

THE WEEKLY ONTARIO.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1917.

THE COALITION GOVERNMENT

The new union government that Sir Robert Borden has at last succeeded in forming will be accorded a mixed reception, depending upon the individual sentiments, opinions or prejudices.

The party system, which is the best system of government yet devised for democracy to give itself expression, is never a perfect device even in time of peace. It breaks down pitifully in time of war.

War is an abnormal condition that calls for the suspension of the ordinary rules. War of the dimensions of the present gigantic conflict is world-wide in its scope and effects. When our national existence is threatened it is a case of all hands to the pumps.

Such times of supreme crisis demand highly centralized control. War to be conducted on a grand scale with success needs all national effort and interest to be co-operated into one huge machine. The control of that machine must not be too much divided, or we have indecision, impotence and indirection.

In other words, wars of vast proportions must be fought out by dictatorships or of democracies resolving themselves into the form of dictatorships. The ordinary processes of democracy or of individual liberty must be suspended during colossal wars if democracy would not be submerged by autocracy and hold the blessings it enjoys in times of peace.

Germany's initial success and Germany's staying power in this war are due to the fact that Germany was a genuine autocracy or dictatorship right at the beginning. Germany had some of the forms of liberal government but there was no question about who was in control of the vast machine.

Britain began the war as a pure democracy, but through sheer force of circumstances and of public opinion she was compelled at a very early stage to accept a coalition ministry, with an inner war cabinet and with the premier, David Lloyd George, invested with dictatorial powers. And yet, at the beginning of the war, Britain had the strongest government of the present generation, if not of her history.

France and Italy preceded or followed the British action with virtual dictatorships. The United States, through the limitations of the American constitution, is compelled to adhere to the forms of party government to some extent but the work of prosecuting the war has been made a national undertaking by the loyal co-operation of both parties. Russia has made an awful mess of it by attempting to apply visionary democratic principles to the conduct of the war. But Russia was speedily forced to abandon visions and clothe Kerensky with the powers of an autocrat. Unless she adheres to autocracy for the remainder of the war she will become an easy victim for Germany.

Therefore it is but a natural and inevitable consummation in Canada that a national government should be formed.

The amazing thing is that the Borden administration, which was easily the weakest government that this dominion has had since the confederation of the provinces, should have been able to hold on for three years during the extraordinary stress of war.

Probably no government has ever piled up for itself such a measure of popular condemnation as has the outgoing government of Canada.

And the pity of it is that there was scarcely one source of complaint but might have been remedied had the government been possessed of the spirit to serve the country instead of the ringers in the Conservative party.

The management of the Militia department as a wing of the party, with conspicuous waste and partisan pull in every section, the multiplying of useless and ornamental officers in the service at an outrageous cost to the country, the placing of war contracts where they would do most good, the failure to curb the unholy rapacity of war profiteers, the raising of revenues by borrowing instead of by adequate taxation of incomes and war profits, and everywhere inefficiency and indifference to the public welfare—these are but a few of the counts in the indictment that awaited a hearing at the coming election.

As one writer well expressed it, the custom of the Borden government was never to spend one dollar where two dollars would answer the purpose just as well.

Having in view this record of extravagance and maladministration there will be many people who will feel that the government is escaping the punishment it has so well earned by its failure to face the polls just as it stood and having to answer for its own sins.

But it is well to remember that the war is, after all, the big issue. The most of us have been cursing the selfishness of party politics and partisan politicians ever since the in-

auguration of the war. The Conservative party had also loaded well the dice by their War-time Franchise Act so that the popular will could not find true expression. We believe a union government would have been the inevitable outcome, no matter which party had won at the polls. As we stated above, it is a necessity that war forces upon us.

In many respects it would have been better had the two parties gone to the polls, just as they were, and depending upon their records. Then the popular will would have had an opportunity to carry out its work of purging public office of some of the less desirable elements. In many other respects it is better as it is. We will be spared much of the bitterness at the coming election that would have been certain under a purely partisan fight. We will all the sooner have a clearing-up, a non-partisan administration of the war, and, may we hope, a real curbing of war grafters and food profiteers.

The union government that has been formed is composed of the ablest, the cleanest and most forcible men in both parties, leaving out of consideration the province of Quebec.

One would wish for the inclusion of such representatives from Quebec as Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux or Sir Lomer Gouin, but this is of course impossible with conscription so prominent a factor as at present. Perhaps, after a time, when the conscription issue is finally disposed of, some action along this line may be taken and a more truly national government formed.

The formation of this union government comes as the response to a very general and wide-spread demand of the best people in both parties. Its success will depend upon how completely the members of the two parties to the agreement are willing to serve the general public interest rather than that of any party, faction or clique, as for instance, the little financial group in Toronto that has had altogether too much to say in the government of Canada the past six years.

The Ontario holds itself free to criticize or commend this union government just the same as any other. It must prove itself by its good works and we will commend it only so far as its works are good. It is not well that any government should go uncriticized. Such an outcome would be bad both for the administration itself and for the people. The coalition should, however, be given a fair field and a certain amount of charity and restraint should mark all comment rather than harsh or captious criticism. We must not look for miracles nor expect too much until the new regime has had time to get cleared away.

A MOST IMPORTANT GATHERING

There has been assembled in this city today and yesterday a gathering of men and women who are engaged in what is easily the most important work in the world, with the exception of the work done by the mothers in the homes. We refer to the convention of the teachers of South Hastings.

It is not aimless and unsubstantial boasting when we say that we have in the schools of South Hastings a body of instructors who have no superior in Ontario.

Notwithstanding the small financial inducements, we have contrived to hold in the local field many teachers of superior intelligence and attainments. They make notable records at examinations but, better than that, they exercise a wholesome and uplifting influence upon those with whom they come in contact. They are, aside from their school work, useful and public-spirited citizens.

The outstanding and excellent character of the schools of South Hastings is due not altogether to the efforts of an able staff of teachers but largely also to the work of our inspector, Mr. H. J. Clarke.

Mr. Clarke is not in his position an autocrat or a martinet. He is not a pedantic bulldozer. Just as it is the duty of the teacher in the public school to enthrone and to inspire the young minds under his charge, so Mr. Clarke conceives it to be his duty to lead, to suggest, to kindle enthusiasm, to encourage talent, to bring out initiative. He treats the teachers as his partners. Plans, methods, ideas are discussed freely, frankly, with no air of conscious superiority on the one hand or of servile grovelling on the other.

Inspector Clarke is not a faddist any more than he is a fossilized exemplar of the dead and discarded past. Before he goes ahead he makes sure he is right. He sends out from time to time to his teachers messages that embody some of his ideas on the subject of education. Many of these ideas he has already put into practical effect in the schools.

Education, with Inspector Clarke, is not preparing for life. He holds that the best way to prepare for life, is to begin to live. A school, in his estimation, should not be preparation; a school should be life.

Inspector Clarke has been able to reach out towards the ultimate ideal only in a very

elementary way as yet. He is held back by educational traditions, ancient prejudices, and lack of finances.

The newer educational truths may be illustrated somewhat as follows:—

Isolation from the world in order to prepare for the world's work is an error. You might as well take a boy out of a blacksmith shop in order to teach him blacksmithing. At an early age a pupil should be taught he is doing something useful, not merely killing time.

The idea of taking our young men and women and forcing them to live in practical isolation from the world, its business and its interests, for the four years of a university course, may persist for some time yet, but the idea will certainly undergo radical change.

Within thirty years a sure revolution has been going on in the method of teaching children. The changes have been so great that they have truly amounted to a revolution. These changes in method have sprung principally from the influence of one man. That man is Friedrich Froebel. Froebel was the inventor and originator of the kindergarten. The kindergarten was the greatest, most important, most useful invention of the nineteenth century, save none.

No rapid transit scheme of moving men from point to point with lightning-like rapidity, no invention of calling up folks five hundred miles away and talking to them can compare in value with that which gives love for brutality, trust for fear, the natural for the artificial.

We are strong only as we ally ourselves with nature. We can make head only by laying hold on the forces of the universe. Man is a part of nature—just as much as are the tree and the bird. In the main every animal and every organism does the thing that is best for it to do.

The kindergarten system is simply the utilisation of play as the prime factor in education. Froebel made the discovery that play was God's plan of educating the young, so he adopted it.

Before Froebel's day everybody seemed to think play was a big waste of time in the children and a sin in the grown-ups. That which was pleasant was bad. Some folks still hold to this idea, but such folks are growing a trifle lonesome.

In 1860, the year before Froebel died, he said: "It will take the world four hundred years to recognize the truth of my theories."

Only sixty-seven years have gone and already we find the kindergarten idea coloring the whole scheme of pedagogics. Like a simple drop of aniline in a barrel of water, its influence is shown in every part.

The educational world is growing better. Go and visit any school in Belleville, or, for that matter, in South Hastings and compare it with the school you attended twenty-five years ago. There is beauty on the walls, cleanliness, order, fresh air, light and gentle consideration. Do not expect to find perfection—there is yet much work to do.

We would earnestly recommend every father and mother and every thoughtful citizen to read some of the standard works on education. They will be found to be full of living interest.

Here are a few of the greatest books on education of all time.—Plato's "Republic," Aristotle's "Politics," Spencer's "Education," Pestalozzi's "How Gertrude Teaches her Children," Froebel's "Education of Man," and Rousseau's "Emile."

The last is the greatest of all. To Rousseau undoubtedly belongs the high honor of having thought and written most powerfully, most originally and most practically on the greatest of problems. His brain is the cornerstone of the structure of all later educational methods.

The ignorant man who has succeeded through natural force and lucky opportunity is fond of asking these questions:—

"What is the good of education? Of what practical use is scientific training?"

These men are admirably answered by Herbert Spencer in his work on "Education." Here are some instances mentioned in Education:—

A collection of Englishmen ruined themselves in the sinking of mines in search of coal. They might have saved their money had they known that a certain fossil which they dug up in abundance belongs to a geological stratum below which no coal is ever found. They went on digging cheerfully and wasting their money. An acquaintance with the fossil and its meaning would have saved their cash.

Some individuals spent one hundred thousand dollars trying to save the alcoholic by-product that distills from bread in baking. They would have saved their money had they known that only a hundredth part of the flour

is changed through fermentation.

An "entozoön" seems to be the practical man a foolish, imaginary creature. But millions of sheep have been saved by the discovery that one of these fancy scientific entozoöns, passing on the brain, caused the sheep's death. When you know the entozoön you can dig him out and save the sheep's life.

Education is important to the individual because it means development of the brain, development of the capacity for production and increased chances of success.

Education is important to our country because it means not only competent citizens but moral citizens.

The animal in us yields to the influence of education. Knowledge and brutality are enemies. They do not dwell together.

Oh, yes, we know, dear reader, what you are going to say about Germany but you are wrong—dead wrong. Germany's mad fight back to savagery and bestiality is no more of an argument against education than a murder committed by a university professor would be a proof that all university professors were criminals.

This very rambling and disconnected article we close with the statement that cannot be successfully contradicted:—

The most important institutions in the geographical division we call South Hastings, or, for that matter, in this province, are the public schools—the gymnasia of human brains. The most important citizens of South Hastings are the teachers of the public schools. We have during the past two days had here the most important gathering that it is possible for us to receive and entertain.

It is a source for congratulation that Mr. Nelson Parliment, M.P.P., has been prominently mentioned for the leadership of the Liberal opposition in the Ontario legislature. As will be seen in another column, Mr. Parliment's is the first name mentioned in a list of four suggested as possibilities by The Toronto Telegram, the paper with the largest circulation in the province of Ontario, and having a very strong influence in a political way.

It is seldom, indeed, that a new member rises so rapidly in the estimation of his fellow members as Mr. Parliment has done. As a speaker he has developed in a remarkable manner and is frequently heard from to good advantage in the house. He has a great gift of natural eloquence and never lacks for language to clothe his thought in words. He has a sturdy courage that is not thwarted by the heckling or captious criticisms of opponents. Though he is a hard hitter in debate he is almost as popular with the government side as with the opposition. His opponents respect his honesty, earnestness and the further fact that he never speaks unless he has something to say.

He has made a special study of agricultural problems. He believes that a strong agricultural policy for Ontario is necessary to relieve the H. C. of L. in the cities and depopulation of the rural parts. It is almost certain that in case of a Liberal triumph at the polls at the Provincial elections, that must come next year, Mr. Parliment would be called to fill the portfolio of minister of agriculture.

Concerning the new Minister of Militia, Major General Sydney Chilton Mewburn, C.M.G., the Hamilton Times, which knows him well, as a native of that city, says:

"The new Minister is what might be called a 'nominal' Liberal. Some regard him as a Conservative. He parted company with the Liberal party in the 1911 election, voting against the Laurier Government. He has also, we understand, voted for the Conservative candidates in the Local Elections. Perhaps the General, may be more correctly classed as an Independent."

Have you stopped to think of what this flight of Laureati, the Italian aviator, means? He covered the distance between Turin, Italy, and London, England, approximately 700 miles, in 722 minutes, and it was necessary for him while sailing through the air at a height of 10,500 feet, traveling often faster than a mile a minute, to pick course by a compass. He drove one of the newest types of airplanes, and was accompanied by an observer. To get some idea of what this flight meant we should stop to think that if Laureati had started from Belleville and covered an equal distance southward, he would have landed close to the line between Georgia and Florida in two minutes more than 12 hours.

The German newspapers are speaking out. The fear of the Government of the Kaiser cannot keep them silent.

Petrograd people, fearing a German occupation, are leaving the capital in droves. But socialists will remain to welcome their friends the enemy.

Women into Slavery

German Villagers from Their Homes.

New York, Oct. 17.—The Evening World today publishes the following:—

"Amsterdam.—The Germans are removing the French, particularly the women from Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing, Croix and surrounding places to work for them. Only women without children and young girls are now being selected. They are taken to the railway stations by soldiers and then conveyed to destinations which are not disclosed to the parents they leave behind. Heartrending scenes are witnessed when these operations occur."

SIXTY WANT EXEMPTION; NON-REPORT YET

Up to this morning sixty exemption applications had been received at the post office here from young men eligible under Class I according to the Military Service Act. Not one report for service has yet been made. This is due perhaps to the haste the applicants for exemption have to be certain to have their exemption claims in early. Those reporting for duty now know that they have until November 10th to report, as have those applying for exemption.

Many young farmers and residents of the adjacent towns and villages are in the city today to appear before the Medical Board. The latter's work is extremely strenuous, for a constant stream of young men is always in waiting until the end of each sitting.

MARMORA

Rev. C. M. Harris attended the meeting of the Bay of Quinte Clerical Union in Stirling on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The next meeting of Marmora and Lake County will be held on Saturday, Oct. 20th, at 10 a.m.

Mrs. M. Kennedy is spending a month in Toronto with her husband, Lieut. M. Kennedy, M.D., who is connected with the soldiers' Convalescent Hospital on Spadina Ave.

Mr. W. B. Deacon of Belleville, has been requested by the Finance Minister, Sir Thomas White, to organize the county of Hastings for the Victory Loan to be issued soon by the Dominion Government.

A quiet wedding took place in Peterboro on Tuesday, when Miss Ada Hart was united in marriage to Mr. Frank Sweet, both of Marmora. They will reside in the residence recently vacated by Mr. S. McMechan.

STIRLING

Pte. Roland Harryett of the Dental Corps, Toronto, is visiting at Mrs. A. Conley's.

Capt. Elmer Richardson, C. A. M. C. was a guest at the home of Mrs. Zora Watts last Thursday.

The Teacher's Convention for Central Hastings was held in the Methodist church, about 90 teachers were present.

Mrs. Dan Cook of Wisconsin, after an absence of twenty years, is in town visiting her sister, Mrs. Manley Wescott and other relatives.

Mrs. Moynes and children spent a few days last week with friends in Belleville.

Mrs. D. N. Buntain of Saskatchewan is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bailey.

Mr. Rusbridge and family moved to Belleville on Tuesday, where they will reside for the winter.

Mrs. M. Hannah and daughter, Mrs. Saylor and two children of Belleville attended the funeral of the late Ernest Phillips on Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot Biffey returned on Monday from their wedding trip. A reception was given them on Tuesday evening at the residence of the brides' parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Elliot.—Leader.

BIRTH

THOMPSON—Ameliasburg, Oct. 13, 1917, to Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Thompson, a son, "Jack."

TODAY'S CASUALTIES

Died—L. B. O'Grady, Kingston.

Wounded—H. Hanna, Campbellford.

Announcement is made by the Food Controller that all possible efforts were being made to secure Canada's fair share of the available corn in the United States.