

on the verge of starvation and that a general collapse might be expected at any moment.

The French Ministry was twice reorganized, and on November 15 Dr. Georges Clemenceau became premier for a second time and succeeded in forming a strong Cabinet. The privations of the people from want of food increased but were generally endured with patience. A serious strike occurred in the large steel works at Harfleur and similar strikes on a smaller scale occurred elsewhere.

The lack of food in Italy also caused adverse criticism and discontent. The defeat of the Italian army followed by an alarming invasion of Italian territory brought about the defeat of the Ministry.

The adjustment of the supply of food to the needs of the people became the problem of chief importance in Great Britain. Stringent regulations were enforced respecting the manufacture of flour and use of sugar. Before the end of the year the control of all principal articles of food was taken over, and maximum prices fixed for most of them. The shortage of tea and sugar was severely felt.

The premiers of all overseas dominions had been invited at the end of the preceding year to attend meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet. Its first meeting was held at Westminster on March 20. All overseas dominions except Australia were represented. Fourteen meetings were held at which the overseas members were furnished with all information respecting the prosecution of the war in possession of the British Government.

The high cost of food and restrictions on personal liberty introduced under the War Measures Act caused considerable discontent and restlessness among the working classes. Little economic disturbance, however, was occasioned by strikes among workmen.

#### OPERATIONS ON THE WESTERN FRONT, 1918.

The conclusion of an armistice with the Russian Soviet Republic on December 15, 1917, left Germany at liberty to transfer to this front a force estimated to amount to more than a million of men with artillery in proportion, and the German army there was consequently increased from one hundred and fifty divisions in November, 1917, to one hundred and ninety-six in March, 1918. A considerable numerical preponderance was accordingly regained and combined with the enormous advantage of the unified command of a homogeneous force acting upon interior and therefore shorter lines. A deficiency in the necessities of life had however produced serious discontent and suffering among the people, and the conviction was growing daily stronger that decisive success was no longer possible; still it was decided by the governing authorities to make a final desperate effort to gain a favourable decision by an offensive on a greater scale than had yet been attempted. Preparations for this were carried on with great secrecy for many weeks, by the concentration of troops in reserve positions, the accumulation of munitions and special training of "storm troops" in the new methods of attack that had recently been developed with marked success on the eastern front by General von Hutier. As the number of American troops in France was