

THE CANADIAN FORWARD

To Our Contributors—

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No notice will be taken of anonymous communications.

All contributions intended for insertion to be addressed to the address given below, and must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

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361 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, Canada.

Vol. 1, No. 16

TORONTO, CANADA

June 25, 1917



You can fool some people all the time.
Some people some of the time.
But you can't fool all the people all
the time.—Abraham Lincoln.



THE CONSCRIPTION ISSUE.

The day of disillusionment is near its dawn, and the principle of compulsory military service which has hitherto been considered impracticable in the Dominion of Canada has now become a dangerous possibility.

The monetary question of borrowing money, which in time past has been closely associated with population, has apparently been overcome; but the secret of this transformation is probably only known to Sir Robert Borden and his close associates. The fact that a large number of Finlanders have been refused permission to sail for their native country is evidence that the labor problem is still acute, and with very little prospect of immigrants arriving from Europe for an indefinite period of time, we venture to suggest that Hindoo labor or some other cheap substitute will have to be entertained by the Government in order that profits may accrue to the class of people Premier Borden represents if the conscription bill is put into force.

Who Wants Conscription?

Much ink has been spilled by the paid press in order to prove that the people of Canada want conscription. The widespread advertisement this principle has received by the conscripted press, conscripted by the advertisers who control the general policy of such press, should not occasion any alarm to the thinking people. If advertising can bring conscription, then, surely, it is inevitable; outside of this there has not been any demand for such a proposal, with, of course, the exception of the "pot-bellied ineligibles," the too-old-to-fights, and the exempters, who are doing all the shouting for the other fellow to wade into the bloody vortex.

A law is very much like an advertisement. It is but a scrap of paper and can only fool the unwary. A law that lacks moral force is of no value.

Self reliance and courage are the two necessary qualifications that will defeat any such law. There are times when a man becomes a law unto himself, that time is now; and all the fake advertising in the world cannot alter the fact that the working-class of this

country are opposed to conscription. For this reason the Borden administration is going to push the bill through and not take a referendum vote on the question. Premier Borden knows that it is just absolutely impossible to carry a measure which carries with it "the electors own death warrant." We again re-affirm our stand "Against conscription" and "no compromise."

A Gratuitous Gift

If Borden and his Associates want men for the trenches, we are quite prepared to make the gratuitous gift of our Politicians, Parsons, Lawyers, and more generally speaking, the whole lot of Capitalist Parasites.

If we ever take to the bloody ramparts it will be after these Blighters have contributed their carcasses to filling the war pit of "hell".

If the Government wants more war—they may go and win all the glory and medals, so fitting to their superior qualities. All that we ask of them is that they will be generous enough to leave our country as a habitation for honest, intelligent human beings. We are not prepared to die as a reward for the slaves portion you have so generously conferred upon us.

CAPITALISTS AND IMPERIALISTS OF WORLD WORRY ABOUT RUSSIA.

Elihu Root, Charles Edward Russell and the rest of the American Commission to Russia have arrived at some Russian port, supposedly Vladivostok, on their way to Petrograd.

If there is anything that Root had hoped to accomplish on behalf of the big business interests in retarding the progress of revolutionary events in Russia, those hopes may now be buried and a tombstone erected bearing the epithet, "Too Late."

That Root may arrive in Petrograd to behold a complete Socialist administration in power is the possibility growing out of the resignation of Konvaloff, minister of commerce and trade. It seems that Konvaloff couldn't agree to the Socialist measures proposed by Skobelev, the Socialist min-

ister of labor, economic and financial measures absolutely necessary in the present crisis. Konvaloff's parting words were: "The present government should make way for a homogeneous Socialist government."

This latest development in Russia has caused great excitement in the ranks of international capitalism. Russia is again going to wreck and ruin, in the opinion of the world's industrial overlords, because workers are parading the streets of Petrograd carrying banners inscribed with, "Down With the Capitalists," and "Long Live the Social Revolution."

Russia's capitalists, especially, are wringing their hands in agony, as they behold the workmen through their committees in virtual control of the nation's industries. It is claimed by them that the demands of Russia's workers for increased wages, a shorter work-day, and improved conditions would more than wipe out all of their sacred profits.

No attention is being paid apparently by the workers to the threats of the big business interests that the industries will be closed down if the workers persist in their demands; the workers evidently feeling that they are fully capable of conducting the industries themselves.

This situation in Russia brings into the limelight the fact that one of the members of Wilson's commission to Russia is none other than Cyrus H. McCormick, head of the International Harvester Company, oppressor of labor in the United States, who is due to learn much of the power of organized labor during the next few weeks.

That the Harvester Company has been very successful in exploiting Russian labor in the past is shown by the annual report of this corporation, which states that \$30,528,000 in profits is now being held in Russia pending shipment to the United States. Not so bad!

It would certainly break the heart of Mr. McCormick if the Russian laborers should confiscate those profits and decide to run the plants of the Harvester Company in Russia for the exclusive benefit of the Russian workers and farmers who produce and use its products.

AS TO CONSCRIPTION.

(The Statist, London.)

A conscript army is required for service at home or in the immediate neighborhood of home. For service in India, or anywhere equally distant, it is out of the question. If we have conscription it must apply to every man in the country. It must not be for the poor alone. That was possible in the old days when working men had no vote, and when trade unions were rigorously put down. But now, when the great bulk of the voters are working men and when trade unions are vigorous and rich, it is literally out of the question. Consequently, if there is to be conscription, every man, from the peer to the peasant, must be liable to it. And does anybody seriously suppose that the country would allow professional men, men in business, men conducting great works, to be taken as privates from their business and sent to the ends of the earth to fight for what might or might not be worth fighting for? It is certain that we must maintain a standing army quite distinct from a conscript army.

ESCAPED THE WORST.

(London Opinion.)

A Galway magistrate, who was a major in the county militia, sentenced an old woman to six months' imprisonment for shoplifting.

"Well, thanks be to the Lord," exclaimed the prisoner, fervently, "low as I am, there's wan thing I'm thankful for: not wan of me kith or kin ever had anything to do with the milishy."

HUNDRED DAYS IN CEYLON

Under Martial Law in 1915.

Little has been heard in this country of the riot which broke out in Ceylon nearly two years ago, and the grave discontent that smoulders in the island on account of the "savage" methods adopted in connection with the disturbance by the authorities. The British press has been almost silent about the event, and it is doubtful if one person in ten in Great Britain has any idea that anything serious had occurred in that part of the empire.

The facts have now, however, been presented to the British public, or at any rate to that small section of the British public that is likely to concern itself with the subject, by Mr. Armoud de Souza in a book, "A Hundred Days in Ceylon under Martial Law in 1915" (Woodbridge and Co., Printers, High Street, Highgate, London, N.). Mr. de Souza is the editor of the Ceylon Morning Herald, and the story he tells of the blundering and criminal folly on the part of the Ceylon authorities, alike in provoking the riots and in instituting a reign of terror on the island, reads like an account of an exploit of Russian Czarism in Poland—the analogy need not be extended further west than that.

Briefly, the story is that at the bidding of a small but grasping and rich group of traders, known as the "Coast Moors," who are quite distinct from the native Mohammedans, the authorities prohibited the Buddhists, who form by far the largest section of the population, from carrying out their accustomed and quite harmless religious processions. This led eventually to serious rioting in Kandy and Colombo, started, it appears, by violent acts on the part of the Coast Moors themselves, with the result that in addition to much destruction and pillage, chiefly the work of the lower dregs of the towns, some 39 people, both Mohammedan and Singalese, were killed. The authorities did little or nothing to quell the rioting during its progress, but immediately the disturbances subsided martial law was proclaimed, and continued for three months. Wholesale arrests then took place, and no less than 8,428 persons were put on trial. Of these, 8,016 were dealt with by the civil courts, 3,573 being convicted and sentenced to heavy terms of imprisonment, 412 were tried by court-martial, of whom no less than 358 were declared guilty, 83 being condemned to death and 66 actually suffering the extreme penalty.

Not the least ground existed for believing the riots were connected with any political aims or plot. This was admitted by the Governor, Sir Robert Chalmers, in his report to the British Government. The Singalese were loyal and law abiding. Nevertheless, many of them were tried and convicted on the charge of treason, and hundreds of perfectly innocent people have undoubtedly been unjustly penalized.

The harshness and illegality of the proceedings has naturally aroused a deep sense of injustice among the Hindoo and Buddhist population. The policy of the Government, Mr. de Souza tells us, has been denounced in Colombo as comparing unfavorably with German methods in Belgium. For our own part we shall content ourselves with saying that it is singularly unfortunate for the reputation of British rule in Ceylon that this black mark should be made against it at the very time the British nation is professedly fighting for the rights and liberties of small nationalities in Europe, and that the incident will not tend to make easier the task of contenting the nearly 300 millions of Hindoos and Buddhists in India and Ceylon with the blessings of British rule and Christian civilization.

J. R. G.

Labor Leader, April 12, 1917.