THE GREAT CONFERENCE

By J. L. Garvin

The delegates of the Five Powers are in London; conversation has already begun. Franco-Italian relations are the hardest crux. To the fortunes of the whole Conference itself, though not necessary to events afterwards, France beyond doubt holds the key; and it is well indeed that she is represented by the most brilliant of her younger statesmen — Monsieur Tardieu, whose personal knowledge of the English-speaking world is remarkable.

The three main issues technically are those of battleships, large cruisers and submarines.

Floating Fortresses Must Go

It is absolutely certain that unless there is drastic dealing with the floating fortresses there will be no financial economy worth speaking about, and no real change of heart as regards naval armaments. They have involved Britain and America especially in vast waste of money and they will be the mock of satire in another generation. They are the world's worst symbols of war-mentality. They are not suitable engines for any future war. They are another unimaginative example (history has furnished many) of exaggerated preparation for—the past war. The monstrous battleship is a monstrous fallacy. Hostile aircraft, if there is another grapple to the death between nations, will attack first the supplies and the life of an importing people, not the fleets. Aircraft will bomb, burn, and stifle the ports and shipping and the dense key-towns in spite of the "Nelson," "Rodney," "Hood," and so forth. Rather than depend on those—if we are indeed to think in realistic war-terms—it would be better to halve the fleet and treble the air-force.

Germany's Famous Pocket Battleship

Germany is setting an example which may be epoch-making. Traditionally, size is the prey of brains. More brains and science have gone into the famous German "pocket battleship" than were ever packed before into one hull. Contrived with original force of research, thought, and skill, the "Ersatz Preussen," though only of 10,000 tons displacement, will be a match for any warship up to twice her size now afloat. She will be incomparable as a blockade-breaker and commerce-destroyer. As a hunting and fighting ship she reduces to insignificance the cruisers of equal displacement, 10,000 tons, which have caused the prodigious fuss between America and Britain. The German "pocket-battleship" is wonderfully designed to sink nearly all the warships that could catch her, and to escape the few that could sink her.

No Battleship Over 17,000 Tons

It is understood that at the Conference some proposals will be made—with every prospect of easy but inadequate agreement—for lengthening the life of existing battleships and reducing more or less the maximum size of their successors. Rumors, for what it is worth, puts that maximum too high. The present "Washington" standard should be cut down by fifty per cent. Allowing anything bigger merely gives more scope to commonplace as well as to cost. Nothing but limitation of sizes will compel the sailors of other nations to equal German efficiency as stimulated by the Versailles restrictions; and to break away from "preparation for the Past War." We shall be disappointed if any battleship laid down after this year of grace is allowed to exceed 17,000 tons at the most.

Cruisers and Common Sense

Cruisers are a simplier matter in spite of all the preposterous bother that has been made about them since the British-American muddle at Geneva. For the necessary adjustment to any agreed parity with the United States, British requirements in this branch have been cut down to a minimum.

It is settled that we shall not go to war with the United States in any circumstances. It does not matter a brass farthing to this country whether America in the name of parity gets three or four 10,000-ton eight-inch gun cruisers over and above what our Admirals think justified by a pedantic idea of parity. Let them remember that what their professional counterparts across the Atlantic have wanted in their hearts, is two to one. The statesmen on both sides, not the sailors, have saved us from that.

The Position of Japan

But it is said that Japan will jeopardize the contingent Hoover-MacDonald understanding by insisting on a slightly higher ratio for 10,000 ton cruisers, giving her an additional two or three of these vessels. We do not believe for a single instant that the Conference wil be imperilled on this of all issues. Our reasons are both political and technical. The Japanese are a wise people. They know that we here admire and like them; that the whole English-speaking world desires amity and co-operation with them on the fairest terms of live and let live; and that further goodwill, though an imponderable element of security, is a real equivalent to a certain amount of tonnage. Again, they are well aware that the "Ersatz Preussen" will make obsolete the designs of all the eight-inch cruisers which were so lately the newest boast.

Burnt Into the Flesh

France for the present is wedded to the theory of armed security by land, air, and sea alike as the only sure dependence so long as the Covenant and the Kelogg Pact give her no concrete guarantee of support. You may profoundly disagree with the thesis, but to be impatient with it is foolish. It may be an almost insuperable impediment to the general progress of disarmament; it may be, as we think, both a psychological mistake and a technical fallacy as regards ultimate security itself. But it is an absolute French conviction not only fixed in the mind, but burnt into the flesh by the terrible memory of two trampling, ravaging, wrecking invasions. The new French national system of armaments and fortification provides relatively to the rest of Europe, Britain included, a dominant diplomacy linked up with Poland and the ittle Entente; a dominant army; a dominant air-force; and a specialized navy which when plans are completed is to include marked strength in cruisers and destroyers as well as the most formidable submarine-force existing.

No Abolition of Submarines

How can the Five-Power Conference mitigate the situation on the naval side? It is uselessly suggested that France, in her present state of mind, shall abolish submarines altogether. She will do nothing of the kind. No French Government could do it. The Republic commands the most coherent and unified of colonial empires. Our neighbors regard as indispensable to their complete project of security an assured connection with the man-power and material resources of their great consolidated North African dominion. The Marseilles-Algiers passage forwards and backgrounds is held to be a chief line of life, requiring to be protected by a definite submarine and cruiser supremacy in the Mediterranean.

Stop Preparing for Past War

Then, is nothing to be done? Are we to throw up our hands? Not at all. Though submarines cannot be abolished altogether a most valuable intermediate gain is possible. As we said, let the statesmen of America, Britain, and Japan stop "preparing for the past war" at enormous waste of money and gross misuse of material. Let them agree accordingly to abolish the gigantic battleship, even if the present monsters must be permitted to die out within a specified period instead of being summarily scrapped. Let them reduce by at least one half the maximum now allowed for replacement ships. Nothing smaller than proposals like this would be worthy of the decisive spirit of Charles Hughes at Washington in 1921. Let this be done, and France, though still unable to abandon her underwater boat, could not refuse to diminish the gravity of the submarine question by consenting to some definite limitation of sizes and numbers. She is now completing at Cherbourg the sinister 'Surcouf," a giant submarine of over 3,000 tons. That way the old madness lies—threat and counter-action, poison and antidote. Limitation offers the likeliest means of accommodation with Italy.

But are we equally bound to say that the German pocket battle-cruiser, however natural and masterly as a triumph over Versailles restrictions, is crammed with challenge to competition. More of these vessels are to be built (though only four are as yet mentioned) by the great maritime nation which won again the blue ribbon of the Atlantic for passenger steamers. Anyone who reads: "Nauticus" and the "Marime Rundschau," the ablest naval annual and monthly in the world, sees at once that German sea-spirit is intense though repressed. The Five-Power Conference would be foolish if it turned the blind eye to that fact. At least let them get a plain answer to a plain question. How many of the 10,000-ton eight-inch gun cruisers would be required to be a match for one "Ersatz Preussen?"

Greatest Sacrifice Made by Britain

No sacrifice can be asked from any nation approaching that made by Britain, which held the sovereignty of the seas for long generations and now on the Hoover-MacDonald basis accepts equality with all its implications—the greatest change of its kind during a few short years that history has known.—Montreal Standard.

R-100 Will Not Be Taken to Tropics

Gasoline Engines Would Be Dangerous in Extreme Heat

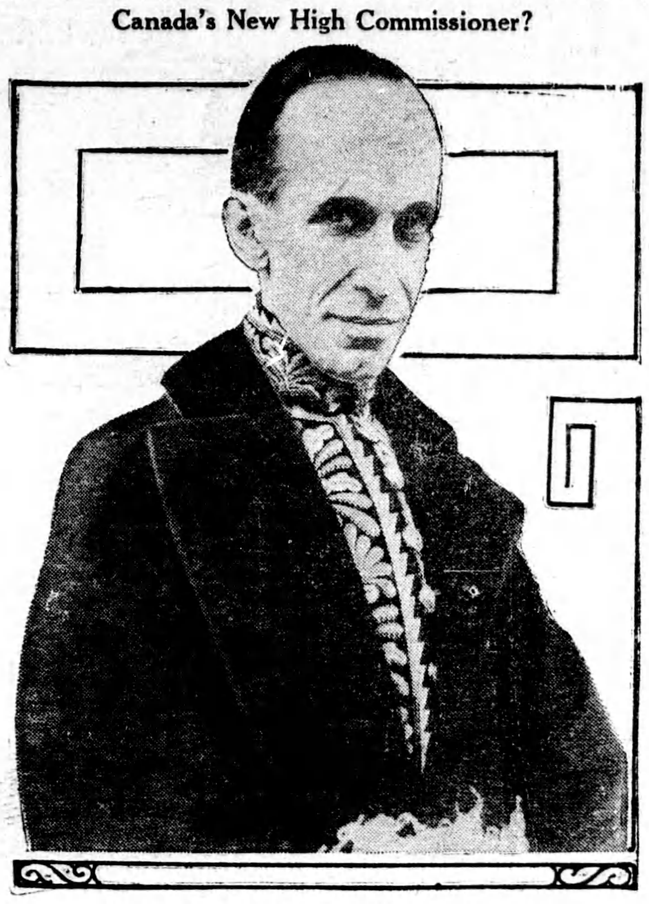
London.—The new British airship R-100 is not considered suitable for use in tropical climates and consequently her operations will be confined, for some time at least, to northern latitudes, said Hon. F. Montague, Under-Secretary for Air, in reply to questions in Parliament.

Mr. Montague explained the R-100 was fitted with gasoline engines, which would be highly dangerous in the extreme heat of the tropics. It was not proposed as yet to re-engine the vessel with compression ignition engines using crude oil, as used in the sister ship, R-101, since these engines were still in the experimental stage.

The R-100 is to make her trial flight from Britain to Canada in the spring.

"The most successful religion is a superstition which has enslaved a philosophy."—Dean Inge.

Canada's New High Commissioner?



MAY SUCCEED LATE HON. PETER LARKIN

Hon. Vincent Massey, Canadian minister to Washington, who is likely to be the next Canadian high commissioner in London, in succession to the late Hon. Peter C. Larkin, it is believed at Ottawa. George Washington Stephens, former head of the Saar governing commission in 1923-26, may be accredited to the White House to replace Mr. Massey.

Sealers' Drama Will Be Filmed On Ice Floes

Varick Frissell, Amateur Director, Heads Company Now in Newfoundland

A sound-screen romance with its theme centering about the adventures of Labrador seal fisheries and the perilous lives of the old-time fishermen out of Newfoundland ports is the project undertaken recently by Varick Frissell, amateur cinema director, whose expedition, aboard Captain Bob Bartlett's schooner Morrisey, will sail from St. Johns, Newfoundland, early in February for the sealing grounds.

In collaboration with technical experts familiar with the requirements of sound film production, Mr. Frissell will utilize as the stage for his drama the ice floes and north Atlantic wastes which constitute the seal hunting grounds of the fleet of sail and steam vessels which annually puts out from St. Johns in quest of the pelts of these denizens of the near-Arctic regions.

During one of his trips to the northland Mr. Frissell became acquainted with Captain Bob Bartlett, veteral seal hunter, fisherman, sailor and deep water adventurer, whose tales of his trips abroad the Morrisey have been material contributions to the saga of sailing men. Captain Bartlett will not only supervise the selection of locations on which scenes will be "shot," but will play the part of a sealing captain in the film, a character role not far removed from that which he plays in actual life.

Those in charge of the production have selected Charles Starrett and Miss Louise Huntington for the protagonists of the play. Although Mr. Starrett has figured in leading roles in screen stories before, Miss Huntington has never before appeared in this capacity.

Religious Battle Upsets England

Situation Serious in Rank of Anglican Church Circles

London—"The biggest crisis since the Reformation." This is the description being applied to the relations between the Church and State, which are again agitating the entire country, following recent action by the Church Assembly in adopting the Archbishop of York's recommendation that a commission be appointed to probe Britain's religious ills.

A statement issued recently by the Archbishop of Canterbury describing the situation as precarious is regarded as moderate in the circumstances, because it is realized that if the extra-legal actions of the Bishops should be brought into open conflict with public law, the question of disestablishment will be raised in an acute form.

The Archbishop of Canterbury says that nobody wants disestablishment, but the Archbishop of York says that "perpetual anomalies are arising in the divergence between the marriage law of the Church and that of the state.

Not Too Great

"The price of disestablishment," continues the latter, "would not be too great to pay for spiritual independence."

And the Bishop of Durham: "The only solution of spiritual independence is disestablishment."

The Bishop of Winchester: "We are face to face with the gravest challenge between the spiritual and secular since the Reformation."

Other Church leaders are stressing the fact that lawlessness is beginning to spread in the Church of England, but they admit that those in favor of diseastablishment are in the minority. Now, however, the number will greatly increase if an open conflict through the law courts begins, as it is expected to shortly.

We weaken when we exaggerate.

British Youths For Dominion

London. — Under an agreement between the British and Alberta Governments, 100 youth from 17 to 20 years of age are being selected by Herbert Greenfield, agent-general for Alberta, for agricultural training and settlement in Alberta by early sumer. The first group will sail on March 18.

Canada-Colombia Trade Expanding

Jorge Gonzales, Consul-General, Predicts Future Steady Growth

The rise in trade between Canada and Colombia in the past seven years has been remarkable, said Jorge Gonzales, consul-general of the Republic of Colombia to Canada recently. Since he began his duties in 1923 the exports from the republic to the Dominion had increased 20 times and the exports from the Dominion to the Republic had increased 12 times, he added in illustration.

Senor Gonzales said that the possibilities of a still greater volume of trade between the two countries would be much enhanced by a direct line of ships between them. Canada was little known in South America and almost unknown in Colombia. This was largely due to the fact that there was no direct communication by sea. At present goods from Canada reached Colombia only through the United States, and when the goods reached the south they were known, not as Canadian produce, but as American. Only when the produce reached Colombia as Canadian would the trade reach its full possibilities.

Demand is Great

For there was great demand for the things that Canada produced.. Though Colombia is rich and can produce flora and fauna of every known description because of the vast variety of her climate, yet she needed and imported great quantities of manufactured articles, of machinery itself, and particularly of flour.

"But," said Senor Gonzales, "if Canada is unknown in Colombia, the reverse is also true. It is not understood that the inhabitants of our republic are 60 per cent. white and that they carry in their blood all the courage and energy of their Spanish forefathers, the Conquistadores. We have many of their fine qualities and we have cast off many of their bad ones. We are not a congiomeration of peoples. We have an organized state. We have a life and mind of our own."

The geographical situation of Colombia was such that it had no seasons and all climates, said Senor Gonzales. From the torrid, humid atmosphere of the coastal regions, where tropical products grew, to the high, dry cold atmosphere of the Cordilleras, where the products peculiar to temperate countries grew, the Colombians could draw all sorts and kinds of produce. While coffee was the largest export of the country at present, there was a great field for other exports, particularly of fruit.

Government Stable

The government of the country, too, he added, was stable. This was witnessed by the fact that the Colombian peso was practically at par on the Canadian exchange and fluctuated very little, if at all. There was everything, therefore, which was likely to give great promise of expansion of trade between the two countries.

Colombia was, moreover, predisposed to trade with the British peoples, for they still remembered the day when Britain had sent out arms and money and men to aid them in throwing off the Spanish yoke.

"Half the evils of the world would stop if they had to be done in the light of day."—Lord Salisbury..

Next Fifty Years Belong to Canada

Sir Esme Howard is Full of Admiration for Dominion

NATIONAL SPIRIT

British Ambassador Hopes to Return for Longer Visit

Washington.—"I think the next fifty years belong to Canada," said Sir Esme Howard.

The British Ambassador, soon to retire, returned from his farewell visit to the Dominion obviously refreshed and invigorated and full of admiration.

"It was delightful to visit Canada again and renew old acquaintanceship," he said.

Discussing the economic future of Canada, Sir Esme remarked that, unlike less fortunate countries, the Dominion's eggs were not all in one basket. He foresaw the industrialization of the country with the development of hydro electric power sources "in which it is wealthier than any other land," together with the advance in industry and the use to which vast and varied resources might be put, and proportionate and necessary increase in agricultural production.

Expressing a particular interest in the opening of Hudson Bay, Sir Esme said he wished he had been able to visit that part of the country as well as the Cobalt district.

CANADA'S NATIONHOOD

With obvious pride the Ambassador then spoke of the Dominion's nationhood and said he had noted with a thrill of interest the national spirit of the Canadians which, inherently British, ever grew and strengthened. He observed also the breadth of the Canadian outlook reflected in the press where prominence was given to world and imperial affairs.

This was Sir Esme's first visit to Canada in the winter time. "The air is so clear," he said. "The bracing air in Ottawa I should think is not unlike that in the Swiss Alps."

The Ambassador hoped that some time he would be able to return to Canada for a longer visit. When it was suggested he should take six months or so for a leisurely trip from Halifax to Vancouver, he said "that would be a very great pleasure indeed."

"I am growing old, growing old," he said. His eyes were merry. He rose briskly.

Saskatchewan to Have No New Court Buildings

Anderson Government Requires all Funds for Educational and Highway Developments

Regina, Sask.—There will be no new court house for Saskatchewan this year.

That's the decree of the Anderson Government which has been urged to build several new law court structures.

The answer is that the Government must look after educational and highways expenditures first.

Sir Frederick Haultain, Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal, other eminent jurists and barristers, and Regina civic leaders, pressed the Government to build a million-dollar law courts building in the Capital City, but they were turned down.

Saskatoon asked for a new court house and there was rumors of a plan to move the Court of Appeal to the Northern city.

The Government has called a halt to Saskatoon's ambitions. While the Government turned down requests for a new court house, intentions are to spend some millions on buildings of other kinds this year.

A million-dollar school for the deaf at Saskatoon, a new Arts building at the University of Saskatchewan, an institution for mentally deficient children, additional accommodation at the Provincial Home for Aged People and more accommodation in provincial sanatoria are among the things planned by the Anderson administration.

On top of that Dr. Anderson is keen about putting in new schools in remote parts of the province, including northern areas where half-breed and white children are not now served. The highways program is a particularly ambitious one.

It is planned to spend $19,000,000 within the next three years on improved roads.

Devotees of Sport

Chicoutimi Progress: People of all ages and both sexes waste precious hours discussing the chance of this or that club, and of this or that boxer or wrestler to vanquish his opponent. I should like to see a part of these thousands of hours, which are lost each year, employed in the study of matters which may improve our young people; I should like to see some of them used in work of a social, literary, artistic, economic or other useful character. In all sincerity we waste much time talking about sports.

Mrs. Blabface — "That new hat makes your face look short." Mrs. Styles—"That's strange. It made my husband's face look long."

Looking After Canada's Interests

PHOTOGRAPH HERE SHOWS CANADIAN DELEGATES FOR NAVAL CONFERENCE IN LONDON

Left to right—Commodore Walter Hose, chief of naval staff; Col. J. L. Ralston, minister of defence; and Col. G. P. Vanier, D.S.O., M.C.