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Special Articles

The Harvest Results of 1917.
By Ernest H. Godfrey, F.S.S.

Conditions in the West.
By E. Cora Hind.

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Nationalizing Railways

THERE are indications that the effort to stampede the Dominion Government into plunging into unlimited nationalization of the railways of the country is not to succeed. In replying to an Ontario deputation pressing for the acquisition of the Grand Trunk Railway, Sir Robert Borden suggested that there were grave difficulties in the way of such a policy, and that "the question was one which would probably require more study and consideration than those now appearing before the Government had time to give it." Many of those who warmly advocate Government ownership of railways take much pains to have it understood that they do not mean Government operation. That, they hold, would be something not to be thought of. To escape such an evil they usually propose some sort of commission or board which is to be entirely irresponsible to Government and Parliament. Such a system is an impossibility in a democratic country. Sir Robert Borden saw this and reminded the deputation that "Government ownership of railways must in some way be accompanied by Government control over their operations." Government control over operations, he might have added, would necessarily mean that the "politicians," from whose wicked work the advocates of Government ownership usually say the country must be saved, will still have a strong voice in the management.

Nationalization of railways, to a considerable extent, is one of the movements of the day that must, for a while at least, prevail. With the Intercolonial, the Prince Edward Island and the Transcontinental on their hands, with the Canadian Northern now being taken over, and probably the Grand Trunk Pacific also, the Dominion Government will have about as much nationalization of railways as the country can stand, without seeking the further burdens of owning and operating the Canadian Pacific and Grand Trunk. There will be abundant opportunity to test the merits of Government ownership on a large scale, without going the full length that many people desire. That some good results will flow from the enlargement of the Government system must be the earnest hope of the country. But those who imagine that the country will be willing to assume the whole responsibility of the policy and leave the control and management to officials not responsible to Parliament will find that they are mistaken.

Politics in England

THE expectation of some of the cabling correspondents that the retirement of General Sir William Robertson from the supreme military command in England would produce

a political crisis, and probably the fall of Mr. Lloyd George's Government, has, happily, been disappointed. Whatever other grounds there may be for criticism of the Government it must be admitted that the explanation given by the Premier in the British House of Commons showed that their attitude towards the military command was absolutely sound. Much as the difference between the Government and Sir William may be regretted there should be general satisfaction throughout the Empire that the Cabinet were able to make satisfactory explanations and that no change of Government is to take place. Neither in the Mother Country nor in the Overseas Dominions is this a time when political crises are desirable, in the interests of the Empire. Nor are they really desirable in the legitimate interest of those who, in the various capitals, are members of the Opposition. An Opposition party in any section of the Empire called upon at this time to assume the responsibilities of Government would find themselves charged with exceptionally heavy burdens and required to take over as fresh problems matters which the Government of the day have long had in hand and concerning which much work has been done. Even though in some respects, in any case, the conduct of the Government be deemed unwise, their retirement at a time like the present would be a misfortune. Enquiry and criticism there must, of course, be, if Parliamentary institutions are not to be a farce—enquiry, however, only in matters concerning which the facts can properly be made public in war-time, for, notwithstanding the current talk about abolishing secret diplomacy and procuring greater publicity, all who have the responsibility of action know that both in public and private affairs there are many occasions when publicity can do only harm; and criticism should be offered only for the purpose of guarding against errors and securing the best possible results of united effort.

Since the death of Lord Kitchener there has been no other military leader who has held so much of public confidence as Sir William Robertson. A soldier who rose from the ranks, he naturally was looked upon with favor by the mass of the people, while the military class into which he had won his way by hard work and general merit recognized his value and gave him a cordial and honorable support. It was not surprising, then, that when rumors became current that efforts were being made to set aside this soldier of the people the public mind became suspicious of political intrigue. There was an impression that Sir William's position had become uncomfortable through the efforts of some mischief makers. There may have been some foundation for this impression and the situation thus suspected may have had something to do with Sir William's retirement. But on the direct issue that arose between the Government and Sir William