

it must be admitted that the position of the Government seems unassailable. A conference of the Allies at Versailles decided that for greater unity of action in the war it was desirable that the supreme military command of the allied forces should be vested on a council to sit in that historic city. The British Government offered Sir William Robertson the position of Britain's representative on the Versailles council, or a continuance in his post at the War Office in London with the modification of his power which became necessary under the Versailles programme. Sir William disapproved of the Versailles arrangement and apparently was unwilling to become responsible for it in either of the positions offered to him. In such circumstances his retirement seems to have been unavoidable.

The Versailles plan adopted by all the Allies is likely to be viewed with favor by the public generally, and there will be widespread regret that Sir William was unable to co-operate in carrying it out. Some day we shall probably learn why he opposed it. Meanwhile, soldier-like, he remains silent and takes up the new and less prominent position assigned to him.

Those who desire to worry the Lloyd George Government will have to find some new ground for their action. There are elements in British politics which are unwilling to give their confidence to the Prime Minister, and if at any moment Mr. Asquith desired to do so he could rally a powerful party against the Cabinet. But the patriotism and the strong common sense of Mr. Asquith, so often manifested since he retired from the Premiership, are a guarantee that he will not for any light cause allow the Government to be defeated. Unless some quite unexpected trouble arise, there is every probability that the Lloyd George Government will retain power, at all events until the general election, which, when it comes will, under a new franchise law, bring new forces into the arena of British politics.

A Western Suggestion

OUR Parliamentary practice in Dominion and Provinces, founded on that of the Imperial Parliament, is so well established that suggestions for a change in it are seldom readily received. There is much ground for the argument that what has grown up through years of experience, and has received the endorsement of the greatest Parliamentary body in the world, must have much merit, and should not be abandoned unless for grave reasons. There is probably less disposition now than there was formerly to pay respect to old customs. This is particularly noticeable in our Western country, where all things are new and where the atmosphere is charged with something like radicalism. Our excellent contemporary, the Calgary Albertan, makes the bold assertion that in Provincial affairs at least our Parliamentary organization needs remodelling. The first suggestion offered is that the Legislature should be abolished and something like a commission form of government adopted for the Province. That this is rather revolutionary the Albertan admits, and therefore it proceeds to suggest something less radical. What it proposes is a change of Parliamentary practice that has much to commend it, and that may be even worthy of consideration in the large political arena. Our contemporary contends that the system whereby the fate of a government is made to depend on the passage or defeat of a measure restricts freedom of discussion and action on the part of members.

Here is the position as stated by the Calgary writer:

"A member of parliament faces a measure knowing that it is wrong. But if he votes against it he may defeat the government and thus do an even greater wrong. He votes for the bad measure and saves the government."

"This is done time after time, year after year, and prevents more good legislation and is responsible for more bad legislation than anything else in our entire system."

"The result is that the more important decisions in the legislature now are made in the caucus, behind barred doors, and the sessions of the legislature are of little importance and are to a great extent staged battles between the parties in which there is but little free and independent discussion. The influence of the leaders is supreme."

The Calgary journal argues that it is not right to put a member in a position which thus obliges him to do violence to his conscience. Instead of a practice which produces the difficulty that has been pointed out our Calgary contemporary contends that a Government should not be so identified with a measure as to oblige them to stand or fall with it. Each member should be free to discuss the measure with absolute disregard of party considerations. Defeat of the measure should not be deemed a defeat of the Government. If Parliament has lost confidence in the Government, it should say so by a direct non-confidence vote, and only in the presence of such a vote should a Government be expected to resign. Of course, if a Government attach so much importance to a measure that they are unwilling to remain in office without its enactment, they would still resign. But the effect of the new system would undoubtedly be to separate men from measures and to allow a much greater freedom of discussion than that which takes place under the present practice.

The Y.M.C.A.'S War Work

TOO much cannot be said in praise of the work of the Young Men's Christian Association in the war service of Great Britain and the Allies. Every Canadian soldier who has served in the forces overseas has experienced the benefits offered by this great organization in the training camps and near the battlefield. While the moral side of the work is properly given prominence, the Association has rendered a splendid service in providing refreshments where needed, and in encouraging the men through the instrumentality of wholesome amusements. The rules of the Association place restrictions on the character of the recreation furnished which to some may seem unnecessary, but it is not to be expected that the organization will abandon its long established principles. A very pleasing feature is that, while the Y.M.C.A. is distinctly a Protestant institution, its aid to the soldiers has been so general and so free from anything like sectarianism that its premises have been widely used by Roman Catholics, and several Roman Catholic chaplains have paid tribute to the value of the Association's operations. It is gratifying to find that this good spirit is extending to the work of the Y. M. C. A. in connection with the United States army. A very prominent Roman Catholic clergyman, Rev. F. Joseph Gormley, has been

appointed one of the Y. M. C. A. secretaries for service in France. Father Gormley was an active member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. His brethren of that organization gave him a send-off at a Roman Catholic Club in New York. The report of the proceedings pays a high tribute to the Y. M. C. A. work:

"The fact that Mr. Gormley has been prominent and conspicuously active in the Knights of Columbus and in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for upward of 20 years was dwelt upon in a most impressive address delivered by the Rev. James F. Cronin, C. S. P., former spiritual director of the Paulist Conference, who was the principal speaker."

"Father Cronin, in the course of his address, pointed out clearly the purpose of the Y. M. C. A. and the great humanitarian service they have undertaken, and related personal experience with executives in high position in the Y. M. C. A. which gave him an intimate knowledge of their motives and methods. Father Cronin instanced one experience which resulted in the elimination of certain literature objectionable to Roman Catholics, from the reading rooms of the Y. M. C. A., promptly after he had communicated with a certain official. He stated that the official immediately made 17 copies of his letter and sent it to each member of the board of directors, and that a response came back from every one of the 17, saying that he was decidedly opposed to having any such literature in the Y. M. C. A. reading rooms. He gave other instances which showed that he had met with neither hostility nor bigotry from the Y. M. C. A., and indicated many ways in which Mr. Gormley would serve our soldiers in France with greater efficiency and human sympathy in all the requirements of the Y. M. C. A.'s activities because of his 20 years' experience as a Vincentian."

A Step Towards Continentalism

IN MOST things Canada is ultra British. There are occasions, however, when, perhaps unconsciously, we depart from British ideas. In England the rule of the road in driving is "Keep to the left!" In the United States the rule is "Keep to the right!" In the greater part of Canada—in Ontario and Quebec, and in the Prairie Provinces which have been influenced by the custom of the larger Provinces—not the English but the American rule has long been observed. In the Maritime Provinces of the East and in British Columbia on the Pacific side the influence of the English custom has hitherto prevailed, and the drivers of vehicles keep to the left. Now a strong movement is taking place in Nova Scotia towards changing the rule. An active organization has been formed to promote the change. Already Halifax has adopted the new rule and in several of the municipalities of the Province the example of the chief city is being followed. The neighboring Provinces are likely to take similar action. The movement has attracted notice in British Columbia and one of the coast papers is advocating the change for that Province. It seems more than probable that the old English custom so long followed on British soil on both sides of the continent will be abandoned and that throughout the whole North American continent the rule for drivers will be "Keep to the right."