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**German Empire is Near to Economic Failure at Present**

Increasing Signs of Collapse Seen in Agriculture and in Industry—Materials Giving Out—Strategists Had Only Planned for Short War

London, July 23.—There no longer can be uncertainty among people who have had opportunity to follow the year's development of German thought and internal conditions that the war is beginning to tell seriously on that country.

It is not that Germany is threatened with such an economic collapse as to render it incapable of continuing to carry on the struggle. But it is, and is decidedly so, that Germany nears the point where she is likely to be hopelessly overcome of her enemies' economic capacities.

Germany had "the jump" on her enemies at the beginning of the war in regard to military preparation. But the enemies this good year 1917 are getting "the jump" on Germany at a tremendous rate in the matter of economic capability.

Not long ago in a talk about conditions in Germany, contrasting them with conditions in the Allied countries, the British Minister of Munitions referred to the fact that his department has information concerning many difficulties Germany confronts in getting essential supplies. He did not go into details. It is known, however, that the resourcefulness and ingenuity of German science are now having the severest test that has ever been imposed on them.

**COUNTED ON SHORT STRUGGLE.**

When the war started Germany had in sight and well in hand the materials with which to equip and bring into action for a short, decisive struggle, the full military potentiality of the empire. Nobody in Germany doubted that such an overwhelming force, almost instantly projected into the conflict would bring decision. Everything in German preparation was based on the idea of the tiger's leap; of doing the thing with supreme, overmastering power all in an instant of crushing down opposition and then making Germany's enemies pay the bills and a good deal more. It

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took Germany forty years to get ready for this contest, and the people who even today most wonder at Germany's failure are those who know most about Germany's preparations and her enemies lack of preparations.

The true story of how Europe managed to save itself, largely through German blunders, has not yet been written. Much of it is utterly beyond understanding; when it is written there undoubtedly will be some amazing chapters in it. Military men believe that the first vital blunder was made in the opening weeks of the war when German armies concentrated against Paris fell into the trap which was laid by Gen. Gallieni, were checked at the Marne, and then delayed too long another effort to seize Calais.

**BLUNDERS AT VERY OUTSET.**

There is some reason to believe that a considerable element of the German strategical authority believed, after August 5, 1914, that it was more important to seize Calais than to take Paris, but the German rulers were determined to take Paris first, to have a grand triumphal entry prepared for the army of the Crown Prince, and then at leisure clean up the coast, take Calais, and hold Great Britain at arm's length until Russia could be conquerer, and then Britain subdued at leisure. All this, as yet, is mere speculation.

The point is that blunders at the very beginning of the war robbed Germany of her expected quick victory and have compelled her to carry the burden of a long and distressing struggle. With the material resources of the whole world arrayed against her because of her enemies' capacity to draw from all sources, Germany has made a wonderful stand. But the time is now come when the disparity tells, and tells severely, against her.

The German class of recruits for 1919, for instance, already has been called up. The French class of 1919 is still to be called. Probably France is really in a worse way for man power than Germany; but France has Allies able to save her from the utmost immediate sacrifice. Germany has not.

**ENORMOUS GOLD EXPORTS.**

Germany is putting her last ounce of strength into the struggle. Almost simultaneously with the announcement that the class of 1919 had been called up there came the admission that in one week \$20,000,000 of gold had been exported from Germany to neutral countries, being very much the largest amount sent out in any single week. Both these details are of the most profound significance.

Again, the travellers recently in Germany agree in saying that immense numbers of kneels have been laid in German shipyards for vessels on which work is suspended and is likely to continue to be suspended indefinitely. There is neither labor nor money nor material to carry it on. The supply of mills is fast becoming exhausted, and the proud armies of Hindenburg have dug themselves into the ground, not because they are afraid, not because they are so hopelessly overmatched in numbers that they dare not attempt to fight, but because they must not use munitions in quantities to match its consumption by their enemies.

**TRANSPORTATION GRAVE PROBLEM.**

The world has been rallied under the

leadership of British and American influences and with the guarantee of British and American wealth to sustain the cause of the Allies. The problem of transportation continues to be the gravest on the side of the Allies, just as that of physical supplies is much the gravest on the side of the Central Powers. The Germans apparently have procured sufficient supplies of petroleum from Roumania and possibly from Russia itself to make them safe, with economy, in this regard for several months. But they cannot produce iron and steel fast enough, nor can they fabricate them into weapons of fighting and transport them as rapidly as they are needed.

The Allies found it possible to go out in the distant parts of the world and pull up thousands of miles of railroad tracks, to bring rails and locomotives and cars to the fighting areas. Germany had no such resources on which to draw. The Allies control the copper, lead and nickel of the world, and these are absolute essentials in carrying on the mechanical business of war. While Germany is pulling down the chimneys from its church towers Britain is carrying on a whimsical debate as to whether church bells ought to be allowed to ring in view of the fact that they disturb the rest of convalescent soldiers.

**AMERICA'S WEIGHT HEARTENS**

It can hardly be doubted that today Britain is the best fed belligerent country in Europe, and quite probably its supplies for the coming year are more safely assured than those of any other belligerent. Of course, the one accomplishment of the Allies this year which more than anything else has cast weight into the scale against Germany is the appearance of America in the war. Despite every effort of the German Government through the controlled press to minimize the significance of America's accession, the German people are somewhat realizing what has happened to them. The thing has put confidence and spirit into the British, the French and the Italian people. If Russia "comes back" and ends the war with fine burst of power and efficiency it will be very largely due to the influence of American example.

To a considerable extent Germany is naturally a less productive country agriculturally than Great Britain; for less fertile than France. In the past weeks of the old crop the German people have been screwed down to the very minimum of life's sustaining rations. Even the soldiers have had their allowances reduced, according to reports from their prisoners, while in great numbers of industrial centres workers have engaged in "stop in" strikes; refusing to work although remaining in the shops and insisting that they be provided with adequate food before resuming operations.

**RURAL DISTRICTS SUFFER**

This has had a curious result. The authorities, desperately determined to keep the wheels of industry moving, have gone out and remorselessly requisitioned supplies from the agricultural community, where more or less hoarding has been going on, taking them in to the towns and thus leaving the agrarian population for the first time seriously to realize what it is to feel hunger. Having set up and operated the machinery by which this can be accomplished, Germany will be compelled from this time forward to use that machinery more and more insistently.

The situation in rural Germany has for a year past been just about as bad as it possibly could be without putting an end to production. Labor has been scarce, skilled labor still more so; horses are not to be had for ploughing, fertilizers are almost unknown, machinery is wearing out and cannot be replaced.

All these conditions are complicated by the fact that the 1916-17 cropping season has been one of remarkable and widespread disaster. The winter was unprecedentedly long and severe, the summer has been marked by droughts which when broken have been broken by terrific hailstorms and deluges of rain that have done more harm than could have been accomplished by a continuance of the drought.

The people have been worn down to the point of physical incapacity for the most effective work. Of this there can be no doubt whatever. The testimonies come from all sources; from letters found in the German trenches; from correspondence that gets past the borders and gives the outside world occasional glimpses of the real situation in Germany; from all the neutral countries adjacent to Germany, and finally, from the outbreaks of rioting and violence in all parts of the country involving all elements of the population.

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