

We have heard considerable during the past few weeks about the splendid opportunity afforded Canada by the war in Europe, to become a manufacturing nation in the broad sense of the term. We have heard how Canada, with her wonderful natural resources, can manufacture anything under the sun and can not only supply her home trade but can also supply foreign trade as well. The men who have given voice to these opinions are men who are thoroughly conversant with the condition of affairs in the Dominion of Canada, and have studied the present as well as the probable future effect of the European war upon this country.

In the first place, it has been pointed out that the manufacturers already in this country should not curtail their operations one jot on account of the unsettled state of the market, due entirely to the war. In the next place it has been pointed out that the present offers a magnificent opportunity to go after every other line of trade that is not manufactured in this country, by establishing factories for those particular lines.

On top of this advice we are being told in interviews given the press almost daily by prominent financiers and others in Canada, that this country has nothing to fear from the European war and that business will swing along merrily in its normal lines, gradually getting better, till in the very near future it reaches a very prosperous condition.

Of course some very sane and feasible reasons are advanced by those responsible for the numerous expressions of opinion given vent to, and none can deny that the theories advanced are based upon facts. For instance, it is pointed out that the commerce and manufactures of Germany, built up with much care and expense, have been completely disorganized by that country being cut off completely from the rest of the world. It is also pointed out that Canada, situated as she is on the main highway of the world's trading routes, with the great markets of the Orient on the west and free access to the great markets of Europe on the east, occupies a position held by no other country to become a great manufacturing nation.

But while all this talk of Canadian development and Canadian expansion is being given vent to, what are the men doing who are in the position to bring about the fulfilment of these bright prophecies? What are the very men who, in some instances, have been responsible for these optimistic interviews, doing to put into effect their promising theories for the present as well as the future.

The majority are at present devoting their entire energy to cutting down their staffs, curtailing their outputs, and following a policy of retrenchment in every way possible. When the bigger concerns commence cutting down, the smaller ones must follow suit or find themselves in a position where their only course is to close their doors. And once the larger concerns in any one line of business begin a policy of retrenchment, the effect is quickly discernible in every other line of business with the resultant need for retrenchment there also.

Canada has the resources, Canada has the opportunities and Canada has the location to become all that has been claimed for her. But first of all Canada needs the men who will rise to the occasion and put into practice the preaching that has been going on within its borders during the past few weeks. It is all very well to sit back and give out optimistic interviews but these interviews are not worth the space they take up if the men responsible for them are not ready to back them up in a more substantial manner than seems to be the tendency at present.