

## Editorial

## The New Confederation

**I**T is a strange coincidence, that, exactly fifty years after Confederation, the first real doubt should arise as to the wisdom or effectiveness of the step. This is probably because never before was the system on its trial. In introducing the bill before the Conference at Quebec, Sir John A. Macdonald frankly stated, and with all the force at his command, that Confederation was a compromise. Now, under unusual conditions, conditions that are testing the loyalty, the forbearance, and the integrity of each province, these questions are being asked by thoughtful men and women: Is legislation based on compromise ever effective? Have we given up too much? Have we really brought about a union? Have we trusted each other too much? Have we really kept the faith? When such questions are asked it is idle to pass them by. Every doubt must find its solution, in a positive assertion or an emphatic denial of the principle which was so dear to the men of fifty years ago.

There are two perpetual struggles going on in the life of every nation—the struggle for better material conditions and the struggle for greater spiritual freedom. Under ordinary conditions people appear to be occupied with the former. It is only in times of crisis that great social, religious and moral problems, which without doubt are the great problems of mankind, absorb the attention of the masses. We have reached a crisis at the present time, and even though the problem of earning a living wage is more pressing than ever before in the history of the country, it is second in importance to the greater problems of securing for each man economic and social freedom, and obtaining from each citizen loyal assumption of national responsibility.

Now, everyone knows this last is the great problem, and it is great because it does not stand alone. For there is disagreement as to the meaning of the term national, and an equal disagreement as to the field of responsibility. To be very specific, there are those who are willing to be what they call good Canadians, but who deny that they have any duty to the Empire, and there are those who are willing to agree that men should offer their lives for their country, but who deny the right of the state to touch capital, even the capital made because of the war. Never was there greater need of clear definition and complete understanding. There is reason for believing that both government and non-conscriptionists have been lacking in frankness and that the former has been woefully lacking in decision.

Non-conscriptionists are of two classes—typified by part of the labor element and by the dominant faction in Quebec. The labor element is protesting against a conscription of men without a conscription of wealth. Well, everyone believes that is right. The country is risking everything—it's very existence—and it must be willing to give everything. This includes men, property and labor. Yet the question arises: Would the labor element vote for conscription provided the conscription included everything? If they would make an out-and-out statement on this point, it

would clear the air. Frankly, one feels that there are many in the socialist party of the labor people who would not favor full conscription. They are side-stepping. They have not yet grasped the significance of the present war—its meaning to civilization and its meaning to the labor people themselves. If they had done so, their action would be positive rather than negative. In other words, they would be banded together urging the Government to proceed with general conscription. They would not be merely fighting conscription in its narrow sense—the conscription of men.

There are the non-conscriptionists of Quebec to whom there should be joined those in the other provinces who sympathize with them. Their plea is that Canada should not join the Empire in this war—that Canada is one thing and the Empire another. It would be a good thing for these people to turn back to the addresses on Confederation, delivered by their own countrymen. They at least did not sympathize with the doctrines proclaimed by some to-day. Canada is in this war because she is British and because the war of Germany is against free institutions. On both accounts Canada has taken up arms. And Canada, must mean all Canada. Neither in our Western cities nor in the towns of Quebec, nor in the fields of the maritime provinces must there be those who are waiting to profit from the sacrifices made by our loyal Canadian boys. Confederation meant a union for purposes of defence, or it meant nothing. We must all in every province, in every rank and station play the game. Just now our national existence must be more to us than our business, our blood-relationship and our religion. It must, indeed, be our religion.

Since Confederation there have come amongst us thousands who knew nothing of the compact of 1867, and they are not bound in the same way. Yet it is unthinkable that these, many of them apathetic in this struggle, and others perhaps somewhat antagonistic to us on racial grounds, should reap the fruits of victory, so dearly bought on the fields of France. We may depend upon it that in the final reckoning the men who pay the price will receive the goods.

It was inevitable in a struggle of this kind that there should be mistakes. One could even excuse blunders. But there are other things that can not be tolerated. The reorganization of government, therefore, must be welcomed as the first in a series of necessary changes, following it there will of necessity be some form of universal conscription, government control of the productions necessary to life, insistence upon restitution from those who have profited by the war, the elimination of figure-heads and political hacks from the army service, the due recognition of the private in the ranks, and proper provision for returned soldiers and their dependents. And when all is ended, there will emerge a new Canada, with new political alignment, with new aims and hopes, a Canada true to the Empire, in brotherly union with the United States, a world-power in friendly relation with all countries that are working towards peace and righteousness—a Canada

cursed and blighted by racial, religious and class hatreds, but blessed through the feeling of brotherhood that has been developed through willing sacrifice in a common cause. Confederation, as we have had it, may be severely tested, but our country will endure the test, and the new Confederation will be stronger, closer and more enduring, because the union is based on love and mutual appreciation of devotion and courage.

## Gratitude

**N**ONE is more dependent upon Providence than the farmer. He plants his fields in hope. He waits all summer long in fear and trembling, now yearning for rain, now hoping for wind and sun; at one time dreading the blight of rust, at another the danger of the early frost. The farmer this year is not alone in his anxiety. Every last person in the land; every man and woman in the warring world is dependent upon the harvest in the prairie provinces. Why then should not we all address the Bountiful Giver of all good things? And why not after the rain and the sunshine return thanks for blessings received? This suggestion of united prayer and united thanksgiving has been suggested by several of our best papers, and is both timely and necessary. The best way to keep religion alive is to connect it with real experience. Two vital elements in religion are prayer and thanksgiving. If there is any prayer that can reach God it will be that of souls in need; if there is any praise that will please Him, it is the uttered thanks of the truly grateful soul.

## The Holidays

**H**ERE'S hoping the children may have a happy and joyous vacation. Life was not meant to be given up wholly to book study. The best that education has to offer is not always given in school. During the long summer days the young boys and girls may grow in physical strength and grace, and they may learn from the field of Nature much that cannot be gained from books. You remember Longfellow's tribute to Agassiz:

And Nature the old nurse took  
The child upon her knee,  
Saying: "Here's a story book  
Thy Father hath written for thee.  
"Come, let us wander away,  
Into fields that are yet untrod,  
And read what is still unread  
In the manuscripts of God."  
So he wandered away and away  
And Nature, the dear old nurse  
Who sang to him day by day  
The songs of the Universe.  
And whenever the day seemed long,  
Or his heart began to fail,  
She would sing a more wonderful song  
Or tell a more wonderful tale.

And so it is for the boys and girls to get out into the open, to grow strong and pure and kind. This is education.

## Let Us Be Loyal

**W**HAT is needed in Canada just now, above everything else, is a little old fashioned loyalty—spontaneous and overwhelming—and not seeking expression in loud-mouthed oratory and labored argument.

What is standing in the way of loyalty? At least five things—greed, partizanship, class and race affiliation, lack of understanding.

Greed is in the way. There are men all over the Dominion whose thought is not on winning the war but on the making of a little fortune. It is a grand scramble in which all are engaged—farmers wanting two cents more for their eggs; grocers wanting ten per cent more profit on all commodities, manufacturers wanting fifty per cent addition to their usual profits, loan companies wanting fifteen per cent dividends instead of twelve, and laboring men wanting ten hours pay for eight hours work, why should the pot call the kettle black? Selfishness is common to all classes.

Political partizanship is in the way of loyalty. It was shown in army appointments, in the attempts to white-wash guilty ministers, in the policy of carrying on the government as party government during war time, and it is now in evidence on both sides in the debate that is going on at Ottawa. Thank heaven the war is going to do away with the evil of party government in Canada.

Let the cry be—every man, every dollar, every ounce of energy, for God and country.



The first Elective Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territory with Lord Landsdowne the then Governor General