

hesitation in boldly championing the cause of compulsion. There is no doubt that his courage, his earnestness and his eloquence had much influence in winning support for the proposal. But some of his colleagues took the opposite view and near the end of the contest several of them resigned their seats in his cabinet. It is hardly a surprise that the compulsory system has received the support of only about one-half of the electors, and that on the final count a considerable majority may be found against the proposed compulsion.

A successful movement for military compulsion requires a unity of public opinion that has not been found in Australia. Is there reason to believe that it exists in Canada?

Australia has given noble service to the Empire in this time of trial. Although she shrinks from the adoption of conscription, we may be sure that she will continue to do her part in the raising of the men for the winning of the war.

Collection of Small Debts

RETAIL merchants of the Province of Ontario are making a determined attempt to secure reduction in the costs of small debt collections within the Province. As is well known the retailer is a comparatively large dispenser of credit on small accounts, and the abuse of the privilege granted to customers is an item of considerable moment to the dealer. At the present time there is no Ontario law making special provision for the collection of small debts. The same machinery has to be put in operation to collect a five dollar debt as one of one thousand dollars. That is, the retailer must go to the Division Court, make a preliminary deposit to cover costs, and must stand the various other expenses of the Court until such time as the debt is paid, including bailiff charges, lawyer's fees, etc., so that it may often cost more than the debt is worth to collect it. The retailers feel that the present system in Ontario is altogether too cumbersome. It very often discourages the small retailer from attempting small collections, and encourages the professional solicitor of credit, who so often solicits without any intention of paying, as they are familiar with the costliness of the process of collection and, therefore, feel that they will not have to pay the debt.

The system is likewise burdensome to the customer, who is compelled to pay the debt, together with court charges, when the debt is collected.

The system is altogether irksome to the retailers, and it appears as though Ontario is behind other provinces in legislation in this connection. Last spring the Legislature of Manitoba enacted "The Small Debts Recovery Act," which applies specially to all claims and demands for debt, whether payable in money or otherwise, where the amount or balance claimed does not exceed fifty dollars. The cost of collection of small debts under this Act is very little, and places the creditors in a position to protect himself against abuse of the privileges granted his customers.

Rescue the Perishing

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD, as he is best known, now called in the cablegrams Baron Beresford, since his appointment to the House of Lords, is a jolly old sailor whose services in the navy won a popular admiration, much of which remains, but it is well that he holds no very important place in the councils

of the Empire. The hero of the Condor is about the last man who could safely be entrusted with duty in relation to international affairs. Hence we must not take too seriously his recent attack on the United States Government on account of their warships picking up many of the victims of the recent German submarine raid on the shipping of the Atlantic coast. If the American warships had not done this rescue work probably many lives—some of them American lives—would have been lost. This unquestionably would have created a renewal of difficulties between the United States and Germany, a result that Baron Beresford seems to desire. He claims that it was unneutral for the United States to rescue these people. It would, according to his view, have been much more "neutral" for the Americans to leave the passengers and crews of the torpedoed ships to perish. We are sure that the bluff old sailor is not as blood-thirsty as he pretends to be. If he means that American authorities conspired with the German submarine commander to participate in the raid, and that the rescue of the people was a part of the plan, he should have very substantial evidence of such a plan before making a charge against the American Government. Mr. J. M. Beck, an eminent American, suggests such a thing, but there does not appear to be any substantial ground for his view. In the absence of such evidence the public will prefer to believe that in sending out their ships to save the crews and passengers of the vessels destroyed, the American authorities merely followed the dictates of humanity.

Magnificent, But Not War

AN Ottawa report gives some information concerning the progress of the work of reconstructing the Parliament Building. The thing that is made clearest by the report is that the work is being carried on without adequate preparation, without proper plans and specifications, without any definite idea in the official quarters of what is being aimed at. Most of the things that usually are clearly settled before construction of a large building is begun are evidently in suspense in the case of this structure that is to cost many millions. The work, apparently, is still being carried on by the "Joint Committee of Parliament," which has just had another meeting. It has now, we are told,—only now—been decided that the building is to be constructed of Canadian stone. The Committee, the report says, "have also discussed the question of steel," but whether Canadian or foreign steel is to be used is not mentioned. "Work is being rushed to get the walls up as high as possible before the winter sets in." "It is possible that the new building will be heated by electricity." There are "seven or eight hundred men" on the work. No doubt several hundred more are employed elsewhere in the getting of materials. The architects, the report says, "are perfecting plans for the new tower which will form the central figure of what promises to be as magnificent a structure as is to be found on this continent."

The prospect is in one respect pleasing. But is this the time for such things? "It is magnificent, but it is not war," said Napoleon on a notable occasion. At a time when the Empire's war service is most pressing, when the need of men for military life is most urgent, when the recruiting agencies at Ottawa and elsewhere are almost in despair, when political leaders are moved to issue earnest and eloquent appeals entreating men to enlist, when conscription is gravely proposed in some quarters,

when ministers are going about the country crying out for thrift, for production and more production, when there is shortage of labor in all the works of necessity, when in the wheat regions the shortage is so serious that the people are officially asked to suspend God's law by working on the sabbath to save the crop, when there is an overwhelming demand for service in all the things that matter, the Joint Committee of Parliament are taking probably a thousand able bodied men and putting them to work on the erection of a building that, in the present state of affairs, is clearly within the class of luxuries, one that is not needed now since the Houses of Parliament are comfortably accommodated in an excellent public building at the Capital.

It seems hardly possible that public opinion will tolerate this wasteful and worse than wasteful business. It is wasteful in the way of excessive cost of the operations. It is wasteful in the way of diverting men from the important duties of the time. It is wasteful in the way of carrying on work that is not at present needed and that should be reserved for the period of unemployment which is sure to come at the close of the war. If the folly is not stopped earlier, let us hope that the moment Parliament meets and is in a position to speak, somebody will have the good sense to move a resolution for that purpose.

The Late Lieut. W. H. Gordon

The news of the death of Lieutenant Walter H. Gordon, killed in action in France, has been received with deepest regret. A graduate of McGill University in '09, Lieutenant Gordon, from that date until the outbreak of war, had been engaged in journalistic work in Montreal. He was, in turn, reporter, sporting editor and city editor. In each field he gained an enviable reputation for accuracy and fairplay. His ideal journal, for which he always strove, was ever upper-most in his mind, and there are few editors who surpassed him in the working out of this policy of fairness and cleanliness. He was one of the most lovable of men, and during his few years work in Montreal had made a host of warm friends. His promotion on the field is but an evidence of the genuine merit he put into whatever work he undertook. He had joined the ranks here in Canada shortly after the outbreak of war. He then spent a few months in England where he was promoted to a sergeantcy and appointed to instruction duty in artillery work. Last January he went to France and a few months ago was promoted in the field. His death is an irreparable loss to Canadian journalism. Lieutenant Gordon's last journalistic work was on the Journal of Commerce. Those who were associated with him and by whom he was greatly esteemed are amongst the number who will most deeply lament his untimely death.

While the result of today's election in the United States is by no means a foregone conclusion for any candidate, the prospect seems most favorable for Mr. Hughes. But it is not at all probable that Mr. Roosevelt's very bitter speech in New York on Friday night will be helpful to that end. It is more likely to do the Republican candidate harm, since it will strengthen the impression many hold that as President Mr. Hughes would to some extent be under the Roosevelt influence, and the ex-President, thought a gallant fighter, is not usually regarded as a wise man.