

TRADE WITH RUSSIA.

RUSSO-AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF COMMERCE.

THE COUNTRIES COMPARED.

WHAT RUSSIA WANTS.

AUSTRALIA CAN PROVIDE.

On Friday afternoon Captain Klatchko, representing the Russo-Australian Bureau of Commerce, addressed a gathering of members of the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce on the question of promoting reciprocal trade relations between the Commonwealth of Australia and Russia (reports the "Register"). The president (Mr. F. W. Vasey) occupied the chair, and there was a representative attendance of members.

"Big Brother Among the Allies."

The chairman, in introducing Captain Klatchko, said that gentleman was the official trade representative in Australia of the Russian Government, of Manchuria and Mongolia, and he had come here to organise a branch of the Russo-Australian Chamber of Commerce. He was representing the big brother among the Allies, Russia—(applause)—and although Russia at the present time was passing through a political crisis, he assured them that Captain Klatchko believed that when the trouble was settled, which might be in two or three months, Russia would be found as firm a friend as she was before the crisis arose. (Applause). Captain Klatchko was not a commercial man, but that did not matter, as he was only here on organising work. He was an army surgeon, and was present with our boys at Gallipoli, and in Egypt afterwards. (Applause). He was subsequently appointed to the staff of the General Hospital in Cairo, and Dr. Ramsay Smith had informed him (the speaker) that he had rendered splendid service to our men there. (Applause). Mr. Vasey then gave a few particulars regarding the extent of Russia's trade, and said as an instance of the success that had so far attended Captain Klatchko's efforts, that 700 members had enrolled in

under Captain Klatchko's efforts, that 700 members had enrolled in Melbourne, and more than 300 in Western Australia, from which State he had just returned. Captain Klatchko spoke five languages, and would address them in English, but if members preferred it he would be delighted to make his remarks in Russian. (Laughter).

German Influence in Russia.

The visitor, a tall, military-looking man, of fine physique, and speaking excellent English, was received with cheers as he rose to address the gathering. In opening his remarks he said that some people seemed to consider that Russia's efforts were hindered as regarded the war, but he could assure them that those who thought so never made a greater mistake in their lives. As a matter of fact, things would now be conducted very differently. The old regime was thoroughly German, and permeated with Teutonic ideas, and their one idea was to end the war as speedily as possible. When they had such men as Count de Fredericks (Minister of the Imperial Household), Baron Woodburg, and Baron Hackelburg—that sounded pure Russian—(laughter)—occupying the highest positions in Russia, and when so many of those surrounding the Czar were thoroughly German in their sentiments, they could readily understand that the Kaiser must have felt very satisfied at knowing that he had so many friends in the Russian Government. For the first nine months of the war, it had been asserted, the Russian troops were really ordered not to oppose the German forces, and under those circumstances they could understand how such patriots as the Grand Duke Nicholas and General Brusiloff felt. (Applause). From the outbreak of the war the one object of the Grand Duke was to get rid of the Germans who were surrounding the Czar, but his enemies proved the stronger, and succeeded in getting him sent to the Caucasus. Many generals were dismissed, simply because they wished to put up a good fight, and when the Duma heard of these things they at once declined to make peace. (Applause). Of course, there were divisions in parties in Russia; he had even noticed that they had divisions in this country. (Laughter). It was not a question of monarchic or republican government in Russia, but which Government would be the best

publican government in Russia, but which Government would be the best for the country. (Hear, hear). And now he was coming to another matter. It was not sufficient to beat Germany in the field, they must beat her in the commercial world as well. They must continue the fight after the war. And, apropos of that, he might tell them that he had just received advice that half a million Russian soldiers were on their way to the Western front, to assist the 175,000 of their fellow-countrymen who were already fighting there. (Applause). Russia's trouble hitherto had been lack of guns and ammunition. Last year, just before the harvest, the Government called all the young men to the colors, the result being that it was impossible to get hands to reap the corn, and, in consequence, about 50,000,000 tons of wheat was spoiled. The Government also called up all the men from the factories, with the result that the munition works were emptied, and while Russia had about 22,000,000 men, it was impossible to arm or clothe them. All these things were done with the object of forcing the nation to sue for peace.

Learning the Australian Language.

He sincerely trusted that the friendship between Great Britain and Russia would not cease after the war. (Applause). If there was only one purpose that had been served by the war, it was that it had made them as people know one another better. He had travelled a great deal, but before the war he had known of Australia only by name, and that it was about 6000 miles from Europe. To know a people one required to live among them, and to speak their language. He had been attached to General Maxwell's staff in Egypt with the Australians, and had had a jolly nice time. (Laughter). He did not know the Australian language before—he meant the slang, but he soon learnt it. (Renewed laughter). He did not always use it, but he used it sometimes, and when he went back to Russia he had no doubt it would come in useful there. (Laughter). He had no idea that Australia possessed such fine soldiers, and when he first saw them they reminded him of his own countrymen. Australia, too, reminded him very much of parts of Russia, and the climate was very similar. Having met so many Australians it had made him very anxious to see this country,

and he had therefore been delighted when he was appointed to a transport to come to Australia with wounded soldiers. On the way out the captain lent him a book on Australia by Foster Fraser. After he had read it he said to the captain, "I can't understand it. It seems to me that the Australians do nothing but play golf and such games." When he came here and saw and mixed with the people he wondered how such a book could have been written. He ceased to wonder, however, after he had read Mr. Fraser's book on "Russia." (Laughter). The author spent nine days travelling through Russia by express, and his opinions of Russia appeared to have been gleaned on the journey. His views on Aus-

tralia were about as reliable as they were on Russia.

The Objects of the Mission.

Speaking in regard to the special object of his mission, Captain Klatchko said that advice reached M. d'Abaga, the Russian Consul-General in Melbourne, from M. Sazonoff, their President, urging the advisableness of establishing a Russian-Australian Bureau of Commerce and Information, whereby Russian commercial men could get an idea of Australian requirements, and vice versa. Australia was a splendid country, but it was being spoiled. They had too many men who did nothing but hold meetings, and did little or no work. (Hear, hear). Life was made too easy for them. He thought the climate had something to do with it. It oftentimes made him feel that he did not want to work. (Laughter). Russia was appointing delegates in the leading towns in Australia, who would communicate with headquarters, and arrange for the holding of exhibitions in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, and elsewhere. They would be open for a year, and Russia would send everything she could supply. In the meantime Russia wanted samples of Australian produce, which would be placed on exhibition in five or six of the leading towns in Russia. They wanted specialists from Australia, men who could show them how mining and such industries could be carried on. They could take machinery from Australia, and they wanted any amount of wool. In Russia they had nearly

wool. In Russia they had nearly 200,000,000 people and 65,000,000 sheep, while in Australia they had 5,000,000 people and 95,000,000 sheep. They could also take Australia's fruit, agricultural machinery, parchment, tallow, hides, and rabbit skins, which latter were in great demand for gloves and caps. Next week classes would be opened at the Adelaide High School, where Russian would be taught free of charge. In Russia, 1905, English was now being taught.

New Russian Steamship Lines.

It would be impossible to open up trade without ships, and a little later it was proposed to establish two lines of steamers from Russia to Australia. One would run from the Baltic and Black seas via Colombo, and the other from Vladivostok. This latter line would afford people an opportunity to see Russia on their way to England.

The journey would not take more than 25 or 26 days, and would be much cheaper than the present routes. At present Australia did very little trade with Russia. Between 1911 and 1913 Russia sent £1900 worth of goods to Australia, and Australia dispatched £4,200 worth to Russia. During the same period the trade between Germany and Russia amounted to no less than £118,000,000. He thanked them sincerely for the welcome they had given him, and assured them of a hearty welcome when after the war any of them visited Russia. (Applause).

Mr. E. Allnutt moved,—“That a branch of the Russian-Australian Bureau of Commerce and Information be formed in South Australia, and the members of the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce present at this meeting hereby enrol themselves as the first members of the branch.”

Mr. W. H. Phillips seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

At the instance of Mr. Allnutt thanks were accorded to Captain Klatchko, and three cheers were given for Russia. The visitor briefly acknowledged the compliment, and in doing so paid a high tribute to the work performed in Egypt by the Australian Red Cross Society.