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Special Articles

Socialism and the Central Powers,
By W. W. SWANSON.

A Time for Kings to Stand Together,
By J. W. MACMILLAN.

Conditions in the West,
By E. CORA HIND.

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Canada at the Peace Conference

SOME strange ideas seem to be abroad respecting Canada's part in the coming Peace Conference, arising probably from the terms of the recent announcement of a mission of an official party that is leaving for Europe. Some matters of commercial business are being mixed up with the business of the Conference in a confusing way. The Montreal Star publishes the portraits of ten gentlemen, including four Cabinet Ministers, who are described as "Canada's delegates at the Peace Conference." With the possible exception of the Canadian Premier, it is not likely that any of these gentlemen will ever see the inside of the Peace Conference chamber. It might not be a safe bet that even the Premier will be there. Most of the gentlemen whose portraits are shown are part of a trade mission which the Government are sending to England. It is assumed that there will be a large demand in Europe for food and materials, and that a trade mission will be able to secure a share of the business for Canada. The aim is good, and the mission will have the best wishes of the Canadian public. But it has nothing in the world to do with the Peace Conference.

It is not wise for Canadians to expect too large a part in the work of the Peace Conference. Already the energetic, if not always discreet, Premier of Australia, Mr. Hughes, is found complaining that the terms of the armistice were signed without having first been vised by him.

The Overseas Dominions, Canada included, have taken a large and important part in the war, winning great honor. They will increase rather than diminish that honor if they manifest modesty in their demands for participation in the settlement of the terms of peace. If the somewhat aggressive spirit exhibited by Mr. Hughes respecting the armistice is to mark the attitude of the Dominions generally, there may be an unpleasant friction between the Dominions and the Mother Country.

That Canada and the other Dominions should be consulted respecting the conditions of peace is eminently proper. Such consultation was promised by the British Government long ago, and there need be no doubt that the promise will be kept. But it is not clear at present that Canada or any other Dominion is to have a special representative at the Peace Conference. We do not think that anything of the kind was promised by the Imperial authorities. It will be well for us all to remember that, while Canada has during the past couple of decades made progress in her status in the Empire, there has really been no constitutional change. The letter of the constitu-

tion remains unaltered. The most that can be said is that the laws governing the relations between the Mother Country and the Dominions are being administered in a more liberal spirit, with more appreciation of the colonial position, than in the olden time.

Canada, as Canada, can have no place at the Peace Conference; nor can Australia, or New Zealand or South Africa. These are all important countries, but they are not independent nations; they can have no standing in any international court. The British Empire, as a whole, has to be represented by the Government of the United Kingdom. If any Canadian takes a seat at the Peace Conference, it will not be as a representative of Canada, but as a representative of the British Government. The British Government will doubtless desire to pay all possible respect to the wishes of the Overseas Dominions as expressed in the course of the consultations that will take place between the Imperial and Colonial Ministers. But it is just possible that it may be found impracticable to have any special representative of any of the Dominions at the Peace Conference. If one is recognized by the Imperial Government as entitled to such representation, the others must have similar recognition. If a Canadian is given a seat, room must be found also for representatives of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland. If Canada is to claim admission for its six Cabinet Ministers who are to be in England—four now going over and two already there—the other Dominions will naturally ask something like similar consideration. Unless the Peace Conference is to comprise a very large representation from each of the nations participating there is every probability that Great Britain will not be able to claim seats at the table for her Colonial Ministers as well as for the Imperial Ministers, who, as a matter of course, will be the chief representatives of His Majesty. We shall not do well to count too much on the admission to the Conference of our six Ministers, or any of them.

So far as Canada is concerned nobody need be alarmed if it is not found convenient to give her representatives seats at the Peace Conference. Frank consultations between our Ministers and the Imperial Ministers are to be expected, and we need not doubt that the Imperial Government will desire to show us all fair consideration. But if our views have to find expression at the Peace Conference through Mr. Lloyd George or Mr. Balfour, there is no reason to fear that any interest of ours will suffer. While the Australian and South African colonies have special claims of their own to advance, and therefore are very anxious in this matter, Canada really has no interest that is not common to the whole Empire.