

## CONVENTION IS SUGGESTED

Vanderhoof Board of Trade  
Wants Prince Rupert to Take  
the Lead in Peace River  
Plans

In connection with the Peace River outlet to the Pacific coast the Vanderhoof Board of Trade made a suggestion to the Prince Rupert Board at its meeting last night as follows:

"We have your letter of recent date re Peace River railway outlet, and note you have a committee working on this question."

"At the last general meeting of this board, the whole matter was thoroughly discussed, including the question of a separate province, and I have been instructed to write and state the attitude of this board on this question."

"While our members feel that it is premature at the present time to go on record as endorsing the idea of the new province, yet at the same time, they think it is up to the larger centres in the territory affected, such as Peace River, Grand Prairie and your selves to take the initiative in getting all possible data, and when this has been done, to call a convention, giving representation to all places affected, so that the whole matter can be discussed intelligently, and a decision arrived at."

"I am asked to say that Vanderhoof will be glad to be represented at such a convention, and that our members are very interested in this question. They feel, however, that the above mentioned centres, are in a way, more vitally concerned and we are now suggesting this move to them."

"GEORGE OGSTON."

## SECRET WORK OF BRITISH

Sir Alfred Ewing Tells of His  
Task in Dealing With the  
Enemy Cyphers

KEPT NAVY INFORMED

Heard All Radio Messages and  
Translated Them For Use of  
the Admiralty

LONDON, Jan. 18.—Sir Alfred Ewing, principal of Edinburgh University, in an address here told of the work done in his department during the war in listening in on the enemy radio messages and deciphering them for the use of the British Admiralty and thus keeping the British informed of what the enemy intended to do.

Admiral Sir Henry Oliver, then director of naval intelligence, knowing that he was interested in methods of ciphering, handed him some wireless "intercepts," saying that there was no department for dealing with them, and leaving him to attempt the job. This was the beginning of what grew to be an important organization for collecting and deciphering the enemy messages. He got a few friends to come and help him; they worked hard and had remarkable luck. The deciphering office was soon established as a separate branch of the Admiralty under the lecturer's direction; the staff of cryptographers was gradually increased till it numbered about 50; numerous listening stations were set up, at which the fleet signals and other wireless messages of the enemy were systematically taken in, and from which they were telegraphed to the Admiralty to be deciphered.

### MOVEMENTS FORKNOWN

When the work had passed its initial stage as many as 2,000 intercepted messages were often received and dealt with in the course of 24 hours. In this way a close and constant watch was kept on the German fleet, and information was obtained beforehand of their prospective movements. Thus it was, for example, that the British Admiralty knew the day before the battle of the Dogger Bank what German ships were coming out, at what time they were coming, and where they were going. All this information was obtained from intercepted and deciphered German signals, by which orders were given from German headquarters to the ships concerned. It was obtained in good time to enable the British Admiralty to arrange for suitable counter-measures, described by Mr. Churchill in his book on "The World Crisis." Next morning the action of the Dogger Bank began: the watchers in the Admiralty, deciphering every signal, followed it in all its phases from the beginning to the end. Similarly, the Battle of Jutland was brought about in consequence of the Germans signalling orders by wireless, which, when deciphered in Whitehall, gave sufficient indication of their intended plans.

### SECRETS OF ROOM 40

From December, 1914, when the system of intercepting and deciphering the enemy messages had become effectively developed, and the various cipher keys had been discovered, the German fleet made no movements which were not known in advance through the information they unwittingly gave to the Admiralty by their own cipher signals. The branch of the Admiralty where all this was done was called Room 40, and its business was referred to simply as the work of Room 40, to avoid any description that might betray the secret, or excite curiosity. The fact that such work was going on at all was known to very few persons even in official circles or in the fleet. It was a jealously guarded secret; any suspicion, or at least any knowledge of it, on the part of the enemy might have been a disaster, for it would probably have caused the source of information to dry up.

It remained a secret to the end, and was perhaps the best kept secret of the war. From time to time he would be on tenterhooks lest the enemy should guess that their plans were known, when on their excursions they unexpectedly found British ships which had been sent to meet them. But the assumed stupidity of the British was a most valuable asset, and it was not, until the war was over that the Germans became aware how completely their confidential channels of communication had been compromised.

Sir Alfred Ewing described how certain of the enemy's code-books came into British hands through amazing pieces of good fortune. To take advantage of them, however, there had to be a constant discovery of keying processes, which were liable to be changed, and were, in fact, often changed. In 1916 the Germans contracted a habit of changing the key of the principal Naval

Signal Book every night at 12 o'clock; but the deciphering staff of Room 40 had by that time become so expert that the changes caused the night watch no serious embarrassment. They were reading messages in the new key two or three hours later.

The Zeppelins were remarkably loquacious, especially in telling of their exploits when on the way home. So, too, the submarines would detail their "bag." In May, 1915, for instance, U 22

exultantly reported by wireless cipher her sinking of the Lusitania. It was a point of immense consequence to the strategy of the war, on the naval side, that Room 40 could be counted on to give news beforehand of any excursion on the part of the German fleet. Apart from that, messages which might have little apparent interest gave, when carefully collated, much useful information about such things as the composition of squadrons and the position of mine-

fields. Brought in N.S. Among the many political messages read by his staff was the notorious Zimmermann telegram, which was intercepted in the manner described in the third volume of the Page Letters. President Wilson was then hesitating on the brink of war, reluctant to plunge, clinging painfully to the idea of neutrality which seemed to be almost a part of his religion. The Zimmermann message, which revealed a conditional offer to Mexico of an alliance against the United States, was deciphered in Room 40. It was then communicated very confidentially by Lord Balfour to Mr. Page and through Page to Wilson, and was given by him to the American Press. Its publication was decisive in converting American opinion to the necessity of war. But the curtain which hid Room 40 remained undisturbed.



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