

of the flax-spinning industry, the case of MM. Paulle Blan Père et Fils may be quoted. Two fifths of their machinery (which is all English, by firms like James Mackay and Sons) of the newest kinds was sent to Germany, two fifths was broken up for scrap, and one fifth was left, but left denuded of brass and copper. In this work of pillage the Germans employed Russian prisoners. One of the firm's mills became in German hands a soda-water factory, and a line of railway was constructed alongside.

These examples have been chosen at random from among the mills of Lille. One might easily extend them, but enough has been said to show the nature of the problems that now confront French industry. The first element in reconstruction is that of cost. All manufacturers have reported to the French Government the state of their mills and the extent of the damage done. The future is looked forward to with apprehension. Mill building and equipment costs have quadrupled since the war. No one cares to move until he knows how the State will assist him. I heard a good deal of criticism of the dilatoriness of the French Ministry. Lancashire's contribution depends in part on both governments, for when the financial basis of reconstruction has been settled priority must be granted by the British Committee already set up. The question of raw material is also of international concern. Our prospective cotton supply is short enough to raise some anxious questions as to its apportionment between the claims of Lancashire and the Continental buyers.

Meanwhile France has to maintain many thousands of unemployed factory workers. The refugees who left Lille in 1914 will shortly be returning — they are at present deterred from returning owing to the food shortage. Employers are receiving every day inquiries from their workpeople that it is

impossible to satisfy. A system of doles cannot continue indefinitely.

The Manchester Guardian

## THE OUTLOOK IN MEXICO

THE sudden close of the world-war has revived the hope that the United States Government may find time to attend to the means of assisting President Carranza's Government to restore order in Mexico. The London prices of the leading Government, railroad, and other stocks, though below the highest figures attained in October, are in general considerably above the then lowest, and much better than at the end of last year, and a demand is noted this week for certain railroad stocks. Conditions appear to be improving, even in the disturbed northern States. The President's Message to Congress, delivered on September 1st, mentions that some 107,000 hectares, or more than 260,000 acres, of land have been given or restored to communities in various parts of the Republic, and the continuance of this process should prove an effectual means of allaying agrarian discontent. The Message gives particulars of considerable public works and of one important railway extension, and states that the safety of communication by rail is increasing, and that the railways are well guarded. Little has been heard lately of the activities of the bands of Villa and Zapata, and they have probably been reduced almost to impotence by the exhaustion of their ammunition. Still, last August a revolutionist general (apparently a Zapatist) demanded \$60,000 of the authorities in Morelia, in Michoacan, threatening to blow up the electric power station of the city (75 miles distant) if it were not forthcoming; and the threat was carried out. And the termination of the war opens the way to a danger which it is to be hoped the

Peace Congress will take steps to preclude, namely, the sale of the surplus stocks of arms and munitions in Europe to traders who may export them to revolutionists in Spanish America — while the activity of these latter may be stimulated by soldiers of fortune from Europe and German strategists out of work. There may, indeed, be danger in sales even to the governments, for there is reason to believe that no Mexican Government since the fall of Diaz has been able to protect the contents of its arsenals from the revolutionists. However, the large German element in Mexico and other Spanish-American countries will probably be joined by fresh immigrants, who will have lost any sympathy with German aspirations after world dominion, and will have every reason to promote internal peace. But President Carranza's Government, which, according to the Message, has induced Congress to authorize the raising of loans at home

or abroad, amounting to 300,000,000 pesos, or £30,000,000, can only obtain them, under existing conditions, in the United States. Informal conversations regarding them have taken place, according to the Message, with American bankers, but they are not likely to be approved by the Government at Washington unless adequate security is furnished, and the assistance of American experts is accepted in 'straightening out' the finances of Mexico. President Carranza has already availed himself of such assistance spontaneously, but the passages in the Message devoted to foreign relations suggest that he may take his stand on the dignity of the nation, and that foreign governments may find considerable difficulty in negotiating with him. A foreign loan, however, is the only means by which Mexico can be rapidly extricated from the plight into which she has sunk during the past seven years of revolution.

The Economist

## TALK OF EUROPE

### A GERMAN OFFICER AT THE ARMISTICE MEETING

A MEMBER of the German Armistice Commission has given the *Vossische Zeitung* the following details of the events accompanying the signing of the armistice.

The Commission arrived on November 8 from Spa at the French lines, where several motor cars were waiting to take us to the appointed place. The motor drive with the French officers lasted ten hours, and it appeared to me that the drive was intentionally prolonged in order to carry us across the

devastated provinces and to prepare us for the hardest conditions which feelings of hatred and revenge might demand from us. One of the Frenchmen silently pointed out to us a heap of ruins, saying 'Voila St. Quentin.' In the evening a train was ready for us with blinds down, and when we arose next morning the train had stopped in the middle of a forest. We now know that it was the forest of Compiègne. It was perhaps a measure of precaution that we were not taken to some town. We were in a forest where there were no houses or tents,