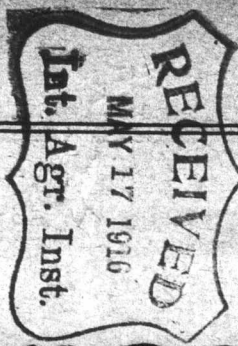


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Special Articles

The Sheep Industry in Canada.

By T. Reg. Arkell.

Our Russian Ally.

By W. E. Dowding.

The Trade and Economic Future of China.

By W. W. Swanson.

Coal Mining in Pictou Co.

Conditions in the West.

By E. Cora Hind.

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The Bi-lingual School Question

WHILE the introduction of the Ontario bi-lingual school question into the House of Commons at Ottawa is, for various reasons, to be regretted, it can be said that the tone of the discussion has minimized the anticipated harm. Most of the speeches made were on a high plane, and there was a gratifying absence of the bitterness which too often marks the discussion of racial or religious subjects in our public assemblies. The speeches may have helped some people to a clearer understanding of the nature of the controversy. The debate, however, cannot be said to have brought the dispute nearer to a settlement.

As we have on several occasions pointed out, the parties to the dispute profess purposes which are not really conflicting. The Ontario Education Department says its chief aim is to ensure the instruction of all children in English, the language of the great majority of the Canadian people. There may be some extremists on the other side who do not appreciate the importance of this, but the most responsible representatives of the French minority claim that they are entirely in accord with the Department on this very material point. The French minority say they desire their children to be taught, along with English, their mother tongue, the French language. There may be extremists in Ontario who would exclude French altogether; but that is not the attitude of the Government and Legislature of Ontario. These say, through their representatives, that the desire of French parents to have their children taught French is natural, and that the regulations made contemplate French tuition to a reasonable extent. The two views are not conflicting; they are really harmonious. Since, then, both agree that the French language shall be taught along with English in the districts in which the people are largely of French origin, the only material point really in dispute is whether the arrangements for this instruction in French are wisely made and calculated to serve their purpose. That is not a question for politicians, but one for experienced educationists. If the question could be approached in the right spirit half a dozen men who have had experience in this branch of educational work should be able, in a very little time, to formulate regulations that would be accepted by all, barring, perhaps, a few extremists on both sides, whom no large body of the Canadian people will regard as wise guides in any public matter.

The British Conscription Act

A CONSCRIPTION law has at last been adopted almost unanimously in the British Parliament. The Northcliffe press writers hasten to declare the event a great triumph for the party that has so long been advocating conscription, and a humiliation for Premier Asquith. The Toronto News, Sir John Willison's paper, readily adopts that view, and criticizes our journal for having approved of Mr. Asquith's course. But the Northcliffites, including our Toronto contemporary, are wrong. Not the conscriptionists, but the Asquith Government, have been vindicated by the recent action of Parliament.

The Northcliffe press has for many months—indeed, one might almost say for years—been demanding the adoption in Great Britain of something like the continental compulsory military systems. There is little doubt that if its foolish policy had been adopted at any time in the past year disturbances, possibly falling not far short of revolution, would have resulted. For generations, whether wisely or not may be a point of dispute, the British nation has not regarded a large standing army as necessary. It has trained its people in the belief that industrial and social progress was of more importance than the development of militarism. Any attempt in time past to enforce conscription among a people so educated would have been doomed to failure. Even the outbreak of war did not at once produce conditions that made conscription practicable. Mr. Asquith and the wisest statesmen of Great Britain clearly saw that conscription could only be safely adopted after long trial of the more British methods. England was bound to make all possible use of her voluntary system before resorting to compulsion.

The voluntary system did not fail. On that, as well as on the question of Imperial organization, the predictions of the British Jingoists proved unfounded. For years they had been proclaiming that unless the country jumped at one of the less than half-baked schemes of Imperial Federation the Empire must fall to pieces at the first touch of attack. But when the great moment of trial came the unfederated Empire laughed at the Jingo folly and presented to the world a noble spectacle of loyalty, unity and power. So with the army. Under the much derided voluntary system Great Britain placed in the field several millions of brave soldiers ready to serve the Empire with a devotion that must be far beyond anything that is to be expected of men who serve under compulsion.

The employment of a system of conscription, under such conditions, would have been not only foolish, but more than dangerous.