

FRANCE'S CLAIM TO THE SARRE REGION

BY F. ENGERAND

THE restoration of Alsace-Lorraine, that is to say, of the territory taken from us in 1871, does not bring France to its old frontiers or restore to her the province of Lorraine in its integrity. To limit our claim to the present area of Alsace-Lorraine would be to imply our recognition of the frontier of 1815; it would mean that France for a second time signed the fatal treaty of that year.

The 1815 frontier was the frontier of a defeated nation; strategically it was very bad, for it aimed to give Prussia access to the principal routes by which France might be invaded; to that end, the treaty detached an important part of Lorraine, the region of the Sarre.

This region of the Sarre had been united to France in 1648, and shared the destinies of the duchy of Lorraine of which it was an integral part and one of the great defenses. For us, Sarrelouis constituted a lock on one of the gates of invasion; the town had been powerfully fortified by Louis XIV, whose name it keeps. Ney was born there.

In 1814, the Allies, among whom was to be found the King of Prussia, had allowed France to retain not only Sarrelouis and the right bank of the Sarre, but also Sarrebrück and the left bank. Why? Because they had recognized our historic right to the territory on the one hand, and the proprietary right of the French government to the coal mines of the region on the other.

The Sarre is, in fact, the centre of an important coal basin which was opened to use through the agency and the funds of the French government. Be-

tween 1808 and 1811 Napoleon had caused the engineers of the mining bureau to survey the three hundred and sixty-seven square kilometres of the basin of the Sarre; the results of this work were registered in an atlas, a veritable register of discovered mines, and the whole business was officially recognized as the most considerable operation of its kind ever executed in France, perhaps in Europe even.

In 1814 Prussian troops occupied the region of Sarrebrück, and in 1815 the Prussian Government, to whose attention the importance of the coal beds had been brought, demanded a rectification of the frontier of the previous year. The intention of that Government to have the mines is revealed by the second frontier which follows the very edge of the coal veins which were then known.

But this was not all. The Government of Prussia had the effrontery to demand the results of the work of French engineers; it asked for the atlas in which they had registered the results of their deliberations. This requisition was entirely contrary to the stipulations of the treaty of Paris of 1814, nevertheless, the Government of Louis XVIII had the weakness to yield, and on the 30th of July, 1817, ceded to Prussia the precious documents she claimed.

There you have your irrefutable proof that the Prussian administration turned the work of French engineers to its own use, and that for one more time the French State had worked for the *Roi de Prusse*.

In claiming the Lorraine region of the Sarre, France merely asserts her right to her old frontiers; in claiming the coal beds of the Sarre, the French Government merely claims its own property.

To the historical side of the case, which dominates the debate over the matter, may be added a less sentimental but most powerful economic case.

Before and during the war Germany's greatest strength lay in the coal with which she was so abundantly provided. It was this coal which permitted of the unheard-of development of German metallurgy. The lack of coal, on the other hand, has been for a century the cause of the industrial mediocrity of France which has been forced to buy

twenty million tons, a third of the total consumed, from abroad.

Germany's criminal destruction of our northern coal areas has cut our supply in half. Alsace and Lorraine use about twenty million tons. From whom shall they have it if our frontier remains that of 1815? We shall have to buy it of Germany, and shall find ourselves, after victory even, a tributary of the stranger for three fourths of our coal supply! And that 'stranger' will be the Government of Prussia!

A return to the frontier of 1815 will have as its consequence the economic vassalage of France to Germany. Is it admissible, is it possible that the heroism of our soldiers and the immensity of our sacrifices should end with such a result?

Le Petit Parisien

DEER

BY JOHN DRINKWATER

SHY in their herding dwell the fallow deer.
 They are spirits of wild sense. Nobody near
 Comes upon their pastures. There a life they live,
 Of sufficient beauty, phantom, fugitive,
 Treading as in jungles free leopards do,
 Printless as evelight, instant as dew.
 The great kine are patient, and homecoming sheep
 Know our bidding. The fallow deer keep
 Delicate and far their counsels wild,
 Never to be folded reconciled
 To the spoiling hand as the poor flocks are;
 Lightfoot, and swift, and unfamiliar,
 These you may not hinder, unconfined
 Beautiful flocks of the mind.

Reveille