

**POST-WAR FUNCTIONS OF COMMERCIAL EDUCATION.**

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The title which I have chosen for the heading of this paper is at the best a vague and imperfect one. There are so many points to be considered, and the field of discussion is so wide as to our preparation for the Trade War which must inevitably ensue at the conclusion of the military one, that it is hard to find a central line of thought to which one can adhere without manifold digressions and side tracks.

“The Post-War Functions of Commercial Education” implies, primarily, an examination of the specialised instruction for persons engaged in the purchase, sale and transport of goods as distinct from those concerned in the manufacture of those goods. But the manufacture of goods is so absolutely precedent to their sale and transport, and so entirely dominates all the issues with which we have to deal, that no discussion could claim to be complete which did not pay some attention to it.

The general object of the discussion is, I take it, the promotion of our economic welfare in the hurly-burly which is certain to arise on the return of peace. Once or twice since the war started, I have endeavoured to convey an impression of what the effect of the outbreak of war was on the world's commerce, in some such terms as follow:—

I should like you to picture for yourselves the broad general aspect of the world of commerce as it existed in pre-war times. The great nations were all engaged in the work of production of materials for human consumption. Each one of them excelled in some particular line of products and in it had a marked pre-eminence over all its rivals. We need only instance the wheat and steel of America and the textile manufactures of our own country. These staple products were being exchanged each for the other in the varying proportions set up by their world values; so many yards of cloth for so many tons of wheat. But beyond these staples there was a vast range of products which all of them made in a greater or less degree, and for

the sale of these they were competitors in the world markets. The sales were determined in terms of quality and price, and these in turn resolved themselves into cost of production. The most highly organised community produced most cheaply. The whole world was one busy market, the parts of it bound together by business ties and often by community of interests. International commerce was like a great living organism. The life blood of the whole was finance and the delicate mechanism of the exchanges saw to it that this blood was distributed to the parts, the constituent countries, in proportion to their several needs. The symptom of perfect health was perfect peace.

Suddenly this organism was mutilated. Its parts were rent violently asunder. Just as in the living animal, the scission was accompanied by violent pain and dislocation; and, again as in the animal, each of the parts has endeavoured to pick up a truncated existence within itself. You and I experience this in the increased prices of our food and clothing and in the diminished purchasing power of our incomes. The longer the war continues the less shall we feel this; the torn places will heal as we become more and more self-supporting and self-contained. The healing will, indeed, go on more rapidly in our case than in that of our enemies, since our control of the seas keeps open many of our sources of supply while closing them to our enemies. The more accustomed to this self-sufficiency we become, the less we shall like to return to our former state of dependence on others for the essentials of comfortable living.

The crisis will come with the ending of the war. In any case, the communities now separated by a wall of bitter enmity will, under the softening influence of time, tend to meet again in normal trade intercourse, and our experience of those who are now our enemies tells us that they will spare no effort to hasten the process. I take it, however, that having learned our lesson we shall not soon forget it, and that the national unity and organisation which is being burned into us will enable us to retain much, if not all, we are now beginning to acquire. We shall not need to reason "why?" The only question for us is "how?"

We are trying to obtain the answer to that "how," and the immediate object of our meeting is to consider that portion of it which will be affected by a re-construction of our educational methods and outlook.

What is industrial success with its connotation of economic welfare? I hope the definition will not be considered too narrow if I describe it as procuring, either by

manufacture or exchange, of the greatest possible supply of the commodities required by our population; a diet sufficient in amount and satisfactory in quality; houses of hygienic accommodation; and clothing adequate and suitable to our climate and work. These, with all the hundred and one appurtenances and trifles that make for our physical comfort and social amenity, are the prizes we set before us. We must leave out of count, or regard as incidental, the power of education to elevate our ideals or to widen and deepen our imagination and culture. The measure of industrial success must be material, expressible in terms of the standard of living existent amongst us. I do not mean to imply that the moral and social sides of education are to be neglected or belittled, but only that these aspects of it are outside of our present inquiry.

We may assume that our chief rivals in the scramble for the world's trade which will inevitably follow the making of peace will be Germany, the United States, and Japan, and it may be well at this point to examine the resources and methods of those rivals, and to deduce from them such lessons as we may to prepare us for the contest. This will not be to scrap our old methods, but merely to re-cast them where observation and experience may show it necessary so to do.

All businesses, wheresoever carried on, are conducted for the profit of the owners of the businesses. Generally, whether this object is attained, the State as a whole benefits by increased revenue and by the upkeep of its people. The extent to which this incidental gain enters into the calculations of the promoters of businesses is determined by the communal concept of the State and of its functions. In Germany, to which our thoughts are most strongly drawn at the present time, we find both ideas, profit earning and state supporting, strongly marked and exemplified. Many people think that with the defeat of Germany in this war there will follow her great decline in the world's commerce. Historically and economically that view is unsound. Throughout its advance from the Mark of Brandenburg to the Empire of Germany, the Hohenzollern rule has suffered only one great check, the defeat of Prussia by Napoleon in the early years of the nineteenth century. The lowest point was touched at the end of 1806 when the disaster of Jena seemed once for all to limit her future to the level of a second-rate Power. From this point the ascent has been practically continuous. The words of the King of Prussia at that time set the keynote and direction to the national aspiration. "The state must re-gain in

intellectual power what it has lost in material power, and to this end I desire that everything may be done to extend and perfect the education of my people." That epoch is marked by the foundation of the University of Berlin, and we all know how faithfully the pathway back to efficiency and power so defined has been adhered to. We have experienced, moreover, its tremendous effectiveness. The first care of the State has been that no individual shall escape from the educational system. Compulsion has become a fine art in that it is no longer felt to be compulsion, but a sacred duty. There is no outward sign which would seem to indicate that the inward force which enabled a stricken and impoverished community to rise within half a century to the position of the world's greatest military power, with an industrial output that secured to itself a large portion of the world's commerce, has lost any of its potency. From the economic standpoint, too, it would appear that it will be much easier to talk about the curbing of Germany's trade power than to make it a practical issue. Sixty-five million people, occupying 210,000 square miles of territory, compact in form, rich in the most important minerals, and with a large agricultural area skilfully tilled, will be difficult to restrain in their efforts to exchange their own products for those of other nations. Even if the move be successful, it will only serve to increase the self-sufficiency of Germany by leaving her to consider first the wants of her own people. There is but one path which will lead to economic success in such a struggle as this, and that is, to emulate her in productive activity. To that end we must learn the secret of her progress and adapt it to our own uses.

Germany has maintained tenaciously the ideal of Frederick William quoted above. Education has been her strong suit. The organisation of her system has been the admiration and envy of rival nations for generations. Starting with a uniform system of training for every child within the Empire, she carries them through an elementary course completed at an average age of fourteen. At that age, every normal boy and girl has acquired, and is able to apply, an amount of knowledge which we in this country would be grateful to find in our boys and girls of three years older. At this point divergence begins. A large proportion of the children go to work, but are still compelled to continue their studies in evening schools and classes. The only difference in this respect is that the punishment for non-attendance no longer falls on the parents it is now placed on the employers. A student

who has to go to an evening class must be permitted to leave his place of employment at such an hour as will enable him to be in good time for his class.

For those luckier children, whose parents can afford to keep them at the day school for some time longer, specialisation then begins. The young student is prepared for commerce, industry, agriculture or a profession, as the case may be, the intensity of specialisation growing as the sessions pass over. The university caps the whole, and gives to the work already done a suitable finish and point of application. But in this beautifully symmetrically whole, close analysis reveals flaws.

The first and greatest of these is in the physical condition of the pupils. The abundant vitality and energy which are so remarkable in the English boy or girl attending a secondary school, finding its outlet in games and sometimes in more objectionable ways, is almost entirely absent in the German student. In an English school compulsory games are a means of directing that energy into safe channels with the elements of discipline, self-control and good sportmanship thrown in. In Germany, a game, when it is played at all, is a very serious thing, not to be approached in any light or frivolous spirit. Looking down a German classroom, one is often struck, especially in evening classes, at the white, fine-drawn expression on many of the faces. Moreover, too large a percentage of the students wear spectacles, even if it be granted that the glasses are in many cases merely protective.

Going deeper than this question of physical ability, one comes to the conclusion that specialisation can be, and is, overdone. In the United Kingdom, while the great mass of the population are content to remain in the social and industrial stratum in which they are born, there is ample room for, and hope of, promotion. Social conventions and want of means may, and very often do, hamper the upward-toiling youth, but there are at least no permanent and insurmountable barriers. In Germany, a boy is trained for one object and on one plane. He is made to fit a given place with mathematical accuracy, but outside of that place he is hopeless. He is a very perfect machine for the carrying out of a given narrow function. The difficulty which every teacher in this country has felt, and which has passed into a by-word amongst parents, of stating just in what particular line a boy will most probably succeed is not allowed any force in Germany. The boy's future is settled for him, and he is too well trained to escape from it. Thus the nation as a whole is robbed of the uplift to the entire community which follows from the struggle upwards of

some of its constituent parts. Finally, and this includes all the merits and demerits of German education, there is the idea of the all-controlling State. A day's work is done, not only for the employer, but for the State, thus adding to the blotting out of individualism as a motive force. Again, and we are only beginning to grasp the full force and effect of the idea, the state is a non-moral one. The British dictum, with its constitutional and legal limitations, that the king can do no wrong, is transferred in Germany to the state, and may be read that nothing the state does can be wrong. The principle is fundamentally vicious. A departure from ethical standards can always be justified by a reference to the service of the state. German commerce is a fine thing from the outside, but the core in many places is rotten.

Turning now to the United States, the second of our great rivals in the world market, we find a population not greatly exceeding that of Germany, occupying an area as large as Europe, with every variety of climate, soil and mineral resources. The population is being continuously enriched by practically all the most adventurous elements in the various nations of the earth. As varied as its climate are the nature and efficiency of its educational institutions. It has universities, competing in curriculum with Oxford and Cambridge, and others which parallel Manchester and Birmingham. But below these there is a gradually descending scale until we reach some which are little, if anything, above the level of our ordinary secondary schools. When a boy or girl wishes for specialised instruction, he or she must seek it unaided. Each individual is flung into the industrial arena to sink or swim as he is able. No social convention exists to keep him down; no outside help can sustain him in a position he is not fit to hold. In such a community, personal weakness spells ruin, just as surely as personal ability spells success. We may say of industrial America, as a great statesman has said of political America, that she has the glorious privilege of youth, that of committing excesses without suffering for them. The curve of American trade is still mounting upwards with increasing velocity, nor can we expect it to flatten until a juster proportion exists between her population and her natural resources.

The object lessons she can most usefully teach us are on the one hand, the greater perfecting of our industrial organisation, and on the other, the avoidance of her point of view with regard to the social side of living, and the pursuit of material prosperity for its own sake.

The last of our potential rivals is Japan, who, without any settled ideas of education, is absorbing all that she considers best of the educational systems of the world, and applying it with genius to the development of her own resources.

The great lessons that we may learn from this rapid survey of the methods of our competitors may be summed up as follows:—

From Germany, so to intensify our methods of teaching, both as to time and specialisation, as to increase the usefulness of our young people to their employers, while leaving them as large a measure as possible of initiative and as large a prospect as possible of advancement: From America, to endeavour to find a place for everybody in the industrial arena but without losing sight of the fact that work is only one of the factors which make up human life: From Japan, to combine conservatism with progress.

It is with the first of these great lessons that we are to-night called upon to deal, and the immediate example selected is the preparation of young people for commercial pursuits. One can best deal with this under the circumstances by discussing exclusively Irish education.

At first sight it would seem that the provision for education of all kinds in Ireland is ample. We have an elementary system carried on in schools easily accessible to every child in the country, and a secondary system which, as formulated in the syllabuses of the Intermediate Board, completely fills the gap between the elementary school and the university. Technical Schools and classes are established in practically every town in the country; some of them, as, for instance, those in Dublin, Belfast, and Cork, challenging comparison with the best of their kind in England and Scotland; and we have three great Universities, one of them federal, splendidly staffed and equipped. But the actual falls short of the possible in the education of the young people of our country. There is no need here and now to elaborate the statistics which prove, what the experience of every person interested in Irish education has shown abundantly to be true, that the great bulk of the elementary school children in this country leave school in the third or a lower standard. No system, however elaborate or efficiently organised, can be built on such a foundation as this. There is no use our discussing the point and direction of our higher education, Secondary, Technical or University, until this glaring evil is made right.

The first great need is an efficient and universal measure

of compulsion, the second is the adoption of an examination for, and issue of, a Higher Leaving Certificate as a finish to the elementary school stage. It is pleasant to note that a move in this direction is already being made. In a few weeks the first examination will be held in Belfast for these certificates, and it is to be hoped that a similar scheme for the metropolitan area will soon follow. It may be expected that employers of all kinds, whether industrial or commercial, will at once insist on the production of this certificate as a preliminary to their considering any applications. These two measures commenced now and rigorously carried out would in five years lift the education of our young people to a plane that most of us have come to regard as unattainable. But the matter should not end there. No standard which can be reached by the average boy or girl of fourteen can be considered sufficient. A proper system of evening continuation classes must be organised in conjunction with our Technical Schools, which will continue the process, if necessary, up to Matriculation level, and it is greatly to be desired that some of the County Council Scholarships now offered so generally for admission to the Universities should be won by students who have been prepared for them in this way. I would go further, also make it a condition of admission to the Intermediate examinations that every candidate should be in possession of this certificate. Then, indeed, Intermediate education would be the real natural link between the elementary school and the university. Already Technical Instruction Committees everywhere are conducting examinations, roughly equivalent to the Junior Grade Pass, for admission to their classes, but the establishment of a certificate such as this would at once dispense with the necessity for this entrance examination, and enable the Principals to arrange for a properly graded system of Technical Instruction suited to the needs of their pupils. Unless and until these fundamental reforms are effected, it is simply futile to discuss the part that Irish education is going to play in the forthcoming economic war.

What is that part, and what particular share in it is Commercial Education to take? Lecturing to my own students some few years ago, I attempted to define what was meant by Commercial Education in these terms:—“On its lowest plane, it implies the building up of a vast store of knowledge; higher, it means the formation of habits of accuracy, promptness and decision; and, highest of all, the development of character and the evolution of a system of Commercial Ethics.” Let us deal with these in



turn. What is the vast store of knowledge? It includes, I think, every fact that a business man ought to know in connection with the business in which he is engaged. First there comes a perfect knowledge of the goods he handles, the source of their raw materials, the processes of their manufacture, and the stages by which they pass from the manufacturers' hands into his own. There follows that he must know the method of distributing them which will be most convenient to himself and to his customers; the method of making the various calculations that arise throughout and the recording in accurate and convenient forms of the various transactions as they occur. To do all this properly he must have as a basis a good general education as it is generally understood. He should also know much of the languages of the countries with which his trading brings him into contact, and be conversant with their currency, weights and measures. The physical facts which influence the manufacture and distribution of his wares, as, for example, the climates of the countries and the habits of the people living in them, will also be important. The very fact of a man undergoing such a preparation as this will induce in him the habits which we have spoken of as being on the plane above the mere acquisition of knowledge: accuracy, promptness and decision. Most important of all, it will show him how necessary is the substitution of adequate organisation for hap-hazard methods in the conduct of his business. Indeed, if there is one idea that should be burned into the mind of every business man, present and prospective, it is that organisation is the key to business success. The supreme organiser is of course a genius, and as such, is born, not made. But it is equally true that a very considerable amount of organising ability can be acquired in business just as in any other department of human effort and applied, even in the simplest concerns; to this end, therefore should be directed, not only the training that young people get in the business itself, but that which is given to them in the classes they attend. At the apex of the process of commercial education, but really running through the whole of it from the lowest grade to the highest, is the development of character, as evidenced by the absolutely binding quality of a promise, the perfect truth and reliability of every guarantee, and the sportsmanlike acceptance of victory or defeat. If we can turn out a generation of young business men prepared in some such way as this, our natural share of the traffic of the world will unfailingly find its way to our doors. The lack of such preparation has been the true

explanation of our slow advance, if not actual retrogression, during the past thirty or forty years.

It is necessary to consider what facilities exist in Ireland at present for the giving of such specialised instruction as we have just outlined. The first is through the Technical Schools and classes now established everywhere throughout the country. If one were to speak critically, one might almost say that, comparatively with the other departments of technology, commercial instruction is playing too large a part in the work of these schools, and it is greatly to be regretted that the anxiety for improvement shown by our clerks and shop assistants of both sexes is not noticeably shared by our future farmers and craftsmen. It will not serve any useful purpose to confine the work of the commercial teachers to the limits set by the students of their less fortunate colleagues; rather it would seem that every facility should be given to the class which has hitherto shown itself most avid for self-improvement, leaving the others to realise in time how valuable an asset they are missing. In these commercial classes we find the first of the three stages indicated above, the acquisition of a store of facts, receiving a greater or less share of attention in proportion to the means at the disposal of the Committee and the number of students the local population can supply. In several instances, where the conditions are exceptionally favourable, it has been found possible to organise departments that are, to all intents and purposes, separate schools of commerce. This is notably true of Dublin, Belfast, and Cork. In Rathmines, guided thereto by the special character of the population, the Committee have frankly confined themselves to Commerce alone, though they have recently found it advisable to establish a special school for Domestic Science also. Very valuable work is being done in these classes, and already they have raised the level of service as rendered by the students, in a very remarkable degree. The great drawback, however, to the work of the Technical Schools is to be found in the fact that the teaching is almost exclusively confined to the evenings, and is thus open to the general objection of being given by tired teachers to tired students. As a set-off against this drawback, but only as a set-off and by no means an adequate compensation, the students are receiving a practical training in their daily work, and the teachers are men and women in close touch with actual business conditions and requirements. Here and there attempts are being made to establish Day Schools of Commerce. If I may be permitted again to refer to Rathmines, I should like to say that the

authorities there have established what amounts to a Day Secondary School with a strong commercial bias. Hitherto the enrolment has been disappointing, but as time goes on and as knowledge of the school's methods and aims extends, we may anticipate an increasing demand for admission. Meantime, it is gratifying to note that business men, at any rate, are showing themselves keenly alive to the advantages of the new departure, and that we have had no difficulty in placing these boys in positions which offer them more than a fair chance of success. As an indication of what may be done, I note below the subjects taught and the time per week given to each, merely observing that the twenty-hour week indicated is much too short. The ideal would be thirty.

Mathematics,	...	...	...	4	hours.
Book-keeping,	...	..	...	3	„
English, including Business Methods,				5	„
French,	...	..	...	3	„
Shorthand,	...	..	...	3	„
Industrial History and Commercial Geography,	...	..	...	2	„

This is, of course, only the first year's work; a second and third year should certainly be added.

In our ordinary secondary schools increased attention is being given to a course of education leading up naturally to the office as opposed to the university. The Intermediate Board about three years ago added to their list of subjects a commercial course, thus enabling headmasters to develop, side by side with the general culture that we have always regarded it as the special function of these schools to supply, a technical training adapting the pupils for their future occupation. This is a most desirable arrangement. Until it was introduced, the commercial form was too often a convenient side track for students who showed no aptitude for the subjects likely to make for success in the Intermediate examinations. It remains to be seen, and only experience can show, whether training such as this will give us the right stamp of business man.

Finally, we have to consider the faculties of commerce in our universities. It may be said in passing, that Trinity, the most venerable of them all, has not yet established a regular teaching faculty of this important type. The diploma at present given is useful, but insufficient, and, above all, fails in the important point of contact between the teacher of university type and the student. Queen's University, Belfast, has established a very good faculty, and there is one in each of the constituent colleges

of the National University in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. But the plane of instruction in these faculties is not yet high enough, mainly because there is not in existence any proper feeding ground from the stratum immediately below. There is a provision in the German Handelshochschule that no person can be admitted who has not the certificate given at the end of the secondary school course and at least two years' practical business experience. We might expect better results from our own university faculties if some such limitation were applied there also.

Now we come to the most vital and pertinent question of all. How are men and women trained in this way to help us in our effort to get and retain a bigger share of the world's trade, with its natural consequence of increased employment and a higher standard of living for the people of these islands? The first great outlet will, I think, be found in the staffing of our business houses at home. We should be able to rely on a home-trained staff for every position in the office. It should no longer be necessary for us to introduce into our most confidential departments workers of another nationality, who, as we now know, have accepted those positions at a lower rate of wages than the home product can afford to take, not because, as they have hitherto plausibly explained, they wish to get a knowledge of the English language, but because they are able to tap for their own government, and through that government their merchants, the means of defeating us in the common market. Moreover, this home staffing will give us a better service and will be a well from which our own great merchants can draw men competent to fill the higher positions in their gift. This alone will be an immense improvement, but does not exhaust the requirements and possibilities of the situation. At the present time, a large proportion of British trade in foreign countries is done through agents of other than British nationality. To begin with, these men are often wanting in expert knowledge of the goods sent them by the firms they represent. They take the particular agency in conjunction with several others, and push it or not as seems most convenient. It may be impossible to get rid of the agency business entirely, but at least the agent should be British, and if his time be not fully occupied in the sale of one given commodity, he can branch out into cognate products and work them conjointly. Where it is possible, however, young men specially drilled in higher commercial schools should be planted on the spot to watch directly the interests of a given firm. The common reply to this by some of our

greatest business men and by any number of their smaller rivals is, that the training in the works is sufficient. The actual test has shown that it is not sufficient. The German output of the high schools of commerce succeeds where the British lamentably fails. We may take a wider view. By their system of establishing these highly qualified young men in all parts of the world, the Germans have contrived to produce what may be called a German tendency in the minds of foreign traders. These traders find their slightest wish as to the get-up, packing and delivery of their goods, carefully attended to. They have a personal interview with a representative of the firm, who has full power to treat, and whose promises are regarded as the promise of his firm. The British representative, whether direct or agent, can often only promise to consult his firm in the matter, thus involving a delay of weeks and often a loss of the business. Here again, we must train specialists on whom the trader can rely for an immediate and final answer, and on whom the firm at home can rely not to involve them in unprofitable business.

There remains to be considered our consular service with all that it connotes. It seems to be forgotten very often that our Consuls are primarily commercial in their functions. No doubt, political duties are added on, arising chiefly out of the commercial duties, but these latter come first in importance, real and implied. Arising partly from the method of appointment, and partly from the lofty indifference of our Government to mere business considerations, the political side has been inflated far beyond the original intention, resulting in a corresponding shrinkage in the foundational need. One of the chief post-war functions of commercial education will be to provide the Government with a sufficient number of young men conversant with the practice and technique of commerce, from whom to select a body of public servants, who will make the promotion of their country's business interests the be-all and the end-all of their existence. It follows as a corollary that the Government must wish to avail themselves of such service, and this points towards a radical reconstruction of the methods of our Board of Trade, or rather, to the much more needed change of the creation of a Department of Commerce, leaving to the Board of Trade as now constituted the superintendence of industrial matters pure and simple. It may be possible to set up a Ministry of Commerce staffed largely with business men more permanent in position than the usual occupants of ministerial office. Even if it be found impossible to dis-

pense altogether with political considerations in the selection of the nominal chief, the personnel of both great parties will probably be such as to afford at least one great business man for this important office.

These considerations lead us further still. It should, in view of the educational advance in all directions within the last twenty years, be possible to substitute for the absolutely competitive examination a method of selection which would be as great an advance on the purely competitive system as that system was on the nepotism which preceded it. Already the great municipal corporations, banks, railways, etc., use the preliminary examination merely as a method of rejecting the obviously unfit, depending on their own personal discrimination for the final choice. The work would be greatly facilitated by the acceptance of a degree in Commerce as exempting from the qualifying examination. But there is no need here to labour details of a change so far-reaching in its results. The competitive system has hitherto yielded as good a class of civil servant either for home or foreign service as any that could have been adopted under the circumstances which obtained when it was first introduced. But it has led gradually to a result, which must give every person interested in the right use of the youth of our country matter for serious thought. At present, all over the three kingdoms, and out of all proportion in Ireland itself, there is a large number of young men and women reading for civil service appointments, of whom only the most trivial percentage can ever hope to succeed; the rest are thrown idle on the community at an age when their more fortunate brothers and sisters have already been at work for several years. No business man wants them, nor are they themselves inclined to go into offices where they would rank as juniors to others much younger than themselves. There remains for them nothing but emigration or the most casual and ill-paid employment.

But this digression must not draw us from our real purpose of this evening. It is sufficient here and now to say that, particularly in our consular service, the Government should select young men and women with business qualifications, and that, on the other hand, the schools must supply a sufficiency of the raw material to make such a selection possible. There are two main directions, South America and Russia, in which this revision of our outlook is especially called for. Already, thanks to our linen trade, there are in South and Central America, many able young business Irishmen, who are serving their firms, and incidentally their country, in a very remarkable degree. But

the possibilities of the Continent are not more than skimmed. Everywhere the Germans are developing their influence and trade, supported by the full power of their government machine. Certain parts of Brazil are to all intents and purposes German colonies, and such of our manufacturers as have endeavoured to open up trade have found themselves hampered and beaten at every turn. Russia has also been a German happy-hunting ground, and one of the chief difficulties of our ally at the commencement of the war was the clearing out of the enemy, who had planted such a terribly fixed foot. There, at any rate, we shall be able to start with a national predisposition in our favour, and it will be entirely our own fault if, from governmental aloofness or want of business enterprise, we fail to get a good result.

The last idea I venture to suggest is also somewhat of a digression from the general purpose of this paper. It is the size of the unit with which we ought to enter on this economic war. Reference has already been made to the size of the United States and the diversity of its parts in soil, climate and resources, with the resultant advantage that these have afforded the business community there in their efforts towards industrial and commercial success. Rightly considered, our own Empire is equally fortunate in this regard. If, as we all hope, there should be a strengthening and shortening of the political ties which now bind the various parts of the Empire together, and if it be the aim of those parts to treat primarily and preferentially one with the other, the advantage of America in this respect will be more than balanced; and if, as a result of the resentments and animosities set up by the present war, Germany should be practically excluded from so great a portion of the world's markets as are governed by our common King, no military advantage, however great, that she may obtain, will compensate her for her loss. But it is supremely important that efforts towards this end should be commenced now. There is no reason why our educational ideals and standards should not be immediately revised, and particularly those parts of them which we are to-night discussing. The prize is a great one. The winning of it will follow as a matter of course if the task be reasonably, immediately, and energetically undertaken.