

The Years 1916 and 1917

The year 1916 for Canada has been a strange contrast of loss and gain, of sorrow and hope, of splendid sacrifice of the many and sordid gain of the few. She has come through all these happenings chastened in mind but with greater confidence in the future of her nationhood and her institutions. This is particularly true of her municipal institutions for they—though many were caught at the beginning of the war overloaded with debt—have found themselves so completely that not only have they taken up their full share of the responsibility and burden of the war, but have readjusted their finances so well that there is hardly a municipality in Canada but what has decreased its debt and increased its official efficiency. It would seem that it required this present Armagedden to show what men could do not only on the field of battle but at home.

But the war is not yet over, and won't be until,

THE LAST POST.

At the convention of the Union of Canadian Municipalities a resolution was passed endorsing the petition of the Last Post Fund to the Government of Quebec for a sufficient sum of money to guarantee the decent burial of indigent soldiers or sailors who die in the Province. We understand that each Provincial government will in turn be petitioned in like manner, and it is to be hoped with satisfactory results, for it is certainly an act of duty for the state to bury its dead heroes, and it is somewhat disconcerting to the citizens of Canada to know that no provision has been made before. But since this war has brought home to us the splendid spirit of sacrifice on the part of so many of our best manhood, we cannot delay any longer our duty to those soldiers who die in indigent but uncontrollable circumstances.

The Last Post Fund itself was founded because one man was humane enough to put up a fight to save the body of a veteran from the dissecting table! That was eight years ago. Since then the kindly work of giving practical evidence of respect to the memories of these derelicts of Society, but who had well served their country in the heyday of their strength has been continually going on in the City of Montreal. Two large lots were purchased—one Catholic, one Protestant—in the local cemeteries and now over a hundred veterans are lying there side by side waiting for the last call. The reading of the discharge papers would show that these men have seen service in every campaign since the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny and that practically every British regiment, including those Canadian regiments that took part in the Fenian Raids (1867-1870), the Riel Rebellion, and the present war, are represented in that little burial ground on the slopes of Mount Royal. Surely a silent tribute to the patriotism of man to his country.

How many old soldiers have been given to the dissecting tables and Potter's Fields of Canada we know not, but it is time such desecration should end. No nation that respects itself can do less to those who have defended its honor than a decent burial when they are no more. Let not our thanks be given only to the living but to the dead soldiers as well.

in the words of Premier Lloyd George, full reparation is made and some time will elapse before Prussian militarism will be humbled sufficiently to accept such terms. In the meantime word has been sent out to speed up the human and material resources of the Empire, with instantaneous response from every quarter of the globe, that each unit of Greater Britain is ready for still greater sacrifice to win the war."

The municipal councils this coming year will be called upon to increase their patriotic contributions and to allow still more of their men and officials to go to the front or otherwise engage in National service. And the demand will not be made in vain. And those who are left behind to carry on the work will do it with a cheerfulness begotten of the knowledge that in doing their own and other men's labor they will be well serving the State.

NATIONAL SERVICE.

The Government of Canada with the coming in of the New Year is taking an inventory of the man power of the Dominion with the object of prosecuting to the fullest of our resources our share in the great war. Some months ago the Premier promised that Canada would raise and equip 500,000 soldiers. Up to this date 375,000 men have enlisted, leaving 125,000 still to be raised, and the primary object of the New National Service is to secure those soldiers by inducing others not of military age nor fitness to take their places, whether it be on the farm, in the workshop or office; and this must be done if Canada's promise is worth anything. In addition to military service Canada is behind with her ammunition orders, principally because of the scarcity of labor and the National Service Commission hopes through the inventory to remedy this grave defect.

Whatever may be the result of the inventory of Canada's man power and there is no reason why it should not be successful, a grave responsibility rests upon every citizen to help in speeding up the vital forces of the Dominion to their maximum power in the production of the necessities of the war. Each one of us has much to do—even to the extent of self-denial—if we are really in earnest that German domination will have no place in our democracy.

RE-ELECTION OF FOUR WESTERN MAYORS.

It was with real pleasure that we heard of the re-election of such municipal stalwarts as Mayor Costello in Calgary; Mayor Young in Saskatoon; Mayor Cater in Brandon, and Mayor Henry in Edmonton. These four gentlemen are strong evidence of the determination of western citizens to elect good men and then hold on to them. The reputation of the re-elected Mayors has spread far beyond the confines of their respective municipalities and it would have indeed been a pity, particularly at this war time, if their services had been lost to their communities—and to municipal Canada.