

# EDITORIAL

**W**E must regard all the phenomena of this war in the light of history. The Food Controller's edict concerning cereals is a phenomenon of war. It is therefore entitled to be regarded in the light of history. One of the most astonishing things about the most modern of all wars is that it has made use of the most ancient discards. The hand grenade, the coat of mail, and the metal shield have all been resurrected and put into commission with the airship, the submarine, and the trench periscope. The exigencies of war demanded a return to all these things.

Very well. Years ago we bought oatmeal out of a sack, sugar and crackers from a barrel, raisins from an open tin, and so forth—when we had no breakfast foods at all. Rolled oats, corn flakes, grape nuts, shredded wheat and crumbles and all the host of the variations on the original theme of oats and wheat, were not known to those of us who organized our appetites on the crosscut saw and the pitchfork and stayed them with corncake and molasses and fat pork.

All the Controller asks us to do is to go back to what we—or our fathers—were, in a few of these items. If we must eat breakfast foods let us buy them in 20-lb. cases or else by the pound from the scoop, in the good old way. If we don't agree to this, he may put soap and tea on the bulk list also. And the end may be—not yet.

Why this reversion to type? Lest we forget the days of our fathers? Not so. There will be a saving of paper pulp used in the manufacture of cardboard, said pulp to be directed to the making of paper. And the price of the cardboard or paper case will be deducted from the total price of the cereal. We are to quit paying for style and go in for essentials.

Incidentally we may note that the original idea of the fancy cardboard container so interesting to the children was not style, but utility. When we come to examine the large number of eatables and washables formerly bought in bulk, now in containers, we are impressed with the advance of factory civilization. Some of the most popular eatables we have, and washables, too, were put on the market, largely because it was possible to take them out of bulk and handle them individually. Some of these goods will be in a bad way if they have to revert to the bulk system. We don't care to discriminate; but fancy the case of a delightful, aristocratic breakfast food that never entered the house without a Christmas chuckle from the kiddies, being dumped in a common paper bag, tied with a white cord—just like sugar!

As a matter of convenience and preservation we prefer the package, even though we do decorate our garbage tins with discarded cardboards. We are sure of keeping out the flies and the mice from the cereals and the raisins, pretty sure that our tea will not be diluted by aeration before we begin to use it, and that the soap will not lose by having the edges chipped off. How about candies? Will the Controller invade that feminine domain also? We shudder to think of it. The fact that his grandfather bought a pound of stick candies or conversation lozenges for his best girl will not be much of an argument for the young gallant who last week brought his lady love a dollar-box of valentined chocolates, and next week brings in a little paper bag.

Nevertheless, we are ready to pack up the Controller in any self-denying ordinance that will lower the cost of living, so long as he makes sure that none of the commodities are going to be deteriorated more by the bulk system than all we make up in the cost—if any.

**S**IR JOHN WILLIAMS says, in the New York Tribune, that the new Union Government will make the Conservative party in Canada obsolete. There's a psychology in this. Sir John

has been long enough studying the psychology of both parties in this country to be an impartial authority on the question. The development of a political party may be regarded by the political writer as something like the inundation of Atlantis was to the geologists. What is this sea of regenerative public opinion that will engulf the Conservative party—if not the Liberal? Is it possible that Sir John expects the new Liberal members to become Unionists? Are Rowell, Carvell, Ballantyne, Crerar, Calder, and Guthrie to forsake the Liberal party and join the Unionist party? We are advised not. These new members who are responsible for making the Unionist Government possible are to be Unionists till after the war, and then—they will revert to whatever Liberalism survives, if they feel so disposed. The mere fact of their having served in a Union Government will make no difference, we are told. These men are free agents who are Unionists for war purposes.

But—and here is the subtle side of Sir John's prediction—what will this Unionist party be? What will the term Unionist mean? Will it be a Canadian edition of the Unionist party in England? If so, our compliments to Sir John for a very adroit piece of political thinking. In that case the reconstructed and rebaptized Conservative party with the Unionist label will have for the main plank of its platform the status of Canada as a part of the Empire. Is this what Sir John means? Is the new Unionist (nee Conservative) party to be under the aegis of the group known as the Round Table?

Here is food for much thought. The cat may seem

## The Solar System in Drama

**W**HAT's to be done about good plays? An old story, with a new face every little while. Last week three little one-act plays of Barrie were put on at one of the leading Toronto theatres, the new Princess. Enough people attended each of these performances to fill a bandbox theatre. The plays were all new; all done since the war, some of them since that New York Barrie success, with Maude Adams in the leading role, *A Kiss For Cinderella*. One of them, *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*, is as good a play as *Cinderella*. It has all the intimately clever characteristics that make Barrie's best work quite inimitable. It was a mixture of humour and pathos contained in a clever plot and carried by skillfully drawn, humanly interesting characters. The same theme carried out over a whole evening might have been regarded as a popular success. The other two were not quite so good. One of them is a satire on the fact that English fathers and sons are not really acquainted and should never be found chumming it. The other was an almost grotesquely pathetic but finely drawn sketch of an old colonel who forgets what happened yesterday and remembers what happens to-morrow; Barbara's Wedding; Barbara was married; but not to his grandson, "Billy Boy," or Carl, his German friend. The old man can't understand it. He seems to have seen both of these boys that morning, also Dering, the gardener, with whom he had a long talk about things that seemed to be happening that day, but of course didn't. He has a hallucination that a soldier and a nurse are at this wedding, to which grandma went that morning. He saw Billy Boy, Carl and the gardener and Barbara. But of course it turns out that Billy Boy and Carl killed each other in the war some time ago, the gardener enlisted and became a captain and married Barbara. And past, present and future, all swim in a war maze before the old Colonel, who can't make it out at all, till he meets Captain Dering, the lucky husband of Barbara, who is now a Red Cross nurse. Was this intended as a satire on the inconstancy of Barbara, or as a plaint over the old Colonel, who couldn't understand the war? Nobody knows. And that's what is the matter with this particular Barrie play. The war has gone to the author's nerves.

Yet, the three plays were good enough to have drawn good crowds of Barrie admirers; people who used to flock to Peter Pan. Then the question arises—What does Barrie amount to without Maude Adams? Does the success of a popular play-wright of Barrie's undoubted genius depend on the star system? Is Maude Adams Barrie's other and indispensable self? We don't know. But we do know that good drama, if it does not belong to the solar system, is slowly gravitating to the scope of the bandbox theatre.

to be out of the bag. Let us notice which way the creature purposes to jump.

**D**R. GRAHAM BELL, Canadian inventor of the telephone, said in Brantford, the telephone city, last week, that seeing by wire will yet be an achievement of science. Dr. Bell is entitled to that prediction, if anyone is. The city of Brantford is entitled to be the place where he first said it for publication, because Mt. Pleasant, a suburb of Brantford, was the place where the world's telephone was born, less than 100 years ago. The unveiling of the Bell Memorial—which we expect to feature in next week's issue—is one of the greatest events of its kind ever staged in Canada. No political unveiling ever had the world-significance of this celebration of the telephone as a memorial to the inventor in his home city. And it was a time for scientific predictions. The prophecy of seeing, as well as hearing by wire is within the bounds of credibility. We do not think Dr. Bell a very rash prophet to have made it. In fact, we should like to carry his idea a step further and predict that long before the youngest child living is dead it will be possible for an audience to sit in a theatre and see on a movie screen what is transpiring at that very moment a thousand miles away. In fact, if our republicanizing prophets are not having their predictions also verified, it may be possible in 1967—or afterwards—for people in Quebec City to be present at the coronation of the King in England, as yet unborn, without going away from home.

**S**IR ROBERT BORDEN took some of the wind out of one of our sails when he came out with his slate for the Union Government. We intended letting the people of Canada elect the new Cabinet. We had got along rather well at the job—though we should have started sooner—when the Premier settled the whole matter out of court. He had a perfect right to do this. He may not have been conscious of stealing our thunder in so doing.

But in the meantime we have received other nominations for Union Cabinet positions. These, with apologies to those who forwarded them, we take the liberty of summarizing as follows:

Sir Robert Borden, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir Thomas White, Hon. Arthur Meighen, Mr. F. B. Carvell, Mr. N. W. Rowell, Mr. Henry A. Powell, K.C., and Justice L. P. Duff.

The second last named was backed up by a very interesting biographical sketch which we shall publish in the near future, concerning a very able citizen of Westmoreland, N.B. From the other end of the country a citizen of Vancouver sends a very timely estimate of what should be kept clearly in mind in the selection of men to fill such important positions in the public service. What he says for and against the present as opposed to a better system of selection will be of interest to everybody concerned in putting in the candidates for election to the House of Commons, the great school for public service.

For the sake of brevity, he says, let us tabulate the various points for and against the present system, omitting superfluous argument.

### AGAINST

- (1) Red tape which limits freedom of action, dulls initiative and hinders decisive action.
- (2) Leaders who are trained in oratorical arts and the study of law rather than along lines of constructive and industrial organization.
- (3) Party patronage which is a lesser evil than many seem to think; few of the real executive heads are affected and no other method has yet been devised for rewarding the real workers in an election without whom an election would be even more of a mockery than it is at present when less than 50 per cent. of the electorate take the trouble to vote.
- (4) Consequent lack of efficiency when compared with a private industrial corporation.

### FOR

- (1) Comparative freedom from dishonesty and graft which is more extensive in private industries than is generally known to the public.
- (2) Public knowledge of all transactions and ability to express approval or disapproval.
- (3) Direct representation of the needs of various sections of the country.
- (4) Practically an absolute check upon the individual action of our leaders ensuring a stable continuance of the present system.