

DR. J. M. HARPER ON "THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE EMPIRE."

(A Review).

An opportune article, from the pen of Dr. J. M. Harper, of Quebec, recently appeared in the Quebec Chronicle. The pleading of the article, which is under the title of "The Consolidation of the Empire," is a practical one, and suggests that a closer consolidation of the Empire may readily enough be brought about in and through a "Possible Parliamentary Assimilation," in terms of which the various Overseas Dominions may share with the motherland in the administrative rule of the Empire as a whole. And one cannot but marvel at the coincidence of a renewal of the friction on the part of the Irish leaders, while the deliberations of the temporary Imperial War Cabinets are in solemn progress, and the appearance of Dr. Harper's article, as something which cannot but draw public attention to the question of Imperial Federation that has to be settled sooner or later in some way or another. Certain members of the lately constituted Lloyd-George Cabinet, including the Prime Minister himself, have been telling us that some kind of a practical and fundamental change in our Imperial organization is in sight as a post-war necessity. One Canadian Minister, in commenting in the article says:

"The points that Dr. Harper deals with are interesting ones," that Minister of the Crown says, "and the publication of the article embodying them will no doubt stimulate thought upon a subject which, always of interest, assumes greater importance under the present conditions which the Empire finds itself placed, and the problems it will have to meet after the conclusion of the war."

The visit to London of Sir Robert Borden, as a co-adviser with the enlarged War Cabinet of the day, seems to have formed the direct incentive in Dr. Harper's mind to re-air the subject which has ever been of great interest to the British subject whenever it has been mooted. The reason why it has been so often laid aside, with no practical results emanating from the discussions over it, is easy of location, as Dr. Harper tells us.

"The years have been allowed to wear the project out to a mere skin-and-bone of a theory. But that skin-and-bone of a theory is taking on flesh again. The war has brought it out into the open once more to the point of its being a practicability. The oyalty of the Overseas Dominions and their instant spontaneous rallying to the Empire's needs have awakened the motherland's gratitude. The problem is being re-enunciated in letters of blood and emphasized by the heroism of battalions hailing from all parts of the Empire — Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, East and West Indian Islanders, South Africans, and Newfoundlanders. The problem is even now being examined in its more salient details by our British statesmen in every section of the Empire. The motherland is ready to take up the question in line with the wishes of the Overseas Dominions. More than one prominent statesman claims that the anomaly of a tribute paid in lives and treasure with no administrative voice in the Empire's counsels cannot be allowed to continue. There must be a change, they say, when once the return of peace gives the peoples of the Empire time and opportunity to set matters right, conciliatory on the part of the contracting parties."

And two other quotations from Dr. Harper's lucid article brings the reader into the very heart of the subject he discusses, namely, as to why the settlement of the momentous question has been so long delayed, and what ought to be the preliminaries taken to have it solved at last.

"The heterogeneity of rule in the Empire has been the basic deterrent in the way of Imperial Federation. That heterogeneity has ever stood in the way of the acceptance of the advice of an Imperial Conference now and again, made up of representatives from all sections of the Empire. To assimilate into a possible whole there has to be a wholesome possibility of assimilation in all its parts, in order to bring about an equal system of representation in any executive exponential of parliamentary rule. The King is over all the Empire's realms; but it is still as difficult as ever to see how a supreme parliamentary control can be arranged for, in and through the direct casting of the ballots of the people all over." And it is that problem of representation which Dr. Harper's article tries to solve in its subsequent paragraphs.

"The setting of the Empire's house in order," as Dr. Harper says, "has to be precluded by the motherland setting her own immediate household in order. The status of Ireland has to be agreed upon; and that involves the

fixing of a co-relative provincial status for Ulster and Wales and Scotland. The heterogeneity of rule of the Overseas Dominions forbids them taking any part in the fixing of such a status. And, if the House of Lords is to be so reconstructed in terms of a democratic demand so as to admit of representatives from all parts of the Empire being given a seat on its floor, that re-forming has to be brought about by the motherland herself, as a preliminary to a possible Imperial Federation. There can be no opening of the doors of the House of Commons to the Overseas Dominions, since that is a body composed of members directly elected by the constituencies of the motherland in proportionate ratio."

And Dr. Harper proceeds to show that the second chamber of parliament in the motherland, called by whatever name may be given to it, is where a lasting and practical Imperial Federation may be given its first parliamentary status. And the story of his argument is something which ought to be read and spoken of by everybody who has the future welfare of our Empire at heart. The Quebec Chronicle deserves credit for having the enterprise of producing the article in full, with the reference made in it to the visit of our Canadian Prime Minister and his three colleagues to London, to share in the deliberations of the amplified War Cabinet of the day.

DAYLIGHT-SAVING IN EUROPE.

A decree has been promulgated directing all Italian clocks to be advanced one hour from April 1 to September 30.

All clocks in France were put forward one hour at midnight on March 24, according to the summer time bill which has been passed by Parliament.

THE VACANT LOT PROBLEM.

In these days of rush and absorption in the business affairs people as a rule are prone to neglect the little things which go toward making a beautiful city. Lack of civic spirit which does not reach beyond one's own sidewalk does not argue well for any town. I am a firm believer in the conservation of neighborhood pride; in fact, when you get right down to the root of the matter, there cannot be a prosperous city unless each home and business has local pride in its surroundings. Civic patriotism depends on this pride. An individual who strives to improve home conditions is bound to be a good citizen, and the combination of such good citizens makes the ideal city. The first consideration in a campaign for beautifying and improving vacant lots is the personnel of those who will have direction of the movement. This work can be most successfully done through an organized body such as Civic League. The size of the organization is not so important as is the fact that the work of direction should be in the hands of competent people. Those who have a clear vision of what should be done, who are gifted with patience, who are willing and sensible enough to subordinate personal opinion or the general good, who are cheerful, good natured and have a sense of humor, and, above all, people who have a very large amount of tact and know when to say the right thing, and how to approach the people in whom it is necessary to awaken civic pride. — J. Lafrance in Civic Progress.

UTILITIES OF BRANTFORD, ONT.

According to the annual report of the municipal utilities the City of Brantford has a surplus of \$11,999. Particulars are as follows:

	Investment.	Earnings.	Expenses.
Waterworks	\$ 832,704	\$ 82,869.20	\$ 27,440.27
Hydro	281,670	80,042.51	46,734.70
Street Railway. . . .	436,549	97,737.98	68,369.35
	\$1,550,923	\$260,649.69	\$142,544.32
	Interest and sink- ing fund.	Depre- ciation.	Surplus or deficit.
Waterworks	\$43,768.95	\$ 7,051.50	\$ 4,608.48
Hydro	17,221.00	7,500.00	8,586.81
Street Railway. . . .	24,564.00	6,000.00	*1,195.37
	\$85,553.95	\$ 20,551.50	\$11,999.92

*Deficit.