



## Conscription Would be Worse

THE spectacle of two thousand "Canadians" trekking across the border at Sarnia and Port Huron in order to avoid filling out national service cards is not inspiring to those who favour national-register and voluntary methods of getting Canada's full strength into the war. So far as the soldier element is concerned we have not lost much in this species of refugee. But we lose the labour which is scarce enough already. Let those who favour conscription think what will happen if compulsory service is made a law. If in one week two thousand slackers cross the border at one point to escape recording their names for national service, how many scores of thousands will cross parallel 49 if straight conscription becomes the law of enforcement? We are trying to make this country more effective in the third year of the war than she was in the first. By organization, enlistment and labour we believe that we are doing it. But a conscription measure which is sure to drive its tens of thousands, as national service did its thousands, across the border is a poor way to increase our effectiveness. According to the national service cards it was not enlistment of man strength that is aimed at exclusively or even mainly. The aim is to inventory national strength in all respects. Canada is now facing the possibility of half a billion a year war orders. That will be nothing short of a joke in fulfilment if we drive our labour across the border. We are facing the need for still greater supplies of foodstuffs. That also will be a fiasco if we drive our farmers and farm labourers abroad. If voluntary national service cards can drive away thousands, conscription will drive away tens of thousands; and we have no way of preventing it.

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## The Transatlantic Submarine

FOUR hundred super-submarines are said to be getting ready for indiscriminate destruction of Allied shipping at any time such a policy commends itself to the distorted judgments of the Potsdam war lords. The aim of this sub-sea fleet is to starve England. That has been tried and has not succeeded. The reasons for its failure—with all its measure of success—is that England has learned pretty well to cope with the submarine menace in her coast waters. There is no longer any possibility of cutting off England's food by torpedoing food vessels anywhere within the range of the submarine scouts and destroyers that patrol every mile of the coast. But the Transatlantic submarine is a different menace. It has been proved that the super-submersible can burrow under the Atlantic and torpedo vessels in American waters. It is the Tirpitz idea to send scores, perhaps hundreds, of these vessels across in order to destroy shipping anywhere on the high seas or along the Atlantic coast. It is impossible to patrol the high seas. It would be a difficult matter to patrol the Atlantic coast. With the United States at war with Germany there would be no check on submarine activities. All vessels leaving American and Canadian ports would be subject to torpedo attacks. We may surmise that a declaration of war by the United States would be counted by Germany a good opportunity to launch her deadliest great bolt against England. The damage to be done by the United States to Germany within six months would be a small matter compared to the damage possible to inflict upon England—so Germany thinks. In a desperate conclusion she would be willing to risk it. The danger need not be scoffed at. It is real enough. But those who allege that England's recourse is to cultivate her soil to the last acre neither give credit to the Allied navies nor provide an adequate remedy. England cannot produce food enough to feed herself and her armies. Neither should she have to. If Canada in 1914 was able to send a huge fleet of troop transports safely across

the Atlantic under warship convoy, it should be quite as feasible to send fleets of commerce ships under perpetual convoy sufficient to keep off submarines. The fleets of the Allied powers are strong enough to provide such convoys and to patrol all harbours from which shipping leaves for the Allied powers.

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## Soldiers' Resorts Wanted

SOME of the returned soldiers convalescing in the dry Provinces and not confined to hospital find their old home towns and cities dull places. While they were away at the front—in most cases—their friends at home closed up the bars. It is not necessary to assume that the only place a good soldier can find conviviality is in a bar-room. Nobody wants to advocate making soldiers drunk in order to give them a good time. But it is a fact that a dry hotel is a cheerless place for either a soldier or a civilian. Temperance drinks are not notorious for good fellowship. Their close resemblance in style to the old real liquor makes them all the less palatable. But it should be possible to provide some sort of refreshment rendezvous where soldiers could foregather and have a good time. The Church basement is not a good place. Checker parlors and religious bowling alleys do not fill the bill. The bar-room at present is a mockery. The friends of temperance and of the soldier should provide a substitute.

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## Bonne Entente Benvenuto

THE Bonne Entente delegation, playing a return match in Ontario this week, are entitled to the sincere co-operation of all those who desire national unity. Canada is both English and French. Those who are trying to bring about more harmony between the two root races should be profoundly encouraged. The more each knows of the other the better for both. The less that can be said of a contentious character the easier we shall get the national unity for which both sides profess to be working. There is a possibility of getting Quebec to do more than she has done in the war. There is just as great a possibility of getting Anglo-Canadians to appreciate better what French-Canada has already done, and the reasons why more has not been attempted. It is not alone the war that requires this co-operation. Race harmony will be necessary after the war. The problems of greater Canada must be solved by English and French-Canadians working together as a family of Canadians in order to Canadianize the people who come here from abroad. If the present relations between the two root races are taken advantage of to the utmost in the direction of sincere effort to get a working basis, we shall find French and English Canada nearer by reason of the war than they ever were before. But if so we shall need to abandon our mutual bigotries.

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## Heroism Universal Now

THERE are no longer any heroes. The word hero implied in a man qualities which, for two thousand years and more, we had supposed exceptional. Two years of war have proven them almost universal. Only this final outbreak of a depraved dynasty in Europe was required to betray into flame the quiet-burning ember of divinity in dull-faced labourers mending track in mountain gorges, in lone prairie-men, in stolid Ontario ploughmen, in clerks and professors, merchants and manufacturers, net-casters and apple-pickers on our far eastern coast. The terrible agency of war has made clear the meaning of a Hebrew King when he wrote, concerning his fellow-men, "I have said: 'Ye are gods!'" Devotion to duty, courage and self-sacrifice

are no longer the astonishing things. We are learning to wonder at self-love, to be shocked at cowardice, and outraged, as we never were before, at the sight of neglected duty.

The men who return with our armies from France, having led in war, will have the right to expect from their fellows at home competent leadership in peace. Clay-stained, lean-faced, steady-eyed, laconic—they will not look upon themselves as heroes deserving special privileges from those who did not go to the war, unless those who welcome them back show in some awkward moment that they have stood still while the others advanced, that our civilization has remained unheroic while those who fought for it were unlearning the selfishness of old-time peace, and learning instead to live calmly with Death in his busiest field. The men who return will not have improved themselves in the arts of peace, necessarily: they may not be better bookkeepers, or salesmen, or brakemen, or readers of gas-meters. But they will have changed in their conception of what is good and what is not so good in human relationships and in human conduct. They will have a right to expect more of the spirit of brotherhood and less of the spirit of egotistic Individualism in the occupations of peace.

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## Study Peace Problems Now

IS there or is there not a peace problem in Canada as in other countries? Are our conditions special and exceptional? Or are we merely slow-witted? Sydney Webb and Arnold Freeman, the English thinkers, have issued a pamphlet which reads like a High School examination paper, but is worth study nevertheless, for it takes up all the "key" questions relating to England's after-the-war problem and suggests means by which the average thoughtful Englishman may contribute to the solution of those questions.

We should have some such a pamphlet in Canada. We need it. Some among us may think that there will be no problem, but even their opinion should be subject to widespread discussion. And if there is a problem—we should be busy now seeking the proper course to pursue when the armies are withdrawn from France.

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## Maximum and Minimum

ONE thousand—at least that many—able-bodied men of varying ages sit in at a certain Canadian burlesque house every night, smoking and being amused. There is no doubt about the smoke and none whatever about the amusement. The air is thick with stuff that looks as though it could be carved into chunks, and smells as near trench gas as anybody could imagine this side of the Atlantic. These thousand burlesquers are undoubtedly of a high order of mentality and of physical endurance. They must be high mentally or they couldn't possibly be amused so often and so easily by the particular species of burlesque for which they pay their ticket prices and war tax. At the same time, as a burlesque, the show is by no means bad, is much better than the kind of menu that used to be served up years ago in such houses, and probably represents an evolution of burlesque. The girls are better looking; they sing better than the girls of old, dance more becomingly, and crack jokes that as a rule don't offend the puritanical mind. But the show is not screamingly funny, and it takes a high order of intellect to make it so. Certainly the men whose nerves can stand burlesque house smoke from a thousand cigars, pipes and cigarettes should not find trenches, including mild doses of trench gas, very uncomfortable. The men who attend burlesque shows under such conditions are able to extract a maximum of amusement out of a minimum of comfort. Why don't they go to war?