

THE EUROPEAN WAR MAY END IN AUGUST

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M. P. Ably Reviews Conditions on the Other Side of the Atlantic—Four Thousand Recruits a Month Joining the colors in Ireland—Blockade is Telling on Germany.

(By T. P. O'Connor.)

London, Feb. 20.—We have had a week of intense and changing emotions. Lloyd George's speech in the House of Commons showing the close alliance of England, France and Russia in the matter of financial resources, with Winston Churchill's triumphant vindication of the immense influence of our fleet on the fortunes of war, have made everybody feel that things are going splendidly and that the defeat of Germany is quite assured.

This feeling has been augmented by the splendid success of the great raid over Belgium by the aviators of the British and French, to which the Admiralty attaches even more importance than the general public. One of the chief Admiralty officials said to me that these raids have established a "considerable funk" among the Germans, mainly because they have showed, as in the case of artillery and on the sea, that British forces have showed unquestionable superiority to the Germans.

In addition these air raids make it impossible for Germany to carry through the formidable preparations for making the Belgian coast towns the starting point for both aerial and submarine raids.

THE PAPER BLOCKADE.

Finally the madness of Germany in threatening the lives of nationals of the United States and their commerce has confirmed the impression from the start of the war that German diplomacy has justified the worst judgments as to its incapacity. The English papers, containing long cables reports daily of fierce outbursts of indignation in America, confirm the impression that all of Germany's attempts to embroil England and

America have hopelessly failed.

These different considerations made England look forward to February 18 not merely with indifference but with contempt. The great steamer companies, including those owning vessels plying between England and France, ostentatiously announced their sailings as usual. No one contemplating a voyage to France or America stopped for a moment to consider the danger from the well advertised German attempt at piracy. Merchant vessels are determined not to submit without a struggle to German submarines. Armed and captained with determined men, they do not dread seriously, marine attacks.

GERMANY'S SUBMARINES.

Germany, to make possible a serious attack on British commerce by submarines, would require thousands of the "unterseeboote," whereas, at the highest estimates, she has but thirty-six.

These optimistic views as to the future of the war are greatly stimulated by the messages from the front, including those of Field Marshal Sir John French and private communications from General Joffre to English friends. These speak confidently of the successful advance of the new English army and by the French reserves some time in March and believe that such attacks in force will compel the Germans to begin a retirement.

There are two schools of prophecy regarding the duration of the war. The first remains pessimistic, not of the final result, but as to the probable duration. That class of thinkers insists that the new warfare of trenches will make it as impossible for the Allies to rout the Germans as the Germans find it impossible to rout the Allies. This class is still in the minority. Most people confidently expect the war to end next August.

The views of the first class are strengthened by the retreat of the Russians in East Prussia. The second receives confirmation of its belief in the German outbursts. It is a real surprise to the Britons to find Germany already so hard hit by the blockade. There has been a general

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conviction in England that Germany has not yet begun to feel serious pressure in her commerce and food supply from the efforts of the British fleets. Germany's frantic pronouncements and Count Behncke's candid admission of Germany's lack of food, as well as the seizure of all food by the German government bring with agreeable surprise a realization that England's pressure has already begun to tell seriously. This, as well as Germany's threats of savage warfare, have led to a determination to make the pressure even more stringent. The enormous temptation to all neutrals to further interference in the trade of neutrals with Germany.

I do not think that cotton is likely to be placed on the contraband list because, above all else, the utmost desire is felt from political, selfish and also sentimental grounds, from common language, institutions and ideals, to avoid all possible friction with America. Although the cotton is supplying material badly wanted by the German mills, Germany's inability to export a single ounce of cloth compensates for that small gain.

Food now enters a different category. It is hoped that American wheat, although declared contraband will find such a ready market in England as to compensate the United States for the loss of the German trade.

BRITAINS ARE CALM.

British opinion in these trying days has remained absolutely calm and sympathetic with the American viewpoint, except on the part of some irresponsible idiots. England has been too often a neutral country and is too commercial not to understand the enormous temptation to all business men to reap the gigantic profits to neutrals of wartime. The recollection of the blockade running of the American Civil War disposes to a spirit of sympathetic indulgence for the efforts of the United States to safeguard the rights of neutrals to trade with belligerents. If it has not been for Germany's threat of piracy and the seizure of all food by the German government, England's policy of allowing the import of food

(Continued on page six.)

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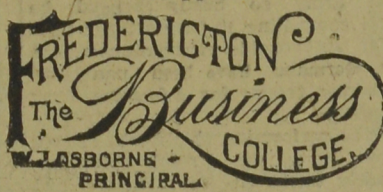
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