

CIGARETTE TOBACCO FAMINE THREATENED

**War Cuts Off Levantine Supply
and Greatly Reduces the
Acreage Planted.**

TOBACCO LAND PUT TO GRAIN

**Germany and Austria Bare of Stock
—Closing of Dardanelles
Stops Shipments.**

A shortage and an advance in the price of Turkish tobacco are predicted by James M. Dixon of the Tobacco Products Corporation, who has just returned from a tour of Asia Minor, Turkey and Greece.

"The available supply from the crop of 1914 now being dealt in," said Mr. Dixon yesterday, "is only half what it usually is, and of the high grade tobacco such as is used in America there is only 40 per cent. of the normal. The crop of 1915 is small in acreage, having been curtailed on account of the planting of grain, and cannot receive proper attention, so that there is no relief in sight. Furthermore, Egypt is entirely cut off from its ordinary source of supply, the Black Sea and Asia Minor and she has been compelled to buy in Greece and Macedonia this year, thus increasing competition.

"Owing to the war it is difficult to make shipments even when purchases are made. Unless the war ends soon or unless the Dardanelles are taken by the Allies, the situation in the tobacco leaf market will be extremely interesting before long. Turkish tobacco, so called, is that raised in Macedonia and adjacent places, most of which are now parts of Greece. Tobaccos used in connection with Macedonian Greek are raised on the southern shore of the Black Sea in Asia Minor from Samsun east and on the north shore of that sea, in Russia, from Sebastopol east. Egypt gets three-fourths of its supply normally from the Black Sea, and owing to the war not a pound can be had from that section, although the 1914 crop was ample."

Prices Low, But Only Nominal.

Mr. Dixon explained that the war caused a shortage of labor at the time the leaf was being cured, so that the quality is below the average. Farmers along the Black Sea have their whole crop on hand, and whereas they got 25 cents a pound for it in the field a year ago they cannot get 5 cents a pound now. In Bulgaria the same condition of market blockade prevails, and tobacco worth \$1.75 a pound can be purchased for 35 cents, but there are no purchasers, and the prices are nominal. This, according to Mr. Dixon, leaves the whole world to be supplied from Macedonia. Continuing, Mr. Dixon said:

"In Turkey and Greece there is a demand for grain and as a result a large part of the tobacco land was planted this year in wheat. Because of this, Macedonia has perhaps the largest wheat crop on record."

Mr. Dixon said that both Germany and Austria are bare of tobacco, from the manufacturer's standpoint, but once the war ends they will become urgent buyers. This condition will be more intense the longer the war lasts.

"We have considerable Turkish tobacco in Germany," said Mr. Dixon, "and the German Government is willing to let us bring it to America on condition that we return equal value of inferior grades which are more in demand in Germany. This will be done if the consent of the British Government can be got, and the necessary shipping facilities arranged. This is now a matter of Governmental inquiry.

Holdup by Railroad.

"Ordinarily it costs half a cent a pound to get tobacco out of Macedonia, but the cost is up now to 5 cents a pound. Recently I took a carload from Rustchuk, in Bulgaria, to a port in Greece. It is a ten-hour run and the Bulgarian Railroad charged me \$240 bonus per car for the privilege of making the shipment. No reason was assigned. The arbitrary demand was made and I paid it."

Mr. Dixon thinks it will take years to restore Macedonia, and particularly the tobacco industry, to normal conditions. The Turkish population has fled, and

thousands of acres of the richest land in the world lie untenanted.

Relative to the situation confronting the tobacco trade, Mr. Dixon said:

"Tobacco manufacturers are facing the peculiar condition that they are liable any time to have a sudden collapse in the price of leaf tobacco or an equally sudden advance. The fall of the Dardanelles would bring the Black Sea supply in, whereas peace would cause a sharp advance by making it possible for Austria and Germany to replenish stocks. In a few months certain brands of cigarettes cannot be manufactured unless the situation is relieved, because the leaf cannot be obtained at any price."