



CANADA does not want conscription. No doubt this country is yet good for a third great effort to raise the last 140,000 of our national half-million of an army. But it may as well be set down as a national fact that conscription is not the way to do it. Let us keep in mind just what has been the experience of conscription in no-conscription countries like England and Australia. The parallel does not hold with conscript continental Europe. Trace it in democracy. Australia, which before the war had universal training and was able to send at once a much larger army to war than Canada sent in 1914, has recently voted down conscription. There must be a reason in democracy. England, which now has conscription, did not begin to create it until there had been instituted in the name of a free nation, first, voluntary enlistment; second, the national register and the pink forms; third, the Derby scheme of systematic recruiting based upon the national register—finally, to get the last remnant of the slackers, compulsory service. And if compulsion had not been exercised at the ports of debarkation much of that remnant of slackers would have escaped overseas. Conscription would have been defeated by its own force.

What have we done in Canada to test out our capacity to raise a half-million army without compulsory service? As yet nothing but voluntary enlistment. That has given us an army of 360,000. Will any one say that it is not a marvellous achievement? We have not as yet even the beginning of a national register. Our present census is six years old. Long ago the Government should have organized our census department upon a sensible business inventory of our resources in a time of war. A national register would indicate where the rest of our half-million army is to come from. But it would not of itself get the men. A Canadian Derby, taking the results of the national register, would surely have a chance to enlarge our Canadian army. Is it out of comparison with what we have already achieved under voluntary enlistment to imagine that such a scheme would get most, if not all, the necessary balance? And if it did not, would conscription do it? Consider the slackers of England who were kept in the country because the ports were blocked against them. But what blockade could Canada ever enforce along the United States border? What is to prevent 100,000 men—if we have so many slackers—from crossing that border to a land where there is no war? Nothing. Conscription, aiming to get the remnant, would make slackers and exiles of men who, under a more sensible extension of our voluntary system on the basis of a national register, might be got to enlist. If Australia, which is an island and capable of keeping her slackers at home, votes down conscription—why should Canada, which is half a continent, dream of adopting it?

A NEW national sentiment has sprung up in the United States. The struggle to elect either Wilson or Hughes has given the nation a voice such as it has never had in forty years of Presidential elections. The contest was not decided by straight party issues. Never before were party platforms so vague and nationalizing issues so powerful. Not in our time has that struggle been conducted with so little reference to old party slogans, so little bedevilment by corrupting influences, and with less to choose between the obvious personalities of the candidates. Neither Wilson nor Hughes fired the national imagination. Almost in spite of either personal or party factors 20,000,000 voters registered their choice in a supreme effort to discover if, after all, the United States had a soul bigger than party politics. Wilson, no longer too proud to fight, won the battle without the traditional aid of Tammany, whom he has always treated with contempt. In the predicament to which Wilson forced himself lies the sudden amazing strength of his position. He has never truckled to Tammany. Some weeks ago he gave that Irish organization a black eye in his letter to O'Leary. Since his election in 1912 he has been a changed man. Then he was solicitous about the opinion of his party leaders and cordial to his party press. Afterwards he ignored one and avoided the other. He ruled party and Congress like an autocrat. His two close admirers after his separation from Bryan were Secretary Lansing and Col. House. His course on the war was consistently neutral up till a few weeks before the election. To keep the peace he sometimes trifled with national honour.

No President in our day was ever so beset with a foreign policy thrust upon him from within and without. No man ever hated it worse. No candidate for the Presidency was ever so between the devil and the deep sea. He was criticized by one section of his own party for being too hostile to the Germans; by another section for being just the opposite. He sacrificed the solid support of Tammany. Almost without expecting it he got as a compensation most of the Progressive vote, which was ear-marked for Hughes. It was impossible to reconcile a Roosevelt faction with a candidate supported by a large percentage of the German-American vote. Wilson entered the contest with the expectation that the German vote would go largely

to Hughes. Returns indicate that even this was divided, and its importance as a factor in the results much over-estimated.

The vote was exceptionally large. The party issues were exceedingly befuddled. Wilson's utterances were much the more pointed and explicit. On all sides, apparently, the old party lines were badly shaken. New issues emerged. President Wilson lived down the rebukes hurled at him by Roosevelt and Root. He changed his attitude in his light of experience. The Wilson of 1916 was not the Wilson of 1914. It took him two years to learn that the nation which had no desire to go to war had a desire to express itself as a nation of neutrality. The best sentiment of the United States is nowhere near pro-German. It is a desire to take rank as a nation among nations, dealing with world problems, even though old party lines had to be broken up to do it. In this respect the political revolution in the United States is not unlike the nationalizing sentiment in Canada. It was given a radical boost by the Progressive campaign in 1912. It was shoved infinitely further as a national issue common to both parties by the impact of the war. The United States may thank the war for having given it a chance to save its national soul. President Wilson may thank the gradual defeat of Germany by the Allies for his chance to show himself as a fighting head of a nation that is not too proud to fight when it comes to an election. He may thank Charles Hughes for being a candidate that no aggressive free nation could want for a head, and his own policy that kept the country out of war.

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TO the first snow, again—welcome! That doesn't commit us to the other snow that is to come, because it is a different kind of snow. Not half so pleasant-mannered as this snow. But the first snowfall is usually timid, tentative, quiet-mannered. It steals down and quietly finds its place. It does its work of transformation noiselessly. Now, on the other hand, rain has no grace whatsoever. Perhaps because rain lacks philosophy. It makes short business of getting to earth. The first snow lingers, pauses, dances a little, and then settles gracefully to the earth. Rain is like the love of man: direct. Snow is like the love of women—not so direct. Later snowstorms, gaining confidence by our reception of the first, will come in howling and swanking. So be it. But in the meantime the first snow is irresistible in its loveliness. Welcome!

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DEMOCRACY makes paternalism difficult. But democracy will do well to take a few leaves from paternalism's notebook. In Canada our Departments of Agriculture have spent millions of money, much time and considerable brains in the business of teaching farmers how to farm. In this work they have sometimes gone too far, sometimes not far enough. There is a limit beyond which no Government can teach the average farmer anything. There are problems which become the personal affairs of John Jones inside his own line fences, just as there are problems which concern the whole community, and can only be adjusted by some corporation common to all and responsible to all.

We have no desire to set any definite limit to the aid and advice which Governments may give in teaching farmers to farm. At some other time we may have opinions which lean towards doing more of that in wise directions. At present it is timely to point out that the reason any Government advises farmers is mainly for the sake of increasing production. Our production of wealth from natural resources falls under a number of heads: the soil, the forest, the mine, the sea and the lakes. There is a practical way of deriving revenue from the air, but it is not of importance here. What we desire to point out is that although Governments have done a great deal to aid the farmer, the lumberman and the miner, Governments have as yet done very little to teach the fisherman how to fish. We have immense areas of fresh and salt water upon which we depend for our supplies of fish. These fish supplies are more important now than ever. With the price of meat and of bread skyrocketing as never before in this country, what are we doing to increase our visible supplies, and therefore to lower the cost of our fish? A little. What there is of it is first-class. What there is not of it—incalculable. We have Government fish hatcheries. We have not one-tenth enough. We complain of the depletion of lakes. We only fiddle away at the task of replenishing them. A good fisherman in Muskoka often stocks a fishless lake with fish. Is there any reason why Governments, which are the only corporations able to do such things, should not take steps, and as soon as possible, to see that all our water farms are made as productive as possible? It costs millions to buy plant food and to undertake reforestation. Fish food is absolutely costless. All we require is the fish in order that they may multiply and consume the food already lying idle in the lakes and the seas. Why do not all our Governments of both parties go into this business of, somewhat reducing the cost of living by increasing the supplies of so important an article of food?