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**THE ROUND TABLE  
LAND SETTLEMENT  
AFTER THE WAR**

**A Quarterly Review of the Politics of  
the British Empire—Republished  
Under the Above Heading**

**I. Criticism of the Government.**  
It is due also to the intense application with which they work to their passion for knowledge, accuracy and learning, to that habit of mind which regards no trouble and no hardship and no foresight as too great if they help to the end in view.  
The real need of the movement is not so much criticism of our leaders, but criticism of ourselves. If we stand boldly by our faith in the democratic doctrine that what

matters is the personal calibre of the citizen, and that this depends not upon his usefulness and docility as part of a great machine, but on the manner in which he exercises a free judgment in both morality and politics, we must accept the consequences of that faith and exhibit of our own accord the qualities which autocracy imposes by force. If we are not able to do much at the moment to remodel our political life, we can at least begin to manifest now that

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ST. JOHN'S BRANCH - WATER STREET

spirit of public service which will transform it when the war is done, in the candour with which we examine our own contributions to the common cause, the courage with which we break with the selfish traditions and customs of our own past lives and the cheerfulness with which we face the privations and hardships which we shall be called upon to endure in the difficult times that lie ahead.

**II. The Conscription Controversy**

THE other matter which has been the subject of political controversy merits more detailed attention, for it concerns, not so much organization and preparation and foresight in war as the permanent political outlook of this country, the effects of which will long survive when the discussion over the Dardanelles and the provision of munitions is buried and forgotten.

The conscription controversy has its roots deep in English history. The passionate hatred of militarism, and of the system of conscription in which it is incarnate, dates back to Cromwell and his major-generals. Nothing save dire necessity would induce the people of the United Kingdom to submit to anything approaching the continental system of conscription. That any government, however responsible to public opinion, should be in a position to declare war, and then muzzle opposition to it by calling every able-bodied man up to middle age to the colours, is utterly repugnant to the idea of liberty as it lives in the British Isles. And the spectacle of how Austria-Hungary and Germany are able to coerce Slavs and Poles to fight their own brethren contrary to their will, and more recently of how an autocrat has been able to force an unwilling nation into war also against its will by means of the conscript system, has only intensified the hostility to it. Further, the history of the struggle for political liberty in England has been largely bound up with the triumph of the civil over the military power. The use of the military to put down riots, or to quell strikes, has always aroused vehement hostility in the British breast. It is objected to as being a refusal to admit of the play of reason and goodwill in controversy, and because people feel that if a large body of men do get out of hand, it is probably not because they have lost the traditional moderation and good sense of their fellow-countrymen, but because they are suffering from an intolerable injustice, for which they can gain no redress. Conscription in any form has always been regarded as a return towards militarism and a more ready recourse to military methods and power within the State.

The traditional alternative to conscription in the public mind has always been the voluntary system. The one was the badge of personal freedom, the other was the badge of personal slavery. Hence, when, after some six or eight months of war, the magnitude of the struggle in which Great Britain was engaged became clear, and there arose a demand for some form of universal compulsory service as giving more certain results than the voluntary system could do, wonderful as the

response to the call for recruits had been, a strong note of opposition immediately made itself heard. It was useless for the advocates of national service to point out that compulsory national service was a totally different thing from conscription. It involved compulsion, and that was enough to damn it root and branch in a vast number of eyes. What was the good, people said, of fighting for liberty abroad, if it was to be lost at home. If Prussianism had to be fought anywhere they would prefer to fight it in Britain than in Germany.

The opposition was enormously intensified owing to the connection of the controversy with the struggle between Capital and Labour. In the eyes of Labour, and especially of organised labour, any form of compulsion meant increasing the power of the capitalist over his less privileged fellows. It implied depriving them in greater or less degree of their one weapon, the right to strike. And in the form of conscription it made possible compulsion for industrial purposes, thus making Labour liable to be compelled to work for the private profit of the capitalist. That organized labour was resolved never to permit. In their eyes it was not only compulsion that was involved, but the fruits of the whole industrial struggle for the last fifty years, the outcome of untold efforts and sacrifices. Thus, owing to the estrangement between the two halves of the industrial world, the question of national service became immediately identified with the class war, and was no longer judged on its merits as a war measure alone.

The situation was complicated by the decline in the authority of Government and Parliament in recent years. The mass of the people enfranchised in the latter half of the nineteenth century had not learnt the full responsibility which lay upon them as voters. The political classes, instead of trusting the new voters and placing in front of them candid policies solely concerned with the public welfare, slipped into trying to get majorities for their own parties by political organization, promises, advertisement and clever platform oratory. The combination of political apathy below and of failure in vision and leadership above, supplemented by the class war, has caused an estrangement and distrust between the politicians and the people which has made every modern Government weak, whatever its parliamentary majority has been. This weakness is true even of the Coalition Government. Though it represents all parties, it is not a true National Government. It has not got the authority and strength which come from complete understanding and confidence between leaders and led. When, therefore, on August 15th, the date on which the national register was compiled, a special campaign for national service was inaugurated, largely by a large and powerful newspaper organization, it provoked an immediate counter agitation in the Labour world, lest the Government should give way to pressure coming only from one side. The counter agitation was entirely successful in its main object. All idea of the immediate introduction of universal compulsory service was dropped.

The effect of the discovery by Labour of the dominating position conferred upon it by the demand for munitions was a lamentable exhibition of irresponsibility and selfishness manifested in the strikes on the Clyde and in South Wales. The character and causes of these strikes have been dealt with in previous numbers of The Round-Table and need not be repeated here. But by degrees publicity for the facts of the situation as revealed by Mr. Lloyd George, and the realization that their very power placed upon them the responsibility for determining whether the people of Great Britain were going to do their duty by their cause, their Allies, and not least by their own fellows in the trenches, brought about a more actively helpful

**Badges for  
Rejected Candidates  
for the Newfoundland  
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A. MacDERMOTT,  
Act. Commander.

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mood in the Labour world. If the leaders did not weaken in their resolution to resist the introduction of universal service in response to public agitation or private pressure they did not entirely bang and bolt the door. The controversy had served to expose the essential difference between conscription and national service. It was one thing to impose by law under military law, and can be used for industrial as well as military purposes. It was quite another to empower a Government to inform all classes of citizens what service it expects them to render for the duration of the war, and in the last resort to compel the slackers and wasters to go. There has never been any opposition to the idea that it is the duty of every citizen to serve his country. The working classes, however, have firmly believed that it should be public opinion and not the policeman that should be the real authority to make him go, and that if it were given a chance it would do the work.

This robust confidence in the essential public spirit of every citizen once his duty has been made clear to him is the basis of the new scheme devised by the Government and the Trades Union leaders and put into effect under Lord Derby's chairmanship. Every eligible man is to be personally canvassed and his reasons for not enlisting scrutinized. No compulsion will be used, and those volunteering to serve will be called upon only as they are needed, and unmarried men will be required to fulfil their promises before married men. If this last call for volunteers fails to produce the number of men required, and if it discloses any considerable number who clearly ought to go, but refuse for inadequate reasons, some measure of compulsion applicable to limited classes only will almost certainly be introduced. If this scheme succeeds it will be in its own way as remarkable a proof of the spirit evoked by responsibility among free men as the wonderful national performance of the French in this war.

The moral of this history is this: in essence the action of Labour has been consistent with the traditions of British freedom. They preferred to incur the charge of a want of patriotism rather than submit tamely to what they believed to be a system inconsistent with true political liberty. In doing so they went much too far. The strikes and the character of the opposition to conscription have done Great Britain and her cause great damage abroad, and they were a sore trial to the men at the front. But they were the outcome of many causes: the blindness of the employer to the point of view of the men, the failure of the Government to grapple either with the question of prices or of war profits, above all, perhaps, to the long estrangement of the Labour world which had become set in the habit of fighting for its own hand, and had but a faint sense of responsibility for such of the national affairs as did not directly affect itself. The net outcome of these anxious days is good. The nation has now become united as never before in its history. All classes now recognize that they have an equal duty of contributing to the common welfare. Labour, if it shows no signs of abandoning its primary preoccupation in specifically working-class interests has won for itself a new position and power in the State, and in doing so has lost much of the aloofness and irresponsibility and self-centredness which were its greatest weaknesses before the war. It is true that the controversy about the best military system for a democracy is not settled. There is still great confusion of thought about voluntarism, conscription, and national service. But if no one could contrive a formula which could satisfy all minds at this moment, it is certain that while conscription has been finally rejected even in the heat of a great war, the principle that it is the duty of every citizen to render active service to the State has received a universal recognition and assent. And this is the principle which really matters. Once the spirit of service is there it will not be very difficult to apply it in any way that the national welfare requires.

London, November, 1915.

NOTE.—On November 13 it was announced under the authority of the Government "that if young men did not, under the stress of national duty, come forward voluntarily, other and compulsory means would be taken before the married men were called upon to fulfil their engagement to serve." This pledge was to be brought into effect, if required, after November 30.

**NOTICE.**

The 8th Annual Convention of the Supreme Council of the Fishermen's Protective Union of Newfoundland will open at Catalina on MONDAY, the 27th of November.

All Councils of the F.P.U. will please send Delegates.

By order of the President,  
W. W. HALFYARD,  
Secretary.

St. John's, Nov. 1st, 1916.

The 5th Annual Meeting of the Shareholders of the Fishermen's Union Trading Co., Ltd., will be held at Catalina on TUESDAY, November 28th, at 2 p.m.

By order of the President,  
W. W. HALFYARD,  
Secretary.

St. John's, Nov. 1st, 1916.

The 6th Annual Meeting of the Shareholders of the Union Publishing Co., Ltd., will be held at Catalina on WEDNESDAY, the 29th of November, at 2 p.m.

By order of the President,  
W. W. HALFYARD,  
Secretary.

St. John's, Nov. 1st, 1916.

The 2nd Annual Meeting of the Shareholders of the Union Export Co. Ltd., will be held at Catalina on TUESDAY, November 28th, at 4 p.m.

By order of the President,  
W. W. HALFYARD,  
Secretary.

St. John's, Nov. 1st, 1916.

The 8th Annual Meeting of Fogo District Council of the F.P.U. will be held at Catalina on WEDNESDAY, November 29th. All Councils in Fogo District will please send Delegates.

By order of the President,  
W. W. HALFYARD,  
Chairman.

St. John's, Nov. 1st, 1916.

The 7th Annual Meeting of Bonavista District Council of the F.P.U. will be held at Catalina on TUESDAY, November 28th. All Councils in Bonavista District will please send Delegates.

By order of the President,  
R. G. WINSOR,  
Chairman.

St. John's, Nov. 1st, 1916.

The 7th Annual Meeting of the Twillingate District Council of the F.P.U. will be held at Catalina on TUESDAY, November 28th. All Councils in Twillingate District will please send Delegates. Important matter in relation to the next General Election will be discussed.

By order of the President,  
W. B. JENNINGS,  
Chairman.

St. John's, Nov. 1st, 1916.

The 7th Annual Meeting of Trinity District Council of the F.P.U. will be held at Catalina on MONDAY, November 27th. All Councils in Trinity District will please send Delegates.

By order of the President,  
J. G. STONE,  
Chairman.

St. John's, Nov. 1st, 1916.