

The real objection to conscription.

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*F. J. Roy*  
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In order to appreciate the deep resentment occasioned by conscription in the last war, the real cause of the resentment requires to be understood. Conscription was regarded by French Canada as the coercion of a large and a proud minority by an unsympathetic majority. It has been considered, ever since, as the symbol of racial tyranny and racial prejudice. The fact that no such motives inspired most of those who supported conscription does not alter the equally important fact it was, and, in large measure, still is so considered. And here may I pause to observe that the unconcealed or ill-concealed racial prejudice of a few of the outspoken advocates of conscription today is doing nothing to lessen that impression.

So long as any measure would be regarded by a third, at least, of our population as coercion, no government of a free country which took its responsibilities seriously would contemplate the adoption of such a measure, unless the alternative promised certain disaster. I think enough has been said already to show that failure to adopt conscription for overseas service will not bring disaster or even insuperable difficulties.

We have experienced no difficulty whatever in getting more volunteers than are needed for the navy and the air force. Such difficulties as have arisen in securing volunteers for the army have been overcome, and I am con-