



## National Service is Not Voting

**S**INCE the Government has declined to make signing of the national service cards compulsory, let us hope that the voluntary system will be given a fighting chance. We believe in the voluntary system. But in the case of the national service cards it may already have been carried too far. Voluntarism may defeat the Government's aim by failing to give the information needed. Unless the information is measurably complete it is of no value. National service, taking this phase of a national register, is different from an election. A government may be elected by not only a minority of those who vote, but by a ten per cent minority of those whose business it is to elect Governments. Voting is voluntary. We may make the mistake of inferring that national service cards are as voluntary as the ballot. In that case the Government may easily conclude that as the people would not exercise the voluntary system to the extent of providing this a part of the national register, wholesale compulsion in the form of a conscription measure is the only sequel? We hope not. But had the Government made the national service cards compulsory there would have been no argument to abandon the voluntary system because it had failed to work. One of the best ways to avoid an excuse for conscription out and out is to make the national service cards—do their work.

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## No Conscription

**N**ATIONAL service is better war service—than conscription. Let Canada do her work. The needs and obligations of Canada in the Empire are great enough to put Canada's weight effectively into the struggle without compulsion. We have only just begun to organize ourselves. Let us continue to do it of our own free will. Canada needs more producers. Conscription may get immediately more soldiers. It will not drill and arm them more quickly. It may do more to swell the reserves. It will do less for production by keeping out of this country the natural immigrants it will get as producers.

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## Right About Face

**P**OLITICIANS have changed their minds, and private citizens their political convictions overnight. It remains for Sir Sam Hughes to execute the most amazing "volte face" ever known in Canada. The day before he resigned from the Cabinet Sir Sam said to the 194th Battalion at Exhibition Camp, Toronto, that Canada would never resort to conscription. Speaking at Lindsay a few days ago he declared that conscription is inevitable. This may be a mark of genius. But it looks very much as if Sir Sam reckoned that with his retirement from the Militia Department the spirit of volunteerism had died. Now that he has quit being Minister of Militia nothing but compulsion is left. We admire the genius of Sam Hughes. Once again we must deprecate his tongue.

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## America's War Mind

**W**E must abandon all attempts to understand American war psychology, for the very good reason that the average American does not understand it himself. To expect this understanding would be absurd. America is—neutral. We are belligerents. The difference is simple; but it contains everything. When you are belligerent you do not criticize your acts of war. You just go ahead and make war. It is only when you are a neutral that you have time to make fine distinctions. American editors and publicists have had a long while to think about this war. The American people have done more thinking than any other nation. It was all they had to do. They did it well. Nothing is so final as the neutral editor's dispassionate summing

up of the case. Its very lack of passion, its Olympian detachment of intellect gives it a calm, cold compulsion over the minds of other people. Thus we have the New York Tribune:

Whatever effect British propaganda might have had two years ago, or one year ago, it will have none now. The mass of Americans believe that the present war is exactly what Mr. Wilson has stated—namely, "a piece of collective madness." They are quite as much in the dark as he professes to be as to the issues of the war and the purposes of the nations engaged. They do not, and they never are going to accept the British view that the war is a war for civilization, and that the first essential to peace is the crushing defeat of Germany.

Yet the Tribune admits that it believes the English and French view of the Germans at war is the right view. And the Tribune understands normal American sentiment better than the casual man on the street. America is not moved to righteous indignation. She is mentally sick of war. She is tired giving decisions; of being looked to as the one great tribunal left. The referee habit has given America the cynical attitude of the judge who lacks the passion of the prisoner.

The New York editor refuses to traverse the moral grounds of the war. To him the war is now a huge preventer of world happiness and prosperity. All about him are piled the walls of wealth, bursting with gold and food and business. Millions rush and scream on the streets in search of more work, more food, more business, more pleasure. And it is a one-sided game. The New Yorker does not pretend to see where it is leading. He only knows that the sooner the war is done the sooner the normal exchange of business. The idle ships of the belligerents will begin again to swing into New York harbour. Wall Street will once more take the mark and the franc and the pound sterling into equal partnership with the dollar. The United States of America will retake her place in the world's work when all the world is working. She will no longer be the Judas Iscariot of civilization, wondering what to do with the money.

It is not fair to the United States to accuse her of lack of sympathy with the Allies or with the enemy. For a nation compelled to be neutral the Americans have shown amazing interest. But they are getting weary of it. They are not in the main work of the world. Europe, which needs the goods made by the United States, is pinching herself in a war. Consumption is lessened. America is not free. She is overloaded with gold and uneconomic prosperity. She has problems at home which are hard to neglect when the world is at war. Only the free movement of the world across America can keep that country from being pestered with its tremendous domestic problems. Only the peace activity of the world can give the greatest self-contained country in the world scope for the expression of her peculiar genius.

Uncle Sam is getting nervous. He yawns at the ringside not knowing when he will be asked to pull off his overcoat and put on the gloves; and he is not in training. If Germany forces Uncle Sam into war, it will not be to fight the United States, but to have a freer hand in submarine-fighting England. With England blockaded, Germany would gain more than by strangling Roumania, or deporting Belgians. Uncle Sam is not anxious to be party to this frightful phase of the war. He has nothing to fight about—so he says. Therefore, why should he fight! The other nations started the war. Let them finish it. Because the world is sick of war; and on this side of the Atlantic, as far north as parallel 49, people are not deeply concerned—for the present—with downing Prussianism. The past must not be dug up for causes. The future must not be searched for effects. This historical sense of the English "gets Uncle's goat." So he puts his hand to his mouth and

yawns again as he reads this passionately moral paragraph from Garvin in the London Observer:

Successful intervention is an art which requires supreme address. The first business of an intending mediator is to make a good atmosphere and to create confidence in his skill and understanding. To say the right thing is as much in these cases. To avoid the wrong thing is much more. The President's peace prelude strikes discords which jar the Allies from head to foot. The President's words seem to present Germany with a gratuitous certificate of moral equality. They seem by inference to condone the rape of Belgium, to accept it as an act of self-defence to put victim and violators on the same footing. It is a view which the conscience of mankind will repudiate as long as the world endures.

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## The Sandwich Habit

**T**HIRTEEN men paraded Toronto streets last week all carrying sandwich boards. With melancholy spiritless shuffle, valued at thirty cents an hour, they trailed round block after block; apparently all able-bodied citizens capable of carrying rifles and kits, or doing useful civilian jobs. All the sandwich board carried was a reason why the people should elect Foster controller. If Foster is elected by the time this goes to print, he may reflect that for some days at least he kept thirteen men from being of any mortal use to this country by either going to war or helping to produce what the country most needs. There are sandwich men in Canada who do not carry poster-boards.

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## Our Imported Labour

**J**UST as an example of the kind of problem of which there are going to be scores after this war, take the question of imported African negroes working behind the lines and on the docks in France. The Republic has been compelled to import this labour in order that the minor tasks in connection with prosecuting the war may be attended to. Black men have taken the place of the common porter, the stevedore and the engine stoker. They have relieved many white men for fighting work. They have proved satisfactory workers in almost every way. And yet, when the war is over and it comes to returning these men to their native countries is it going to be easy just to land them on African soil and say "stay there." Toronto is said to have at least one whole factory equipped with Chinamen. This is another branch of the same sort of problem.

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## Not for Export—G.B.S.

**P**ERHAPS it is just as well that the British Government should "persuade" Mr. Bernard Shaw not to come to this side of the Atlantic on his proposed lecture tour. Shaw is an egotist and a humorist, and his egotistical humour sometimes makes him seem like an anti-Britisher, because no situation to him is tragic enough to eliminate what he calls humour. His mania for preserving his own independence of thought and speech might easily be misunderstood by such strictly literal people as the Americans. They would be sure to miss the humour, or the whimsical exaggeration and make newspaper headings from his subtlest phrases. It is just as well that the gifted playwright be kept at home where his humour, if any bubbles over, may divert home people from a few of their present worries.

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**T**HE article in last week's issue on A Man and a Movement contained the statement that Mr. C. A. Dunning is Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan. This should have been—Provincial Secretary.