

# What Democracy Must do to be Saved

By THE MONOCLE MAN

**D**EMOCRATIC government is learning a thing or two about itself these trying and testing days, which I trust its true friends will not soon forget. We are learning that it is not all of democracy to let the people concerned, regarding any subject, vote directly on it. In fact, we seldom did let them do that. It is only where democracy has armed itself with the plebiscite, the referendum and the recall that it can be said to possess the power to vote directly on subjects which concern it. What we have generally done, in the name of democracy, is to let the people choose their own rulers and then hold them to account. But the individual subjects which concern these people have usually been handed over to these rulers to decide as they thought best. This, it will be noted by the careful observer, has not been exactly popular rule. It has not been gathering the "hoi polloi" into the market-place and asking them to pass finally upon public business by show of hands. It has been an attempt at something far better than that—it has been an attempt to have the people choose experts to pass upon public business and then hold these experts responsible for the results.

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**"EXPERTS!"** That sounds a good deal like a joke when we look at our city councils, our provincial legislatures—yes, and our Federal parliaments. Every time we think of it, we thank God that we do not elect our judges; for in that job we do need real experts. The trouble is, of course, that what we elect are not experts on road-paving or municipal franchises, or legal codes, or education, or industrial organization, or anything of that sort, but just experts on "how to get elected." The "stump speaker" wins over the student. Still, in the piping times of peace, we manage to "muddle along" somehow. So much prosperity is poured into our happy national lap—our very few people rolling in the riches of measureless natural resources—that we can afford to play tricks with our communal organizations, and still escape starvation.

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**B**UT ruthless and institution-smashing war has brought us up out of our lazy indifference with a round turn. The democracy of France was the first to discover that it could not make war with a debating society in charge. It was too serious a business with the Germans pounding down toward Paris. So they called together all the big men of the nation and formed a Coalition Government. That was—as the London "Spectator" put it neatly when Britain came to do the same thing—naming a Dictator to carry on the war. "The Dictatorship," says the "Spectator," "it is true, is in commission, but none the less it is a Dictatorship." Britain and France are to-day as much ruled by an oligarchy as Germany or Russia. The form is different—that is all. We fit our Dictatorship to a democratic environment. And we all know perfectly well that that is the only way to win the war—that war cannot be waged by popular vote—that a democracy, like any other nation, must choose its captains or inherit them, and then trust them.

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**A**ND I maintain that that is the proper way for democracies to govern themselves at all times. Why should we be sensible only when danger threatens? We put a Kitchener in the saddle and obey him like a Dictator when the penalty for not doing so is likely to be the destruction of our national existence. We know, instinctly and in spite of all our theories, that that is the best way to get things done—i.e., to choose the biggest expert we can find and then leave it to him. And we do this gladly and eagerly when the penalty for foolish interference with our experts is national death. We do the same thing when the penalty is individual death. When we are sick, we do not call in the most plausible talker we can hear of, or the busiest "hand-shaker," or the oiliest politician. We call in the best physician—the best expert. With death grinning horribly over the foot-board of our bed, we dare do nothing less.

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**B**UT why wait for death? Why not be as sensible in meeting life? What we want in the form of municipal government, for example, is—not co-operative plunder of the civic chest by ward flatterers—but government by experts. Why should we not have men trained in the administration of towns and cities, and then give them the job? We spend two or three years educating a horse doctor. We will not trust our good horses to any man who has not been professionally trained. But we will trust revenues running into the millions to men who have had no training at all. We pay less attention to the qualifications of an alderman than to those of an office-boy. No man would think of putting a general manager in charge of his business—handling, say,

fifty thousand a year—if that general manager had not given up a good part of his life to learning how to manage this particular sort of business. But a lot of men, acting collectively, will put a group of general managers in charge of a business, affecting the health, happiness and prosperity of every one of them, without demanding that they shall have spent an hour studying the intricate and important problems of civic administration.

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**I** EARNESTLY believe that democracy has got to get more sense than this if it hopes to survive as a form of government in a world where the stern tests of organization and efficiency are being applied with steel-shod vigour. We cannot have it said that democratic government is necessarily costly government, loose government, government bedevilled by "patronage," government administered by round pegs in square holes, government burdened with "incapables with a pull," government whose only virtue is that the people are deluded into the false notion that they have something to say about it. We must make democratic government effective.

It must give us as good an organization as the oligarchic government of Germany. If it does not, it will eventually go down before that form of oligarchic government. Nothing survives in this pitiless world but the fit. And the way to make democratic government effective, this war has shown us. Nay, it has shown us that we always knew. That way is to put experts in charge of every government job, and then keep them steady by weighty rewards and punishments. War rewards its victors with Dukedoms, and its failures with death. We must take a leaf from war's stern page. The first government founded by the early Christians exacted the death penalty for an attempt to "graft" at the government's expense. Ananias and Sapphira were the first "grafters" executed.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

## St. Saens, a German Hater

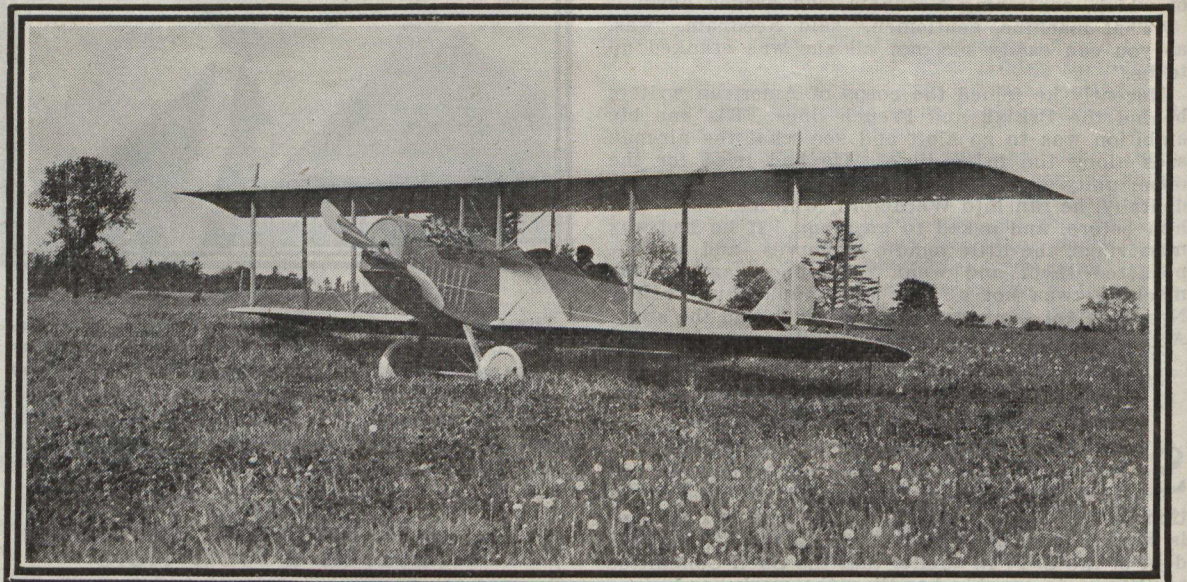
**C**AMILLE ST. SAENS, the venerable French composer and the Verdi of Paris, is now in the United States. He says that everything hailing from beyond the Rhine "must be banished from France." He makes no exception even to Wagner. That was where the shoe pinched some of the French critics who declared that St. Saens should not be so unchivalrous. They remind him that when Wagner first began to startle the ears of Europe he himself was one of the great Richard's most able defenders. St. Saens retorts that he did so in order to befriend "a poor devil battling against a thousand difficulties."

## CANADIANS LEARNING TO FLY



SWIMMERS TAKING TO THE AIR.

Champion Canadian swimmers who are taking the military aviation course at the Thomas Flying School, Ithaca, N.Y. Left to right—Frank McGill, Canadian swimming champion 100 yards; George Hodgson, Olympic champion 1,000 yards; Phil Fisher and H. A. Peck, all students from Montreal, who expect to join the Royal Naval Air Service.



A BI-PLANE WHICH CANADIANS ARE LEARNING TO USE.

The English army Curtiss bi-plane, J. N. 3 type, 100 horse-power, motor 1,750 r.p.m., maximum speed 85 miles an hour; nicknamed "The Lizzie," in use at Long Branch Aviation Camp, near Toronto.