

## Unwise Speeches

THE discussion of the conscription measure proceeds at Ottawa, not, however, on party lines. It is understood that some French Canadian supporters of the Government will oppose the bill, while a number of Liberals have declared their intention of supporting it. In two cases, speakers have used words which are not conducive to harmony or good-will. A passage in the Prime Minister's speech contained an unpleasing suggestion concerning what might happen when the soldiers return from the war. A French member of the Opposition used language which seemed to advise forcible resistance to the law. Perhaps neither speaker meant what the language conveyed to the ordinary reader. The moderation and caution which at all times are desirable in our Parliamentary debates, as well as elsewhere, are more than ever important in the present state of affairs in Canada.

## Maritime Union

THE New Brunswick Legislature has unanimously adopted a resolution favoring a union of the three Maritime Provinces. The question is a very old one. In 1864 a conference assembled at Charlottetown to consider it. Canadian delegates went down to see the Maritime men, the Conference broke up, the question of Confederation was taken up and the broader union came into operation. Many a time since that the question of Maritime Union has been raised, but never pressed far enough to bring about a Conference of a representative character. Theoretically, all the arguments seem to favor union. But the movement has never been regarded as of an urgent character. Sometimes advocates of union have talked of the economy to be effected by having one Government and Legislature instead of three. One may well doubt if any such economy would come with union. The expenses of Government and Legislature in all the three Provinces have been on a very modest scale, some of them ridiculously so. If union were accomplished, good results in other ways might follow, but it is not at all probable that there would be any saving in the cost of government. If the movement had ever gone far enough to produce a Conference a snag would have been struck on the selection of a capital for the United Province. Neither Halifax nor Fredericton, now Provincial capitals, would be disposed to yield its honors. Charlottetown would almost certainly be out of the race, and that fact would go far to keep Prince Edward Island as much against union as it has hitherto been. The Conference proposed by the New Brunswickers might open the question in some more attractive form. But in the absence of any strong public opinion concerning it the early consummation of union is not to be expected.

## Food and Fuel

NOT too soon have the Government appointed a Fuel Controller and a Food Controller. The appointments made seem to be excellent ones. Mr. Charles A. Magrath, who has been named as Fuel Controller, was a useful member of Parliament for several years, and since his retirement from the House of Commons he has done excellent service as a member of the International Waterways Commission. Hon. Mr. Hanna, the Food Controller,

was for a long time Provincial Secretary of Ontario, and is still a member of the Ontario Cabinet, although he no longer holds a portfolio. Both these officials are men of ability and considerable experience in public affairs. The Orders in Council authorizing the appointments are broad in their scope, conveying ample powers for the regulation of the supply, storage and sale of the commodities referred to. How far the Controllers will be able to use the large powers given them remains to be seen. As a rule the less the Government have to do with regulating ordinary trade the better it will be for all concerned. But the present times are not ordinary, and the very high prices of the necessaries of life call for some effort to reduce them, or at all events to check further increase. There has been some adverse criticism, not without foundation, of the action of the Government in undertaking, some weeks ago, to fix the price of one article, newsprint paper. It has been well said that if the Government had to take action along that line, food and fuel should have been the first commodities dealt with. However, these things are covered by the Orders in Council recently passed, and the public will await with interest for the action to be taken. It is well to remember that some of the causes of high prices are world-wide, and that no Governmental action can supply all the relief that the consumers desire.

## Controlling the Church

THE Methodists would be shocked to be told that they are a state-controlled body, but a recent event in England shows that they, like others, are obliged to submit to conditions of state control that are embarrassing. One leading principle of Wesleyanism—the frequent change of the pastorate—is now temporarily suspended. We in Canada are meeting many conditions that remind us forcibly of the war. But in comparison with those which are met by the people of the motherland we have freedom and abundance. We are far enough from the sound of the guns to allow us exemption from many restrictions to which the British people have to submit. In respect of food, fuel, travel and social life we still have a freedom which the inhabitants of the United Kingdom no longer enjoy. A very important point is our freedom to travel, at all events within our own country. In England, where the Government have taken control of the railways, measures have been deliberately adopted for the purpose of restricting travel and traffic. All passenger rates have been largely increased, and freight rates also have been raised on all commodities not necessary for food or for war business. The Methodists spend a very large sum every year in moving their clergy and families from one place of duty to another. It has been found that owing to the increase in the railway charges the cost of these operations, if carried on as usual, would be a very heavy burden on the funds of the denomination. The Methodist authorities have therefore decided to suspend the operation of the moving rule, except in cases of great urgency. Thus the state control of the railways practically involves a measure of state control of the great Methodist body. The suspension of a rule to which Methodists attach much importance is one of the war burdens which have to be met, and are met cheerfully.

## Lord Northcliffe's Mission

THE early announcements respecting Lord Northcliffe's mission to the United States were confusing. The first report, apparently circulated by Lord Northcliffe's papers, that he had been appointed to succeed Mr. Balfour, was well calculated to surprise. Lord Northcliffe was well known as a man of ability and energy, but certainly not the type of man one would expect to be chosen for delicate diplomatic duties. Mr. Bonar Law's explanations in the British House of Commons only partly satisfied the public demand for information concerning the appointment. A clearer and more definite statement of the matter was much to be desired. It has now been supplied in the House of Lords by Lord Curzon, in reply to enquiries by Lord Buckmaster. It is gratifying to have from Lord Curzon the assurance that "there was no analogy whatever between the functions and duties which Mr. Balfour possessed on his mission and those of Lord Northcliffe. . . . His duties were in no sense diplomatic, and they would in no way conflict with those of the British Ambassador, or derogate in the smallest degree from the position of the Ambassador." Lord Northcliffe goes to the States as the representative of the British Government in business matters, not touching the diplomatic field. In the line of service thus assigned to him, Lord Northcliffe's acknowledged ability and energy may be employed with advantage to the country and with credit to himself.

## America's Part

IF—for reasons which most people now acknowledge as good—America was slow in coming into the war, now that she has entered the field she is giving abundant evidence of her determination to do her part thoroughly. The American navy is busy on both sides of the Atlantic in co-operation with the navies of the Allies. General Pershing and his staff are at work in Paris, the advance guard of an army which will soon carry the stars and stripes to the battle front. The work of preparation for all phases of the war is progressing everywhere in the United States. Recent evidence of the spirit of the people is found in the magnificent response to the call for registration of men of military age, and in the splendid success of the "Liberty Loan." As a first instalment of the vast sums needed for the carrying on of its war policy, the United States invited its people to subscribe for two billion dollars in bonds bearing 3½ per cent interest, the largest single loan transaction on record. In the Federal Reserve District of New York alone—New York and adjacent territory—enough money was offered to meet half of the Government's call, and the total offerings of the nation are a billion dollars beyond the amount called for. More than four million persons or corporations subscribed for the bonds. Evidently Uncle Sam will lack neither men nor money for the great cause in which he is now a prominent partner.

The muddle in Russia, the practical suspension of action by that nation, is bad enough, and gives cause for much anxiety. But how much worse the situation would be if our American neighbors had not come in!