

TO MAKE DEMOCRACY SAFE FOR THE WORLD

HON. W. S. FIELDING.

President Wilson coined a striking phrase when he said the aim of those who were fighting against the German enemy was to "make the world safe for democracy." Another American public man—we think it was Governor McCall, of Massachusetts—supplemented it by an expression equally pregnant, when he said it was no less important to "make democracy safe for the world." In more than one quarter the world sees exhibitions of a kind of democracy which is not safe for anybody. If democracy is to be made safe, if we are to have in Lincoln's words, "government of the people by the people for the people," the citizens of our country must arouse themselves to a sense of duty that is now too often absent. If there are in any community forces that do not make for the good of the whole, they are certain to be active ones. If a section of the people, or a corporation, or an organization of any kind, or a group of individuals, have aims for their own advantage rather than for the benefit of the community at large, one may be sure that they will be at all times energetic in the support of their projects. On the other hand, it too often happens that the majority of the people are so careless or indifferent that the minority easily become the rulers. If the democratic movements of the day are to assume wholesome forms, the mass of the electors will have to awaken from the indifference too often exhibited, and be prepared to discharge the full duties of citizenship.

Down in St. John, N.B., a very dangerous movement, of which we have several times spoken—the effort to bring the police force under the control of labor organizations—has produced a troublesome situation. St. John has what is called the Commission form of civic government. The law includes a novelty in the shape of a "recall" provision. On an application from 15 per cent of the voters an election may be ordered to afford the citizens an opportunity to endorse or dismiss the City Commissioners. When the Commissioners found a movement afoot for the affiliation of the city police force with the trade unions, they promptly expressed their disapproval of it; when a number of the policemen persisted in their course against the Commissioners' ruling, they were dismissed. Thereupon the dismissed men and their sympathizers set in motion, for the first time in Canada, the "recall" machinery. The necessary petition of 15 per cent of the electors was obtained, asking for the dismissal of two Commissioners. The trade unions took up the cause of the dismissed policemen.

The reasons against an affiliation of a police force, or a military force, or a court of justice, with a trade union or with any other society representing only a part of the community, are so clear that it is not easy to see how thoughtful people can view such a movement with approval. One has difficulty in understanding how the best thinking men in the trade unions can desire to see the police force, on which they and their families must depend for protection of life and property, brought under the control of labor leaders who may be a thousand miles away and in a foreign country. The difficulties between labor and capital which, unfortunately, occur often, are not always confined to the communities in which they originate. The "sympathetic strike" is an instrument that may be used to paralyze a city in which there is no conflict at all. That a police force in St. John might be called to strike at the order of a labor leader in Victoria or San Francisco or New York is a state of affairs by no means inconceivable. These considerations apparently caused but little serious thought in St. John. Members of the labor unions, many of them, one must believe, without much deliberation, espoused the policemen's cause. When the votes were counted, St. John awakened to the fact that the two Commissioners had been dismissed for their action in insisting on having the police free from obligation to anybody representing only a section of the people. Then, when it was too late to provide a remedy, St. John discovered that less than half the electors had voted, and that by the will of a minority of the citizens the police force was to be brought under the rule of the labor unions—not of local labor authority, but labor leaders far away from St. John and in no way interested in St. John's welfare. The majority of the citizens grossly neglected the duties of citizenship. The minority, active

BACK TO THE HOME TOWN.

Municipal committees to welcome home the Canadian men from overseas have already been formed in several of the leading cities and in some of the smaller municipalities. The Union of Canadian Municipalities is co-operating with the Repatriation Committee. It is expected that every municipality will form an honorary committee of citizens, composed of men and women, who will assume a measure of responsibility in this work of giving a welcome to the returning men and their dependents, in helping men to secure employment when they are discharged from the army, and generally in assisting them to re-establish themselves in civil life.

Mr. Harry Bragg, municipal representative in connection with the Repatriation Committee, is sending a circular letter to every mayor and reeve in Canada. The purpose of the letter is to find out what progress has been made in each municipality, up to the present, in forming local committees for this work. In some municipalities, it is being carried on very satisfactorily by the provincially-organized Soldiers' Aid Commissions, or Returned Soldiers' Commissions. In other cities, the local committees are known by the name of Civil Re-establishment Committees, and they work in more direct contact with the federal department of Civil Re-establishment.

It apparently does not matter so much what the name of the local committee may be, so long as it is broadly representative of the community, and actively helping. In the municipalities where committees have not yet been formed, and men of the Canadian citizen army are coming home, the representative of the Union of Canadian Municipalities is urging that the citizens should get together for the purpose of organizing the welcome, back to the home town.

The Repatriation Committee, it is stated, will be only too glad to answer any inquiries which may be made by the municipalities with regard to those problems which come within its scope. The steps taken by the government to establish co-operation between the Union of Canadian Municipalities and the Repatriation Committee seem to be highly commendable. Municipalities have a most important part to play, and duty to perform, in making the welcome real and permanent and practical to the Canadian men who left home, to give their lives if needs be, at the call of duty.

CONSERVE TILL MARKETS STABILISE.

The "Bache Review," of New York, points out that the situation in the copper industry furnishes index for many other lines. Much new construction work and normal industrial enterprise had to be postponed during the long period of the war, and there is consequently an enormous amount of delayed work to be attended to. This, however, must wait until business and industry become adjusted to the new after-war conditions, and there is considerable conservation both amongst manufacturers and consumers, who will await, as far as possible, for the readjustment to take place, and to reveal its new conditions. The stabilisation of the market and of conditions generally, through Government assistance, is of utmost importance at this time, when trade and commerce must necessarily feel the stress and strain incident to the change from war to peace.

and energetic, were given the power to rule the city's affairs.

In the occurrences at St. John there are lessons for other communities. The age of democracy is here. The people have acquired the power of self-determination. If the mass of the electors appreciate their responsibilities and bestir themselves for the advancement of the public good, democracy can be made safe for the country. If neglect of the duties of citizenship is still to prevail among those who should be foremost in the consideration and decision of public questions, the failure of democracy is assured. The forces that do not make for the public good will be left to control affairs. Then the step to Bolshevism will be a short one.—Journal of Commerce.