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# SHIPYARDS ON RIVER CLYDE WORKING ON WAR VESSELS

### Maritime Construction in English Establishments Exceeds Maximum Capacity of the German Empire.

By JOHN L. HALDERSTON.

Glasgow, July 26.—The man who saw the warships that are being built along the River Clyde and wrote an account of what he had seen would astound the world. I have just seen the shipbuilding yards of the Clyde, all of them, and my brain is still reeling under the impression produced by the most stupendous scene of naval activity in the history of the world—the phrase is that of a great builder who stood beside me on a little tug that chugged along mile after mile between what seemed almost a solid wall of hulls towering above us on either side.

But no man may visit the Clyde and describe what he has seen. My trip was arranged by the admiralty, and what is written here consists merely of an attempt to convey to the reader some idea of what the men and women of England are accomplishing without giving away any one of some hundreds of secrets—such big secrets that they fairly shout themselves at the least expert observer who passes them. For the reporter who writes a story about the Clyde, however he may bore his readers in America, may be absolutely certain that he will have at least one most attentive reader in the admiralty buildings in Berlin.

The Clyde in peace time is not a haven of rest. Beside the narrow stream, twenty miles from the sea, and fifty years ago only three feet deep, the building of ships, in the great yards of Beardmore, John Brown Company, Harlan and Wolff, and a score of smaller firms, goes on continuously. Some warships are always under construction, but normally the bulk of the Clydebank shipbuilding goes to swell the great British mercantile marine, nearly half of which was built here.

### Navy Comes First.

Today, as has been true since the beginning of the war, the navy comes first on the Clyde. Until recently practically no work was done here excepting for the navy. If the reader who has seen the Clyde imagines, however, that he can picture what is going on here by thinking of warships on the stocks instead of freighters and liners, he will underestimate the present rate of construction by several hundred per cent. For it is not only the stocks in use in peace time that today hold their growing burdens of steel.

Ships are being built all along the banks on temporary stocks, so closely crowded together that it might almost be said that in many parts of the river their number is limited only by the amount of waterfront, since each ship must be built in a position to launch. And when a ship does take the water, it is the custom on the Clyde today to commission her successor, not next month or next week, but

today or tonight. An empty ship on the Clyde was something I did not see.

### Many Ships Being Built.

Keeping this statement in mind, some conception of the size of the new British navy, which is being silently created, may be formed when it is remembered that the Clyde, though the largest manufactory of ships in Great Britain, is by no means the only one. On the river Tyne, on the Humber and the Mersey, and at Belfast, and in the Tees, Harlow and Wear district ships are feverishly building, as well as in four great government dock yards. In 1914, the Clyde produced one-quarter of the total tonnage built in the country. It may be inferred, therefore, that the British are turning out at least four times as many ships as the Germans possibly can make, and there are good reasons why the proportion is probably very much greater than that.

Our trip down the river was interrupted at several points, and climbing ashore from the tugboat, I was shown at close range some of the most interesting types of ships, types that were unknown before the war. For instance, a great ship of design most peculiar, torpedo proof and mine proof. She can be struck by torpedoes and mines, but when they go off they cannot hurt her. She—but another word about her and the censor would be on my head.

Breathless with admiration, I walked round and round a ship which is so fast that she can sail round anything of her approximate class in the German navy, or in any other—so powerful she can blow out of the water the mightiest battleship in the service of Britain's enemy. Eighteen months ago, that ship was not even designed—at least not designed in anything like the shape she appears today. When she will be in service I do not know, but she looks about ready for business. I may be permitted to quote the remark of one of the builders of this powerful leviathan. "She will be with the fleet," he said, "less than seventeen months after the first plates were laid."

### Fast Ships Designed.

There are other ships building on the Clyde faster than the fastest battleship, mightier than the strongest German super-Dreadnought. There are ships which I saw which are faster and stronger than the one just mentioned. The most secret details concerning these ships, such as their actual maximum speed, are unknown in the highest naval circles, excepting in that particular tiny circle to which such things pertain in the ordinary course of business.

The Briton has a reputation for conservatism, but when he takes to the water he forgets this and becomes the most daring of innovators; to illustrate which fact, I may mention a great pile of rusting junk in a certain shipyard. "What on earth is that?" I asked. "Oh," replied my guide, "those were the engines of the—." We got 'em inside her, then they made some improvements in the design to make them a bit better, so we yanked these out and put in new

### Britain Desires Navy of Such Size That All Thought of a Rival on the Seas Will Be Removed.

All this, remember, in a great ship that must be built, and will be built, in seventeen months.

### Women Good Workers.

If we can put the ladies to building super-Dreadnoughts, they can do most anything, and we need never lack for men to fight the Boches," remarked a naval officer beside me, and I assented, wondering whether the women whose sharp-eyed work I was watching will be willing to go back to the ribbon counter, the home with its brooms and dishpan when the men come back.

Many cruisers of many kinds are building on the Clyde. Patrol boats of exceeding speed, whose mission is to make life unhealthy for the German submarine, are being built in batches, and wherever there appears no room for a big ship, slips have been erected upon which half a dozen destroyers or submarines are being built. I counted the number of each of these types which I saw during the trip down the river. I am not sorry that the censor does not permit me to print that number, for it would arouse incredulity.

I would not believe it myself if I had not made the count. And the submarines and destroyers which are thus being turned out in batches, like standardized cheap motor cars, are very different from those which were known before the war and appear in the naval lists. They are very much bigger, and more powerful, and, above all, faster.

### Two Questions Asked.

At luncheon on Clydebank, sitting a few yards from a slip where one of the largest Atlantic liners was launched a few years ago, now occupied by a warship bigger than the liner and superior to anything now afloat, I put two questions to my hosts. "What does Britain want with a navy of such size?" and "Why does she get the men to man it?"

"The first question is not so foolish as it sounds. Figures which had just been frankly discussed, and which I cannot give, showed conclusively that the feverish shipbuilding of the present, at least with reference to ships newly laid down, can have no reference to danger from Germany in the present war.

At the beginning of the war the proportion of effective battle strength between Britain and Germany was as two to one, but that proportion is now increasing at a perfectly ridiculous rate. If the war lasts another eighteen months it may be more like four to one, giving the German shipbuilders the benefit of every possible doubt. It is natural, therefore, to wonder why the strain is being kept up in these islands, for ships are expensive.

Several naval officers of high rank answered my question. They will gather the different points made into one statement. What does Britain want with a navy of such size? It is perfectly true that the margin of absolute safety against Germany has probably been reached long before the ships now being laid down come out. But it is the intention of the admiralty, at the end of the war, to present before the astounded German people a fleet of such size and power that all thought of ever rivaling Britain upon the seas will vanish from the mind of Germany.

### Navy Is Unhindered.

Then, and then only, will it be possible to relax the building pressure. Meanwhile, the navy is unhindered by parliament, since its building activities are wholly secret and it gets all the money it asks for without having to account for a shilling, so the political drag on building programs with which Americans and all democrats are familiar for the moment, does not exist.

It is intended, however, to produce to the world when peace comes not only an overwhelmingly big navy, but the most efficient, with the best guns, the fastest ships, and a proof of the superiority of British design and naval science over the German, which shall convince even the Germans themselves that further rivalry is hopeless.

My second question, as to the possibility of manning the vast numbers of ships which are pouring out of the slips, brought a tribute to the mercantile marine. The number of men more than twice the number serving in peace time, and most of the new officers are men who served on merchant ships, were members of the naval reserve, and learned enough in their short terms of duty with the fleet in past years to be whipped into shape as capable members of the royal navy in very quick time.

### Old Ships Are Shelved.

As new ships are put into commission, old ones are constantly being shelved, and the crews of the older ships put on board the new ones. The story of how the crews of British submarines were trained was told, but for several reasons I may not repeat it. The difficulty of manning the under-water boats has been solved by a system of training most ingenious, which does not take as long as formerly, and which it is hoped the Germans have not yet fully understood and imitated.

The Clyde is known throughout Britain as the center of labor agitations in normal times, and the introduction of women and unskilled labor into exclusive unions of shipbuilders, jealous of rights and privileges they had won by bitter struggle, has naturally made trouble. Agitators have been deported, and newspapers which in the opinion of the government were preaching disloyalty have been suppressed. The temper of the men, on the whole, is surprisingly good, however. This statement comes from members of the shipbuilding firms, a source not likely to be prejudiced in

favor of the workmen. On the day of my visit work was going on as usual, yet the day was a traditional local holiday. There are no holidays on the Clyde during the war, and work goes on, day and night, week days and Sundays.

In view of the terrific and continuous labor on the hundreds of ships under construction, I tried to get some idea of the hours the men and women workers are kept on duty. The women regularly get one day off a week, and that, as a rule, not more than eight hours, and never more than eleven, I was told. It has not been found possible to give all the men a day off a week, and stories are told of indispensable workmen whose absence would tie up some whole department, working straight through from the beginning of the war, twelve or more hours a day, with only a few days off in twenty-four months. The working hours are unquestionably much harder than American workmen would put up with, except in such a crisis as this, but the men are successfully appealed to on patriotic grounds. They know that their lot is easy compared to their friends in the trenches, and they know that Britain must have ships.

### A Touching Sight.

It was most touching to see the effect of the battle of Jutland on the curve upon the chart in my office, which shows working efficiency," said a manager of one enormous plant which would swallow up the work of a Navy Yard. "There are always a certain number of men who get drunk, or who fail to show up for work, and naturally we have to be pretty lenient with these men, if they are skillful workmen. We cannot afford to discharge them. The charts always show, then, a certain falling off from the highest possible level of output.

"But one morning the men read of a fight in which we had lost seventeen ships, and struck them dead. I saw the result next week when the curve showing number of hours of time lost through avoidable absence was plotted on the chart. It jumped up almost to the perfection line, and a deputation of men came to the office and said they wanted us to know that the few fellows who didn't show up the morning after the battle news were too drunk to understand that England had lost ships which would be replaced. When they sobered up and took in the news they came back, too. Of course, the effect of such news wears off, it does not last, unfortunately, until the new ships are in commission, but such an incident shows the men's hearts are right. We shall treasure that chart."

It would be misleading, in a story about the Clyde, to give the impression that only warships are under construction. The submarine campaign last year, and especially the more virulent U-boat war this spring, coupled with the highly satisfactory state of the naval building program, resulted in a resumption of the building of merchant shipping on a considerable scale, though not one approaching the normal peacetime output. Sandwiched in between cruisers, destroyers, battle cruisers and submarines, I saw many great freighters which will take the places of those sunk by the Germans.

### Designers Kept Busy.

Naval designers have been busy even in this field. It was quite noticeable that many of the ships being built which are for the war will travel as ordinary merchantmen had features about them which will make them extremely serviceable to the navy during war time. Special devices for mine sweeping and mine laying and other devices are being closely connected with warlike were to be seen, and I was told that the admiralty is giving preference in merchant construction to ships which can be used as auxiliaries when needed. All the ships now building on the Clyde, even the most harmless-looking tramps, can only be built by permission of the admiralty, and the same rule holds in every British shipyard. As a result, no work at all is being done, or has been done during the war, for neutral shipping firms. All energy is concentrated on British needs, and the needs of the allies.

I understand that in some of the other great shipbuilding centers, which I have not visited, more merchant ships are being built than on the Clyde, which has until very recently been given over almost entirely to naval work. Merchant ships which stood untouched on the slips from the day war began are now being hastily completed. It is recognized by the admiralty that the shortage of tonnage is so serious that a freight steamer has become valuable as a means toward winning the war, no less than a warship.

### Speed a Big Factor.

To an American, viewing the incredible number of warships building on the Clyde and reflecting, as was inevitable upon his own navy, thoughts which are rather agreeable were bound to come. I am in no way qualified or disposed to offer criticism of our methods at home, but I feel most positive that if the British permitted the world to know anything of what they are doing in warship construction, very much more emphasis would be laid upon speed in our new ships. Above all, it is not enough now to lay down ships as fast as those which appear upon the published naval lists of foreign powers. "The ships which England tells the world about are already out of date," said A. H. Pollen, the famous naval expert, in a recent conversation.

That remark came back to me on the Clyde when I remembered the discussions in the American newspapers about some of our new battleships, to be the most powerful in the world, and some battle cruisers, to be the most powerful of their class, which Congress is just now providing for. They will be laid down, I don't know. It is perhaps correct to say that these ships are the most powerful concerning which public discussion has taken place anywhere. But I trust the British censor will allow me to say that I have seen British ships building which vastly outclass American ships which as yet are only talked about as the biggest or most powerful or fastest ships of their class. I should be angry if an Englishman said to me, "The British build first and talk afterward, while you—" but I will not pursue the matter further.

### HOROSCOPE.

"The stars incline, but do not compel."

Sunday, August 13, 1916.

This is not a fortunate day, according to astrology. It is well to pursue routine affairs. Although Mercury is in a benefic aspect with Mars, Uranus, the Sun, and Venus are all adverse.

The rule is peculiarly unfavorable for association with persons whose influence is desired in any financial or philanthropic enterprise. It is not a suspicious time for calls or social affairs.

Women come under a sway, peculiarly sinister where men are concerned. This is believed to make them aggressive and likely to take the initiative in love affairs, only to be disappointed.

The evil power of Uranus may be felt today in the irritability and changeableness of men and women upon whom any responsibility devolves.

In the map of the full Moon of this date Jupiter is in a place that is read as indicating increased sentiment in favor of peace in Europe and strong demands for the cessation of war against the populace in cities of Germany, Italy, and England.

Saturn is so posited as to presage trouble in shipping affairs. These will affect Great Britain first, but the

United States and Canada may be especially interested.

Activity in the United States navy is indicated by this configuration. Persons in authority may be severely criticized.

A serious earthquake is threatened next month for 163 degrees west longitude, and seismic disturbances may be expected in the western part of the United States.

Disorder and internal troubles are prognosticated for Russia, Italy, and Persia.

Fraud and embezzlement in public places are persistently foreshadowed.

Persons whose birthdate it is have the augury of travel and change that may not be satisfactory.

Children born on this day may be constantly changing business as well as places of residence. These subjects of Leo excel in outdoor sports and have talent for leadership.

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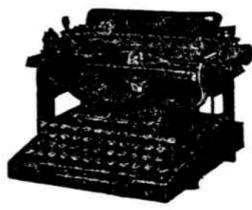
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