

EDITORIAL

Drastic Changes Afoot

OTTAWA is on the eve of changes. The Cabinet, we understand, is to be reorganized. Enemies of the Government will seize upon this as a sign that decrepitude is coming over the Cabinet. The retirement of Ministers is quite in line with the changes that have lately taken place in other democratic countries and in some not so democratic. In point of fact, any Cabinet under our system is due for a shakeup every four or five years. We seldom regard a Cabinet Minister as a fixture longer than for the natural term of Parliament. That term expired last year. Had there been an election no doubt some of these men would have been ripe for retirement on general principles. As there seem to be drastic changes afoot, we surmise that so far as the Government is concerned there is to be no election in the near future. What the Liberals will decide about this is not so evident. Sir Wilfrid Laurier is becoming an old man. If he hopes to win another election he cannot afford to postpone the date of it very long. A campaign is much more strenuous than a premiership or the leadership of an opposition. It was a campaign that killed Sir John Macdonald. Very likely the Opposition will decline to see in any proposed Cabinet reorganization anything more than a death-bed repentance. Very likely the Government will be able to convince Parliament and the people that to have an election now that the war has reached its most critical of all stages would be worse than even a national government.

Win the War!

BUT we are told by the Toronto Star that the Government is not prosecuting the war as it should, and that the people of Canada have almost forgotten that there is such a thing as a war. Now that the United States has decided upon national selection of an army, we are told that Canada should have conscription. It is true that recruiting is dead. It is equally true that the Government and the military authorities cannot revive it. The social study critics allege that the failure to recruit is due to the indifference of the people to the fact of the war. That is quite superficial. The country's business is much deeper and relatively more simple. What we have to do is to help win the war. That is not now, though it was at first—a mere matter of raising armies. The country is to be organized, is being organized as never before on a war-winning basis. To this end farms, factories, railways, banks, private incomes, governmental machinery, domestic life—everything we have—are being brought into play. That a lot of it is slow business we must admit. We lost ground long ago by having no form of national register. Haphazard energy and slapdash enthusiasm raised our first quarter of a million army. We only began to talk of organization as though we meant it when the slapdash period was over and the recruiting began to slacken. Now we are talking so many ways about organization that presently we shall be in the position of the man who could tie a knot so many ways that he was unable to choose which way he wanted to do it.

Isn't it quite plain that outside of one area in Canada we have sent the best part of our available manhood to the war? Or if General Hughes' estimate of our man power is correct is it not still a fact that we have drained ourselves short of labour at home for the purpose of providing the war with all that it needs in the way of foodstuffs and munitions? How can we increase production up to near the billion dollar mark in munitions and up to a point of equality with our peace-year exports of food, if we are to take another 100,000 or 200,000 or 300,000 men out of the country? There is a limit somewhere. We are already importing Americans into the West to put in and harvest our crop. Are we to conscript away the rest of our men and import

more Americans to take their places? Or would it not be as well to let the Americans stay where they are and answer their own country's call to arms?

Forward Quebec

AND of course we shall hear that this is a backward movement. We do not want Americans taking our places in the trenches. We do not want to see our divisions at the front reduced. We want to keep Canada in the glorious place she has won at Ypres, Festubert, Courcellette, Vimy and Arleux. That is true. We cannot afford to stop sending men. But let us get the men sensibly. Let the national register do its work. If Quebec chooses to be represented by a minority at the front, let Quebec take up the work at home under the scope of the national register. There are thousands of men in Quebec who can work on the farms of Ontario and the western provinces, as well as in the mines, the munition factories and the shipyards. The day will come when Quebec will regret that she did not send more men to stand side by side with the brave French-Canadians that have already gone. It is much more the duty of Quebec to do her part in the war against Germany than for any German settlements in the West or elsewhere.

If conscription is to be applied will it operate to make aliens and internment subjects of the Germanic peoples on the prairie who do not care to fight against Germany even though they remain loyal after a fashion to Canada? This is a delicate question. It is one not to be answered by a wave of the hand or a thump on the table. It is not a matter of A B C for any sectarian to settle on the principle of force. Again we say that it is the plain duty and privilege of Quebec to send more men to the front. It is in the nature of the French-Canadian to fight. It is in his history. It is in his interest as a race. The way is made plain for him. Canada of both or all parties will welcome 50,000 more voluntary men from Quebec, much more than any measure of conscription. It remains for the leaders of Quebec to back up the efforts now being made by Hon. P. E. Blondin and Gen. Lessard. These men are in the right and Quebec knows it.

We Are All in the Right

CONTRADICTION is the spice of living. By the same mail this week we receive two letters, one of which is a plain contradiction of the other. One letter comes from Quebec; the other from Victoria. They are both on the same subject. The Quebec letter says:

I received the returned M.S. re French language in Quebec and am sorry that you will not print it. When a correspondent writes over his own signature it is up to the paper to print it as it stands and make its own comment editorially.

But it is on a par with Ontario bigotry, Orangism and politics, which prevents any settlement of that regrettable agitation. Although Quebec had honestly started the "Entente Cordiale" and would like the matter settled, Ontario, through above influences, will not. Hence all the nice speeches and writings by Ontarians on the Entente are a farce, and discord is preferred. This trouble started in a row between Irish and French Roman Catholics. I am a good Anglican churchman and my friend the Archbishop of Regina, Monseigneur O. E. Mathieu, C.M.G., agreed with me that he, with Sir George Garneau and Hon. Mr. Chapais, with three sane Ontarians could settle the trouble in a day, but Ontario will not.

The crass ignorance of Ontario men high up in educational and other matters concerning Quebec affairs is amazing.

My article is not controversial, but tells the truth, hence its return.

The Victoria letter, equally sincere, comes at the question from a different angle. It says:

However, I have stopped showing the Courier, as I get tired of trying to explain the position you have taken as regards the so-called "French" language in Canada. I

have had considerable experience in lumber camps with the French of Quebec, and after a lot of difficulty I succeeded in understanding them, and in making myself understood by them. When I came out to Saskatchewan and met the French in the northern part of the province I found that there was practically no similarity in the language. Therefore, I do not know what French you want to have taught.

The article to which the Quebec letter refers was about 4,000 words in length, much too long to be treated as a letter to the Editor. The writer asked that it be printed without the elision of a single word or any other alteration. We courteously declined the manuscript on the ground that the subject was one of controversy in which at present we did not care to engage. Hence our correspondent who wrote the article in a calm effort to get a better understanding, treats our refusal of it with an outburst of indignation and an attack upon Ontario.

The Victoria correspondent is out of patience on the same topic from just the opposite angle.

On second thought we have decided to send to each of these correspondents the letter of the other and allow them to fight it out between themselves.

Submarine Optimists

THERE seems to be a settled policy among a certain class of war optimists to dispose of the submarine problem by a few sums in mental arithmetic. They will not admit that when a last grand desperate fling of the dice is being made by a nation like Germany all the energy she spent and lost in her land campaigns on both fronts, all her stored-up rage at the strangulation of her mercantile marine and her navy, all her disillusionments over the Zeppelins and the Taubes and the Fokkers, will be put into this undersea business. Under the water is the only place that Germany is practically up to the present—invincible. Everything that can be fought to a finish in the open is ours for the fighting. The under-water business is still in the hands of Germany. Submarines can't be fought under water except by nets and mines. The nation that has submarines to operate can only be fought by submarines. The only way to do that is to sink that nation's ships as she is sinking the ships of the world. But when that nation has no ships afloat that's quite impossible. Meanwhile nothing is to be gained by disguising submarine losses. At the present rate of destruction the food and other supplies of the world on the high seas will soon be decimated, unless some way can be found to arm all ships of size—which we imagined was being done. What has become of Sir Percy Scott, who, before the war, was so convinced that submarines were the great weapon of sea war?

Prophets of Empire

SOME people's intellectual cups are never full until they begin tinkering the Empire. There are people in Canada who sit up nights devising new schemes of Empire-management. These men are a peculiarly unselfish crowd. The zeal and energy which they put into reforming the Empire would have achieved wonders if applied to private business. But they went into world politics and, of course, the Empire came along with its elephantine burdens just in time to jolt a lot of them right at the feet of these problem-solvers who lose no time getting to work on the job. Among these reformers we note politicians, university men, manufacturers, and plain people. Not so many of the people. They have not time to get the vision of this far-flung Empire that trails its splendid caravans across the midnight sky at the open window where the reformers sit looking towards Jerusalem. Single out any one of the Empire-revolutionizers you know, change his customary clothes to a long, purple-broidered robe, stick sandals on his feet and a shepherd's crook in his hand or something resembling a mace, let his hair grow into locks and his face get a bit leaner—you have a real modern prophet. That's the sort of man you would expect to write upon a parchment scroll complete specifications and war cries for a new Parliament of the Empire. Meanwhile he reads Macaulay's Essay on Warren Hastings and wishes to heaven he could write an epic of Empire after the manner of Milton's Paradise Lost.