

MAYBE it was the Bob Whites calling in the bush cornfield while the old crows were spying around for the corn to pull up; maybe it was the new veil of buds over the vast hills of the swamp hardwoods; maybe the faint flicker of dust on the road behind somebody's wagon; or it may have been the smoke of some man's log heaps; somebody taking his first swim in the mill-pond; or somebody perhaps went fishing for suckers in the creek. But if he was a real countrified person, as most of us are glad now we used to be in those elderly days, he put on the best "bib and tucker" he had and walked three miles to the Celebration. It was by long odds the grandest holiday in the whole year, in any calendar, to any nation. It was in Canada that the old 24th became such a popular idea. In Canada may it never die. Monarch's birthday and all, it was yet a great Canadian institution, is yet, is going to be. The Bob Whites call no longer; but the day is here and all it ever was. So we'll go right down on our shirt-bosoms and take a good long drink out of the little "crick" to the immortal

OLD TWENTY-FOURTH OF MAY.

EDITORIAL

Welcome and Work

SIR ROBERT BORDEN is welcome back. No Premier of Canada has ever had such an intimate insight into Imperial affairs as Sir Robert. Time and again he has been at Empire War Cabinet sessions. The Imperial Conference, recently closed, was the most important ever held. Shorn of the pomp of other days, relieved of the splendid theories of Empire, the Ministers from overseas have been permitted and expected to get very close to the hands that control the lever of Empire. Sir Robert has seen much of the War Council. The Responsible Five who manage Britain's part in the war have let Canada's Premier into as many of their secrets as he cared to know and more than he may ever choose publicly to tell. He has been at close range with big, energizing men who, by the fortunes of war, have for the time being become world figures. If ever a Canadian Premier got working vibrations from association with big men abroad, that Premier is Sir Robert Borden.

Fortunately Sir Robert is not easily excited. He is not carried away by emotions. He does not regard himself as on stage. In fact, most of the photographs of the Premier in England seem to indicate that he would be glad when the London business was done and he could get back to where his real work is in this country.

At least, so we imagine.

The time has gone by when a Canadian Premier could forget Canada while engaged in the business of Empire. Other Premiers abroad left no unmistakable impressions in England that Canada was the place where they did all their biggest work. Sir John Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier always went about in England as primarily great Canadians. There was then no war to disturb the pageant of Empire. It is the present Premier's business to carry on Canada's end of the war and to carry it on by efforts such as his Government have never yet made. There is a tremendous work to be done in Ottawa. It makes very little difference by what methods it is done so long as it is done. We assume that Parliament stands behind the Government in this work, and that the Government will make good use of Parliament. The work must be done. England is working as never before. The men with whom Sir Robert has been associating are up to the eyes in work that puts party manoeuvres and parliamentary inertia into the scrap heap. We shall expect drastic things from the Premier and his Government as a result of being next to these men. And in welcoming Sir Robert back to Canada we may be excused for pointing out the peg on which he may hang his coat and, if need be, his collar and tie.

Quebec and the Militia Act

MORE than once Quebec has said that it is the plain business of Government to invoke and operate the Militia Act, which expressly states that the Government of Canada has the right to order out all males of military age for the defence of Canada. There have been various interpretations of this attitude of Quebec leaders. Armand Lavergne clearly said to the editor of this paper last summer that if the Government would make it necessary by

law for Quebec to go to war, Quebec would obey the law. What did he mean? Cynics have alleged that his meaning was—We will not go of our own free will, but compel us and we will act under compulsion. That is a prejudiced view. Armand Lavergne, with all his own superficial cynicism, often the mask for sentiments he does not care to express, would not admit this interpretation. He is a young man, by training a soldier, by instinct a man of action, naturally courageous and devoted to the principles he professes. Would such a man be likely to wear the King's khaki as a slave soldier booted into a war against which his free will rebelled? No, we prefer to think that Lavergne's meaning is:

"Make it clear that Quebec is to go to war in conformity to the law of this country, for the sake of Canada, which every French-Canadian loves as dearly as any other race in Canada, and much more than most—and for the sake of Canada with the clear mandate of Canada we will fight. But do not ask us to volunteer in a war which was not of Canada's choosing."

We may be wrong in this interpretation. In making it we do not necessarily endorse its motive. But motive is a matter of choice. If Quebec is willing to obey a Canadian law rather than respond to an Imperial impulse—why not give Quebec a chance to do so?

Russia That is Not Yet

AN American editor has predicted that Czar Nicholas may yet return to the throne of Russia. If so—what? Is there any prophet who can tell us the fate of Russia? Temperamentally she does not belong to Western Europe. She is an Oriental. The Russian mind dwells in a perpetual mist. It moves in masses. It is a sea lashed by the last wind that blows. And the wind changes very often. Happens that the prevalent wind is from German way. There is a reason. Russia the inorganic population-mass, one language, one stock of national ideas, serfs, mujiks, barons, spies, superstitions, fatalisms, great sad music-makers and intense novelists—is next to the most powerfully organized state in the world. Germany has been blowing on the Slav sea for a long while.

Bismarck always said his country must keep the Russian door open. He knew. He was ambassador at St. Petersburg for a long while. He pioneered the "penetration" of Russia, knowing that out by the Slav door was the only land route for an expanding, ebullient Germany. He frankly admitted that France would never coalesce with Germany and he sneered at England even while he feared her. To his way of thinking, it was important to keep on good terms with Russia. To do this meant more than diplomacy. It meant ambassadorial espionage and a system of corruption trickling steadily down through the court and official life of the country. With official and aristocratic Russia poisoned, the under-world of the illiterates would be merely a matter of swinging a huge mass into line, with a policy just as Prussia manipulated the rest of Germany.

The revolution in Russia probably caused no mutterings in Berlin. At least the Czar had a semblance

of authority, he was something of a patriot and much of a Slav. With him out of the way it mattered little what the Miliukoffs and Rodziankos and Guchkoffs might want. All the powerful patriotic minds in Russia would have no influence without some form of despotism to focus them. Russia is only the phantom of a democracy. The Duma is a kindergarten parliament, full of democratic impulses. If some Imperial ragamuffin could be discovered with a clear claim to the throne, a long beard and a Cossackian guise, he might ride through Russia and muster the millions from Siberia to a new patriotism. At present the dreaded William of Berlin is to them the all-powerful emperor; and he—well he is backed by his nobles and apparently feared by all of his people. No, it would be little use to return Nicholas unless the Revolutionists can be sure that he is kept away from outside influences and maintained as the idol of the Russia that is to be.

Another Wells Evolution

M. R. H. G. WELLS has traversed another continent of universal thought in his sequel to *Britling*. His new book, *God the Invisible King*, is the present apex of his thinking along this line. The publisher's advertising extract reads:

"The time draws near when mankind will awake . . . and there will be no nationality in all the world but humanity, and no king, no emperor, nor leader, but the one God of mankind."

For cosmic breadth of utterance this makes Tennyson's "parliament of man, the federation of the world" sound like a nursery rhyme. Mr. Wells' intellectual industry is prodigious. He is never at a loss for new co-ordinations of philosophy in semi-popular form to make another best seller. Thousands of people in England will buy the book to see how Mr. Wells proposes to get rid of the British monarchy. Many thousands of Americans will read it to be reminded that in getting rid of George III, they were setting an eternal example to mankind. The abdication of the Czar and the establishment of a so-called Russian Republic may incline somebody to translate the work into Russian. But before the translation is off the press, Mr. Wells will have another evolution of his intellect ready for the publisher.

The Washington Power House

THE latest Cabinet in the long line of renaissances is that of President Wilson. As yet that Executive of a nation has not been shaken up and remanned. But it probably will be. It contains some weak men in some of the most important posts. Daniels is a weak character; Baker, Secretary of War, is not a big aggressive; Treasurer McAdoo is perhaps not of a calibre to meet an emergency, although in his recent interview with the *New York Times* he gave expression to a number of bracing sentiments that showed his grasp of the emotional side of the war. In fact, McAdoo spoke rather too freely. It is a way American ministers have. Not being responsible directly to Congress, any Cabinet member may speak out in meeting whenever he is interrogated by an interviewer. There is a lack of team play about the American Cabinet and a great deal of individualism. Before the war is much older in that country the Cabinet will perhaps be re-organized on a real war basis. There may even be holes shot in the Constitution. Congress has relapsed into a condition of debate. Congress, as at present constituted, is not suited to a great and prolonged crisis. Changes may happen there also. There is yet a long way to travel from the first flush of patriotic excitement to the point where the United States Congress and Cabinet representing the unity of the people is within sight of winning the war. But when democracy has accomplished so much in other countries under the stress of war, we may expect America to rise to the great occasion and in so doing discover in herself a strength which for a long while has taken the form of talk. America is a vast power-house just getting the current from its Niagara, the people. And it will take a lot of drastic reformations to make that Niagara effective in Europe as it is expected to be by the Allies. Playing Russia off against America will not save Germany.