

### III.

In Canada the direction of affairs has been taken over by a national government representing all sections of the country and all classes of the people. It has been formed by the union of men who have sunk political differences and have subordinated political ambitions to their duty to their country in an hour of great national danger.

The government by its composition, and still more by its programme, is one that every Canadian who believes in winning the war can support, without question or apology. It came into existence in order that the whole moral power of Canada could be organized behind it, thus enabling the country to exert in the late stages of the war, a power which, it is quite conceivable, might affect the final result. A very narrow margin may divide victory from defeat in the final stages of the war.

Whether the Union Government is to be given the political power and moral authority to keep Canada in the war to the full extent of her strength rests now with the people. They are being offered, as an alternative to a national administration, a return to party government.

The proposal submitted to the people by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his associates, is that the system which has failed everywhere and has been discarded in every belligerent country because it fostered national weakness and disunion, is to be re-established in Canada. The national energies are to be devoted primarily to carrying out a domestic programme. The war policy that is proposed is one of delay and indecision.

### IV.

The programme outlined by Sir Wilfrid Laurier assumes that time is a matter of no consequence in the prosecution of the war. It is proposed to disorganize and throw away the machinery by which men to replace the wastage at the front are now being secured.

The procedure to be followed in the event of Sir Wilfrid's return to power has not been clearly defined in his declaration of policy; but it is plain that there is to be an abandonment of the whole present system of securing recruits. This is to be followed by a resort to voluntary enlistment. The methods by which in the earlier stages of the war battalions were recruited by voluntary enlistment are now obsolete; they could not be revived. If voluntary enlistment is again to be relied upon some new system must be devised. Of necessity it will have to be directed by the government—the day of voluntary campaigns for voluntary recruits is certainly past. If this effort fails there may be, the public is told, a return to compulsory enlistment; but before this can be done there must first be held a referendum of all the electors in Canada.

The leisurely processes thus indicated suggest that in the minds of those responsible for this programme there is illimitable time at the disposal of the Allies for the winning of the war. A little reflection will show that if the national government, which is actually on the job of securing soldiers in sufficient numbers to keep our armies up to the fighting strength, is replaced by a party government, pledged to carry out the programme suggested in Sir Wilfrid's manifesto, there will follow months of confusion when no progress whatever will be made towards securing reinforcements.

The work done under the provisions of the Military Service Act, which is now actually securing men by the thousands for the army, will be discarded. The suspension of the operation of the Military Service Act, to which Sir Wilfrid has pledged himself, would logically involve the return to their homes of all men who have joined the colors through the enforcement of the Act. There would be an interregnum of weeks while the new government was settling down to work. Then the working out of the plans of voluntary enlistment would take time. If finally it was decided to submit the Military Service Act to a Referendum, parliament would have to meet to create the necessary machinery.