

How Lethbridge Nestled Kaiser's Vipers To Her Breast

Back in the summer of 1913, Canada was visited by a large party of Germans styling themselves the German Trade Expansion Committee. They toured Canada from coast to coast, were wined and dined by the Boards of Trade. Some of them even came to Lethbridge, and were treated to the best.

And now it turns out that they were to all intents and purposes a bunch of first class spies in the Kaiser's employ, sent out to size up Canada's sentiment toward the Motherland. At least that's what a special correspondent of the Winnipeg Free Press says in an article from Salisbury. Here it is:

Persistent reports in London avers that Canada has been a victim of the Kaiser's spy organization and that the German Trade Expansion committee which toured the Dominion in 1913 was preponderantly a disguised unit in the all-seeing espionage system of Germany. These reports, which gain a great deal of credence here whisper that some specially appointed experts on this trade commission were instructed to examine at first hand into Canada's sentiment toward the British connection, Canada's possible aspiration toward national independence, her preparedness for "rebellion" and willingness to accept German aid in such an undertaking, her readiness for war and probable action should Great Britain and Germany go to war. Similar "information," these reports declare, was received by similar means in the other young, self-governing British nations, but in their case the aim was annexation as a prize of war free from any entanglements such as the Monroe doctrine of the United States.

Winnipeggers will remember how, in 1913, this ostensible trade commission visited almost every Canadian city, how its members were feted and feasted, shown all there was to see and told all there was to tell. In Ottawa, Halifax, Montreal, Toron-

to, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver these emissaries of kaiserism were all eyes and ears for their imperial master, seeking knowledge of strategic value to the German army and further means of supplanting Canadian and British made goods with those of the fatherland. Throughout Canada Canadian clubs, boards of trade, industrial bureaus and publicity associations welcomed them and unfolded for their admiration visions of Canada's vast resources. Over many a pleasant banquet board champagne loosed the tongue and the enemies of this empire learned secrets of value to kaiserism. Suspicious lulled to sleep by innocuous evening dress and by mild looking spectacles, these German tradesmen cordially exchanged notes with Canadian military men as to present and future army plans here and in Germany. And so these men crossed Canada with their fingers on its most vital pulses of peace and war.

A SECRET REPORT

In due course the German commissioners published and distributed in interested German circles an elaborate pamphlet report on trade expansion between the fatherland and the younger British nations. A further report, pertaining to Canadian defence matters, was made in confidence to the German secret service department. The report has since proved a colossal misconception of Canadian sentiment and military preparedness, a misconception only less obtuse and blundering than those made by German diplomats in European warfare.

In gathering their information the "commissioners" had to proceed with the utmost caution so as not to arouse suspicion. Invariably they closely collaborated with local German agents familiar with the conditions. Almost always they led up to the theme through the genial channel of champagne and general principles of international relations, statecraft and government. Illustrations were drawn from Germany, Britain and Canada, and so they gauged Canadian public opinion.

A few of the conclusions reached by the investigators are reproduced below, and these show how utterly they failed in their task:

Canada is bound to England by the loosest possible ties—ties which will break asunder at the slightest strain. In Canada, they declared, there is a strong and growing sentiment hostile to the British connection and in favor of embarking upon a career of national independence and self-realization. The commissioners saw in the Dominion a national self-consciousness rapidly emerging and tingling with determination to free itself from the irksome British yoke. They pointed out that German aggrandisement was feared and suspected in Canada, and

that the fatherland should for this reason refrain from trying to intensify and consolidate this anti-British sentiment, leaving Canada's natural development to continue to work itself out in separation from the hated and coveted British empire. Germany, they declared, could best hasten this dismemberment by forging yet stronger the already substantial economic bonds between herself and the Dominion.

THEIR CONCLUSION

But, said the German emissaries, if Canada should decide to stand or fall with England, the Dominion has neither men nor money nor munitions, nor armaments to make it an effective fighting factor in the war. A few regiments of German infantry could more than counterbalance any punitive effort of Canada in a big war. So declared the commissioners, blind to the possibility, now an actual fact that Canada could in a few months count her efficient fighting force by the hundreds of thousands, or that Canada would prove the granary, the partial manufactory, the arsenal and the North American exchange centre for the nations now at war with Germany.

The crowning error of these blundering Germans is found in their idea that Canada and the other young British nations would not fight with Britain against the fatherland. In the event of war, said the report, Great Britain would assuredly be confronted with the fact of all her self-governing colonies declaring for national independence from the British yoke, thus repeating the history of the United States of America. To this end of stripping Britain of her vast colonial possessions Germany bestirred herself. Where practicable, i.e., in India, Egypt and South Africa, she resorted to actual intrigue, but in Canada, New Zealand and Australia she was perforce content to bring about as great an economic separatness from Britain as possible. The policy of political aloofness and economic infirmity, these shrewd Germans calculated, would best further their ends of gradually dismembering the hated and coveted British empire. And so their trade commission toured Canada in 1913 with a mission specifically and generally hostile to British empire interests.

GEN. JESUS CARRANZA AND SATFF SUFFER DEATH PENALTY

Laredo, Feb. 1.—General Jesus Carranza, his son Acelardo, and Ignacio Peraldi, members of his staff, were executed by General Santibanez, former constitutional general, who deflected Zapata, according to a telegram received by the widow of General Carranza from the first chief at Vera Cruz.

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