

August 19, 1914

The war

Some thoughts about the war

No extremely serious encounters have occurred in the European war yet except the battle of Liege in Belgium. Encounters have happened between Germans and the French at Muelhausen, between German and Russians along the Russian border and some smaller encounters at sea. Rumors also tell us that German troops have entered Finland.

Germany is in the focus of the war. It is surrounded by enemy countries, both big and small. Only once in a while does Germany receive assistance. The general opinion is that Germany finds itself in a hopeless situation.

There is France against Germany with a long and bitter threat due to the fact that Germany in 1871 took Alsace-Lorraine from France. This province has been a reason for a feud between the two countries for centuries. The province belonged to the German empire since the 10<sup>th</sup> century until part of the province was surrendered to France through peace declaration of Westphalia in 1648. The whole province was surrendered in 1697. But in reality it was the unwise Louis XIV who stole the province from Germany. It then remained a French possession until 1871 when it through the peace treaty of Frankfurt in 1871, when it once again became a German province. During these two hundred years the most common language was German. Newspapers were published in German and French. When the province became Germany again 43 years ago it happened against the will of the citizens. It did not, however, take long before the citizens felt at ease with their new ruler. Most of those who were very dissatisfied moved to France and in addition a new generation has grown up. Therefore Germany has a loyal province.

The other country, against which Germany needs to prepare for a serious battle, is Russia. It is possible that Germany will not only receive sympathy, but also help among the Russian possessions. We find among them the Russian part of Poland, which has been so suppressed by Russia. This part of the old Poland has over and over tried to free themselves from Russia through revolting. Since 1864 it has remained quiet. During this time the suppressor systematically tried to remove both Poland's language and nationality. It would not be impossible that Germany would receive some assistance here. We have a similar situation in Finland. Finland has now received encouraging support from the Russian government. But Finland knows so well what that means. If Germany would get allies in the mentioned Russian provinces, Russia would have a hard time to manage.

Germany has likely hopes and advantages especially against the last mentioned enemy, which probably is the most challenging.

#### War preparations in America

The United States is and will remain neutral. President Wilson issued a proclamation last week in which he explained that our country will remain neutral. In connection with his proclamation the president officially made public the laws regarding punishment for crimes against the neutrality which have been in effect since March 4, 1909. These laws prohibit:

1. To accept and carry out a commission or to work for any of the countries in war (Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Germany, Russia, France and England) on land or at sea.
2. To enlist in the armies or navies of these countries.
3. To pay someone else or convince them to enlist in duty for any of these countries.
4. To pay someone else to go outside the United States or their jurisdiction to enter a duty as mentioned above.
5. To convince someone else to go outside of the United States with intent to enter such duty.
6. To equip or arm, or try to equip or arm, or just participate in arming or equipping any ship that will be used by any of the countries in war.

But in our neighbor country Canada they are preparing armament. They have announced that they will call in 20,000 volunteers. Strong men in the ages between 18 and 45 are asked to volunteer if they have any military training.

There is said to be many German reservists in Canada. They are not allowed to travel home to help their "Vaterland." The Canadian government will gather them together and keep them closely guarded as long as the war is going on.

One regiment has been ordered to guard the big granaries along the big lakes to prevent hostile persons trying to blow them up. That way they can secure the export of grains to England.

#### President Wilson offers his service

President Wilson has offered the combatant countries his service, not that he will assist either side with troops or battleships. In the interest of peace he has offered his service as mediator.

This offer from the president of the United States should mean a lot. It comes from a government that deserves respect and esteem from all. Our countries have questions about this war in the most impartial way any country can be. As a nation we no interests tied to the ongoing war.

Due to the particular composition of our nation we are sensible to and obviously feelings of sympathy for the powers involved in the war, but this does not need to cause us to be partial, because it involves all powers. Our situation is such that our government would simply be a better mediator in this conflict than any other government.

The other governments have already acknowledged that they have received his offer. But so far no one has declared an interest in using it.

This is however not nothing to be surprised over because they would like to see how successful they can be on the war stage before they would listen to a suggestion from a mediator. We need to remember that those governing in Europe are not dictators. It doesn't depend on them if the fighting will start, continue or stop with the help of a mediation. They are under pressure from their nations. The war cannot be stopped immediately, but the offer is there. They can take advantage of it later.

May Wilson succeed with this the same way Roosevelt did when he mediated in the Russian-Japanese war.

### Impact on our commerce

The European war will in more ways than one increase the demand for our products. The fighting nations need necessities. But South America will also become an important market. Germany, France, Belgium and the other fighting nations have had a large trade with South America. Last year the trade amounted to \$61,000,000. Now this commerce will mainly have to come from the United States.

### Short messages

The German emperor is said to have aged a lot during the two weeks since the war started.

According to German messages the number of casualties in the Battle of Liege was between 4 and 5 thousand men. Other reports have stated that it was up to 38,000.

A London correspondent says that Germany so far has lost 15,000. There is all reasons to believe the reports regarding Liege is untrustworthy.

No country in this war can borrow money from the United States. It would be against the neutrality.

It is estimated that Germany can get by during a long time with both necessities and war material even if England would establish a blockade. Germany imports generally about one third of their provisions.

If the Russian part of Poland will be loyal to Russia the government in St. Petersburg promises that Poland will be considered almost independent. They are promised their nationality, their language, freedom of religion and a government of their own, which however must be answering to the Russian government.

Japan is now entering the war and causes more worries for Germany. Japan's ultimatum consists in short of the fact that Germany needs to give up all their possessions in China with no conditions or compensation. They demand a response before dinner next Sunday. If Germany refuses the possessions must be surrendered no later than September 15. Japan's intent is to eventually return them to China.

The European countries not involved in the war feel left behind. It can look that way when you consider how one power after the other has joined the horrible game of war. Rumors now say that Greece has threatened Turkey with an ultimatum.

Sweden, Norway and Denmark have signed an agreement to keep the peace between each other. These countries have already mobilized their troops.