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Red Week
Plans
Next Issue

THE CANADIAN FORWARD

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A Defender of the Rights of Small Nations Reviewed By the Light of History

Another Conscription Policy in Australia

The war, we are told, must not stop yet, as we have no guarantees against German attacks on liberty of nations in the future. The English people are, then, asked to go on surrendering their lives and liberty to the State, on the understanding that the triumph of British militarism means perpetual peace and the safety of small nations—that such is the inevitable and the sole end for which we are to sacrifice most of what we have hitherto held dear.

Surely, Surely, if we are to settle down for a further spell of civilized warfare, we may be pardoned if we enquire for a moment into the reputation of our ruling classes, to convince ourselves that it really is Peace and Free Nationality that our rulers have at heart. Let us see how they have striven for those noble ends for the last 100 years.

In 1816, having defeated Napoleon in a war to end war, we began to enjoy the perpetual tranquillity which Napoleon's downfall was to herald by bombarding Algiers, perhaps by way of a firework celebration of universal peace. In 1817, no doubt against our will, we found ourselves saddled with the White Man's Burden, and had a war with the Pindaris, in India. By 1818 the Burden was well upon us, and we conquered Holkar and annexed the Peishwas dominions. In 1819 the British Army had an engagement nearer home, and defeated a mob of somewhat hungry Lancashire people at "Peterloo."

For four years the millennium was expected, and was just about to arrive, when in 1824 the Burmese War was "forced upon us," and lasted until '26, which also saw the Ashantee War. In 1827 we destroyed the Turkish Navy at Navarino, with the help of France and Russia.

Civilizing the Heathen

For seven years, the people lolled in luxurious inactivity—or were they too hungry to fight?—and in 1834 we annexed Coorg. In '35 we began to civilize the heathen blacks in South Africa, and in our ardour killed several. In that year we also, with the utmost politeness, sent an expedition to Spain to help the Queen teach her subjects how to behave; this course of Education lasted until 1857. From 1838 to 1842 we were fighting in Afghanistan, in the meantime annexing Aden, in 1839.

From 1840 to 1842 we were also occupied, in a spirit of love, with bestowing upon China the inestimable benefits of opium, which the Chinese were ungrateful enough to try and keep out, with weapons as old-fashioned as their ideas. The years '43, '44, and '45 were occupied with the Gwalior War, '45 with the 1st Sikh War, '46 and '47 with a Kaffir War, and '48 and '49 with another Sikh War.

During the 'fifties we were guaranteeing perpetual peace and the freedom of small nations on three Continents. The years of grace '50-1-2 and 3 marked the duration of another Kaffir War, and

'51 and '52 a second Burmese War. In 1854 "we didn't want to fight, but by jingo" we did, and between then and '56 lost 20,000 men in preventing Russia from having Constantinople. That might have been over sooner, but that we were fighting Persia and China and conquering the Santhals in India at the same time. In 1857 came the horrible Indian Mutiny, at which, conscious of their love for subject races the Press and Government of the time was surprised. This lasted until 1859, and Canning was unpopular for refusing to take revenge. Fighting still continued in China, until 1860.

Bible Rule in India

In 1860 we were still bestowing on the Indians the blessings of that rule which Queen Victoria told them was founded on the Bible, and fighting against Sikhism. In that year, also, our gospel of perpetual peace flew on white wings (which never grew weary) across the sea to Australasia, and we fought the Maoris until 1861. A remarkable year then followed, 1862. There was no war; so a pigeon-shooting club was started in London. True, we took part with France and Spain in an armed expedition against Mexico, but honour was satisfied without bloodshed. In 1863, honour or something called us to New Zealand, where we stayed killing people for their own good until 1866. India still being enveloped in heathen darkness, we let in some more light at Umbeyla in '63, dispelled the gloom of Ashantee from '63 to '66, and flooded Bhootan with Christian radiance in '64 and '65. The national aspirations of the Abyssinians claiming the sympathy of a Christian people, we fought them, more in sorrow than in anger, in '67 and '68, and repulsed a Fenian raid on Canada. In '68 we suppressed the Bazotees; the writer cannot for the moment recall their identity, but has no doubt that they were the enemies of the human race, and were threatening the foundations of civilization. In 1869, Shere Ali having the sense to accept the protection of an alliance with England without much fuss, a strange, shy figure, carrying an olive branch and apologizing profusely for her intrusion, wearily presented herself at the threshold of the British Empire, and asked if she might sit down.

Dismemberment of Persia

In 1870, with great magnanimity, we left the main task of civilization to France and Germany, and contented ourselves with fighting Fenians in Canada. In '71 and '72 we continued the good work with the Looshai War, and in '73 and '74 again turned our attention and our guns towards the Ashantees; '75 and '76 were dull years in the business of culture-spreading, only a few Malaysians being killed, but in '77 and '78 we carried the gospel and a number of explosives to Jowaki, and with the sanction of Providence suc-

ceeded in smashing Zulu militarism. In '79 we again fought the Afghans, who respected neither the sanctity of treaties nor the rules of war.

Throughout the whole of the ten years from 1890 to 1900, we were converting the Dervishes, Arabs, and Egyptians in Egypt and the Soudan to belief in the gospel of modern weapons. From 1899 to 1902 was the South African War, about which enough has been said by most decent people. In 1903 and 4 we were blowing the Matabeles to pieces for the good of their heathen souls, and in 1904 our "peaceful mission" to Taibet cost the Thibetans hundreds of lives.

And what of the period immediately preceding the war? The "Daily News" of January 10th, 1912, says: "The same day brings news of the dismemberment of two ancient Empires—China and Persia. Russia announces formally to China that she will occupy outer Mongolia. . . . Russia has settled things in advance with Japan, and, if the Russian Press be well informed, with Sir Edward Grey. The partition of Persia is announced as informally as possible. A cable from India . . . told those whose eye it caught that Sir Edward Grey was contemplating the annexation by Russia and England of their respective spheres of interest in Persia, and the erection of a neutral belt into a new Persian kingdom. . . . China and Persia have one feature in common . . . the independence and the integrity of both have been solemnly guaranteed by us. . . . Never before has the British nation . . . crusaded so consistently against the liberties of struggling peoples."

On the whole, we think the guarantees of perpetual peace and the freedom of small nations will not be entirely secured by the smashing of the Huns.

WHERE ARE THEY.

The man who had made a huge fortune was speaking a few words to a number of students at a business class. Of course, the main theme of his address was himself.

"All my success in life, all my tremendous financial prestige," he said proudly, "I owe to one thing alone—pluck, pluck, pluck!"

He made an impressive pause here but the effect was ruined by one student, who asked impressively:

"Yes, sir; but how are we to find the right people to pluck?"

STILL USEFUL WORK.

The New Curate—Is your husband in, Mrs. Jones?

Cottager—No, zur, 'E be gone drill-in'.

Curate—Ah, I'm glad to hear that. Home Guard, I presume?

Cottager—No, zur. Turnips.

The Conscription Junta has at last fixed on a plan to force compulsory enlistment for overseas service on the Australian people. The plan is a double-headed toss. Should it fail, the slave promoters lose nothing; should it succeed, they win everything.

Eighteen members of the Senate must go to the country before June next. Of the present House 19 are Laborites and 17 Conscriptionists. Eight of the former and ten of the latter are due to retire. That leaves as the basis of the new Senate seven Conscriptionists and eleven opposed to conscription.

Three states—Victoria, Tasmania and West Australia—voted a majority in favor of compulsory enlistment. The Junta believe that vote will be repeated, and thus give them nine Conscriptionists to add to the seven not obliged to face the elections. The Junta further believes that the immense personal pull of Senators Milten and Gould in New South Wales give them a good chance of being returned. That will mean 18 in the new Senate to vote for conscription when the House meets.

But the Junta also hopes that, in view of the small majority against conscription in Queensland, one, or perhaps two, of its followers might creep in. More particularly as already up north the sectarian monster has spread his slimy tail across the path of liberty. Yes, the Junta has expectations of Queensland swinging over.

In South Australia a weak Labor selection may result in a compulsionist sneaking it. It is very clear that the Senate is in serious danger of being captured by the Hughes-Irvine-Lynch conspirators.

Granted that the scheme succeeds thus far, a bill will then go through both chambers almost immediately. Simultaneously an address will be agreed to requesting Lloyd George and the Imperial Government to extend the life of the Federal Parliament until the end of the war. The House of Representatives will not then be dissolved, and Australia will be down and out.

The reason no formal coalition is being agreed to now is because Australia hates fusions. Hughes and Cook will fight the Senate campaign as separate leaders, supporting each other's candidates, but they will deny the contention they are the one party. Once there is a compulsionist majority in the Senate, however, all pretence will be cast aside. To change the personnel of the Ministry now would perhaps involve the possible opposition of the men who would lose the jobs given them as reward for their labor treachery. So no risks are being taken that way. Afterwards they go on the scrap heap equally with the democracy they have betrayed. The Government will be described as a National Government, and it will rule by regulation and coercion.

This paper prays that the people will take time by the forelock, and make ready by agitation, education and organization to retain in the Senate a majority of members definitely pledged to no-conscription of life and labor, and the due observance of the verdict given last October.—Melbourne Socialist.