

Editorial

Democracy

THERE is no expression more frequently met with in the papers and magazines of Canada, Britain and the United States than "the fight for democracy." No phrase more completely sets forth the purpose of the war. The world is not safe so long as the few have absolute power and the many are in abject submission to them. It is all the same whether the power is wielded by a military class, a religious order, a political clique, or a financial corporation. Just now the world fight is against military despotism. The other forms of tyranny must in time be overthrown in the same way. The nations and all individuals must be free. Death is better than slavery or servitude.

Now it is strange that though we, who are in Canada, have been willing to give life and wealth to overthrow the despotism of Germany, we are quite willing to tolerate an equally objectionable despotism at home. The German war-lords have no more power in their own country or in Europe than have the money-kings—the big business men—right here in Canada. It is wonderfully strange how some people who are shouting "conscription," are blind to the other evil; wonderfully strange how they can denounce German robbery and heartlessness, and condone robbery and pillage right in our midst.

The Rule of Wealth

DURING the last three years, as never before, Canada has been in the grip of the moneyed interests. Appointments in and out of the government have gone to those who possessed gold, or who were willing to fall down and meekly worship the golden image. The possession of wealth has been to those in office a sufficient recommendation for leadership. Think of the last appointment to the Canadian Senate, think of the chairman of the most important of our commissions. Think of all the other appointments that meant so much to Canada during the war, and of the character of the men who have had at all times the ear of the government. If ever a country was ruled by a small coterie of men rather than by the representatives of the people that country is Canada. If ever there was a disgusting aristocracy it is the aristocracy of dollars that has the ascendancy just now. It is a small satisfaction to see the common people come into their own in England, Russia and other European states, and to find that right here we are in subjection to a few men, most of whom have acquired wealth as the result of special legislation, or because of donations from the public treasury. We can have no true democracy until the directors of our national life are true representatives of the people, rather than creatures of special privilege or worshippers of the money-chests.

Should any one think this is overdrawn, let him consider who are the real advisers of the government to-day. Not men of the people, but those who, above all others, were responsible for the plunder of the people. And when it came to actual appointments to the cabinet, does not everybody recognize that no one stood a chance who was not a friend of the interests? The very first appointments from the ranks of the opposition were men who could be trusted to stand in with "big business."

Any thing could go so long as the money-kings were left in possession of their plunder. The militarism of Germany is bad, the moneyed bureaucracy of Canada is worse, because in this case we are responsible for the evil.

There is a question being asked by every Canadian and by every newspaper, "Why should there be division at this critical time?" The answer is as plain as the nose on a man's face. It is not primarily because of race, religion or politics. It is because there are forty or fifty men who control one-third of the wealth of Canada, and they are determined to control the government of the country. It is easy for them to do so when the men in charge are such willing friends. Verily the love of money is the root of all evil.

The Remedy

HOW shall we get things right? There is only one way. The people can rule just as soon as they make up their minds to do so. No one need fear chaos and confusion. There could be no greater blundering and injustice than we have had during these last three years.

There is only one thing stands in the way. An old philosopher has told it all in a parable. Would you hear it? "Once upon a time the fishes of the streams and lakes waited upon King Pike and complained that he was too rapacious, that every year he swallowed too many of their number. King Pike, after careful deliberation, replied that there was, perhaps, some ground for the complaint, and that he would improve matters by allowing one of the little fish each year to become a pike. Then they all left perfectly satisfied, for each one hoped to become that pike."

The cure for all our ills is public spirit. There are public-spirited individuals in every community. Let

us entrust them with authority. These are the only men and women who can be trusted. After all it is a question of moral worth. Canada will not be great, prosperous, happy, so long as dishonest, unscrupulous, blinded partisans control its destinies. Nor will it be any better if its policies are shaped, and its interests administered by men who represent special interests. A man who is a grain grower and nothing more, a trade's unionist and nothing more, is just as unsuitable for public office as a man who is conservative and nothing more, or liberal and nothing more. In public office men must rise above their private affairs, they must cease to be partizan, they must be men. "God give us men! A time like this demands

Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands; Men whom the lust of office does not kill; Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy; Men who possess a conscience and a will; Men who have honor, men who will not lie; Men who can stand before a demagogue, And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking; Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog, In public duty and in private thinking, For while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds, Their large professions and their little deeds, Mingle in selfish strife—lo, Freedom weeps, Wrong rules the land and waiting Justice sleeps!"

It is bad enough to meet a man who is not willing to send men and money to assist in the great world-struggle. It is even worse to meet a man who is crying "conscription" in order to drown the clamor that is being raised because of his own misdeed. So whether we have conservatives or liberals or both combined, to lead us, let them be men of the people.

The Food Controller

IT must be confessed that up to the present the food controller has not accomplished very much. He may have gathered statistics and figures, he may have travelled a good many miles and may have talked with a good many people, but he has certainly not done what people expected him to do. He has not relieved the strain nor lessened the anxiety of those who find it so difficult to live, and this despite the fact that he was so emphatic in his promises. Here is something from his own pen: "Against the other price-raising factors, against competitive buying by foreign governments, against unequal distribution of resources, against speculators, greedy middlemen and wasters, the public will be vigilantly protected."

It is impossible to get away from the impression that Mr. Hanna, or the men behind him, have been more anxious to stand in with the big interests than to relieve the distress of the people. For there is distress because of high prices, and these prices are altogether unnecessary. It is idle to say that an interference with prices would disrupt our economic system and cause national disaster. Isn't it about time the present system of handling food supplies was upset? Can't we usher in a new system here as well as in England?

A short time ago a gentleman of this city was at a town, a little over one hundred miles away. He bought a basket of blueberries for \$1.15 and paid express charges of 20 cents. He could have had all the blueberries he wished for at this price. On reaching the city he found the price to be \$2.75 retail. Even then the retail dealers were making but a little profit. There is, however, on King Street, a fruit combination that the food controller seems to have passed by. There is at the city market even a worse combination dictating the price of vegetables. A citizen has been offered outside the door of the market potatoes at 35 cents a bushel, when the members of the gang who were buying at that price were demanding 60 cents. This thing has been going on for years. The retail men are afraid to say a word. In Toronto the same thing is taking place. In Calgary it is no better. Our food controller is either powerless or blind. In a democracy the common people should have a little consideration. They receive next to none in Canada.

Here is something for Mr. Hanna to read: "New York State strides over men who thought themselves its masters, to cheapen food for consumers. Congress may tax profits as high as 80 per cent. Reverence for the law of supply and demand may have wrought well for a time, developing initiative, but it is as dead in Great Britain as King Alfred. Lord Rhonda instructing local committees tells them that their first duty is to safeguard the interests of the consumers. Farmers and market gardeners received from 75 cents to \$1.00 a bushel for their potatoes last fall. In the spring consumers had to pay \$2.50 a bushel. In Montreal potatoes were allowed to rot in cars so that prices might remain high."

But what is the use? What is the use of a controller who can't or won't control? Perhaps, however, Northcliffe was right in saying that a controller needs the courage of a lion, the eyes of a hawk and the hide of a buffalo. It may be that our own food controller has not yet acquired the characteristics of all three. Give him time.

Misplaced Emphasis

WE are informed on good authority that the grain crop of Western Canada is worth seven hundred millions. To this add the value of the roots and vegetables, and the income from the sale of stock and stock production—butter, cheese, wool, hides. The total will not be far from a billion dollars. Then the fishermen, lumbermen, miners, have been busy, and the manufacturers have been earning a huge income. Now deducting cost of production, there must be a very handsome balance in favor of the producers. Shall we say half a billion or more or less? The exact amount it is impossible to determine. Let each man for himself fix a figure. It will of necessity be a high one. One farmer says that he will clear fifty dollars out of every eighty-five he receives for his grain. That means a pretty big saving for a man with a thousand acres of wheat. Other farmers may do worse, and a few may do even better according to their acreage.

What should the receipt of such a vast sum mean to the country? It should mean first the payment of debts to banks, loan companies, implement dealers and local tradesmen. It should mean the purchase of comforts for the homes, the introduction of modern conveniences and labor-saving devices, the erection of new buildings, the building of roads, this and a thousand things beside. But all this is for the present. What about the future? How much will be set aside for the betterment of society, for the education of children who will constitute the society of the next generation?

A rough calculation shows that about three per cent of the gross income of Western Canada goes to the support of schools. This includes all that is spent in salaries, buildings, payment of debentures and everything else, and covers elementary, secondary and higher education in all its branches. Does it not seem to be about time for our people to take education seriously? Our schools are not doing all they should. The teachers in the elementary schools are underpaid. It is impossible to get men at the salaries given, and women remain at the work but a few years. In the secondary schools the teaching force is very unsatisfactory and the programmes of study very inadequate. Our technical schools are not to be compared to those of Europe and America. We must surely awake. It matters comparatively little how much money a man leaves behind him, it matters everything what character and ability are possessed by his children. Three per cent is a ridiculously low allowance for education. Ten per cent would be none too much. We are not putting emphasis in the right place.

The Latest Allies

URUGUAY is not a large country. Its population is about a million. But it is a country of great resources. It has rich plains capable of bearing wheat, corn, barley, millet, oats and rye. The people, however, take to stock-raising rather than agriculture. There are twenty million sheep in the country. The wool crop is over 30,000 metric tons annually. Cattle and horses are also reared in every part of the country. The people are chiefly of a mixed race—Indian, Spanish and Portuguese. The prevailing language is Spanish. The trade of the country is considerable, and apart from this it will be a great blow to Germany to be shut out of her seaports.

Peru, on the opposite side of the continent, is about 1,100 miles long and 800 miles broad, but owing to its broken surface its population is but four and one-half millions. Its climate varies from tropical to frigid because of varied altitudes. Its productions are varied, the chief being sugar, leather, wool, coffee, and copper, lead, bismuth and tin. There are three or four important towns or cities—Lima, Callao, Arequipa and Cuzco. One-half the population may be called Indian, and one-fourth of mixed origin. The prevailing tongue is Spanish. Peru is a land of romance. Originally the home of the Incas, it was despoiled by the Spaniards who treated the inhabitants shamefully. During the last few centuries it has been torn by internal strife or engaged in struggles with its neighbors. Its break with Germany is an added recognition of the righteousness of the cause of the Allies. It also means that there is another long stretch of a thousand miles of sea coast free from the depredations of raiders. Here's a hand to you—Uruguay and Peru!

Let Us Not Be Discouraged

THE War is going well with the Allies and badly with the enemy. On the one side the power is increasing and the morale is excellent. On the other side the power is diminishing and the people losing courage. The mutiny in the German Navy must be interpreted as a feeling that the German method will not win the war. With that view the Allies are in complete sympathy. The end has not yet come, but we can see it. The boastful and threatening speeches of German officials need not impress us, nor should we be disturbed by the talk so long as Germany can hold a gun.