found concerning the issue of the War Loan of £12,000,000 at 4½ per cent., in the form of inscribed stock or bearer bonds, at the option of the subscriber. It will be issued at par, for a term of 21 years. The subscription list will close on Monday, September 3, 1917. It is a large sum of money to raise in such a short time, but the Minister of Finance relies with confidence on the patriotism of the people of New Zealand. To do one's part in helping in this matter is worth all the wordy patriotic effervescence in the country, and there can be little doubt that the people know their duty and will do it cheerfully. The Dominion has done its part—and more—in sending fighting men to the front. Whether we hold that enough have been sent or not, we cannot but be unanimous in believing that New Zealand can still help largely in other ways. Most of the fighting forces went forward freely, prepared to lay down their lives if necessary, and many of them have done so already, to the eternal glory of New Zealand. Subscribers to the War Loan have it in their power to help the men at the front now. For one reason or another people at home must stay at home, although thousands of them are as keen on getting away as any of those who were able to go. Such people will gladly welcome the opportunity of helping now afforded by the issue of this large War Loan. We have no doubt at all that the Minister's confidence in the patriotism of the population of the Dominion will be magnificently justified even in the short space of time allowed for subscriptions. Some time ago the *Lyttelton Times* described our war activities as "A generous sacrifice of men" accompanied by "an orgy of profiteering." There is much justification for that

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