

EDITORIAL

POLITICS was invented to upset man's normal views of society. This country for two years has been fervently praying to avert a general election. The election is coming. All the reasons against thus dividing the country in a time of war have been cogently set forth by newspapers of both party stripes. The reasons are calmly brushed aside by the spirit of politics which declares that we must have an election. And in working against an election at this time we believe that Premier Borden acted as a man who personally puts patriotism before politics.

Within three months, perhaps, or more, we shall have to make up our minds more effectively than ever we have done on the issues confronting the country. The Liberals—after a split on conscription—came together again, and declined to extend the life of what they call a moribund Parliament. The argument has some truth; not all. Effectively this Parliament is no more moribund than that of England, except that it was elected under a scheme of member-distribution far inadequate to the Canada of to-day. In the new allotment the West will have 22 extra seats, a total of 57, almost equal to Quebec. This will make a big difference. The West has been training for the use of this new voice. The decision of Ottawa Liberals to let this Parliament die comes suddenly after the announcement that western Liberals are to hold a general convention in August. No doubt the congress will have more than was expected to say about the new politics of Canada. At any rate the West will not be a meek little sister glad of a chance to ride on the band wagon. Western Liberalism has chalked out for itself a large area in the sentiment of the West. The rural element, the grain-growers, the radicals, most of them are Forwards. The Liberal convention will have its great strength in the agrarian element; which is where the West differs from Prussia, controlled by a reactionary autocracy of farmers.

Will the western congress throw its weight with the Ottawa Liberals, who have declared for an election, and will they make an effort under the banners of Laurier to oust the Government?

It looks that way. Ottawa has been talking to the West. An astute manipulator from the prairie has lately been in Ottawa. A thorough westerner, he is also a Laurier regimist. He may see an opportunity to get the West all it wants in a new Parliament at Ottawa by organizing all the strength of western Liberalism—whatever that is, says Winnipeg Saturday Post—against the Government. The Graham amendment to extension of Parliament coincided oddly with this politician's visit. A mere coincidence. Line up the Liberal sentiment in favour of conscripting wealth, make that a leading plank, and at once you accuse the Government of being in league with the capitalists and the vested interests; which is precisely what the agrarian element on the prairie are most opposed to.

We are not saying it is true. Only it can be made to seem true; which in an election is sometimes the same thing. Anyhow, we are to have an election. Gradually we shall make up our minds on the issues. We are in the hands of Fate—up to a point; and then we decide. And it will be no old-line politician struggle. It will be a struggle of curiously mixed elements. The West will epitomize it. There we have a strongly conscriptionist sentiment in both parties that has paid the price on a top average of enlistment. We have also anti-capitalism. We have the dominant Anglo-Saxon element; and we have also many thousands of German-speaking and other foreigners. There are French-Canadians and there are Americans. We may conclude that two of these groups will oppose the conscription platform on fixed principles and that the other two will support it. And we imagine this will be rather outside of old-line politics.

It is too early yet to prognosticate. Politics in any case is too much like weather. In a dry time all signs fail.

PRESIDENT WILSON is having the usual trouble that seems to beset war cabinets. His, however, are peculiar to the American style of

THE NEW CANADIAN SAYS:

WHEN I realize how big a contract it is for any man to get a living knowledge of this country and how worth while it is to try, I wonder that more people don't make the attempt. I have seen perhaps about half or two-thirds of Canada from East to West, and have gone about a quarter as far North since I decided to drive stakes here some years ago. I am told by those who know that I am only just beginning to feel what the country is like. I am also reminded that as yet I don't know anything worth speaking of about the people, and probably far less about what is sometimes referred to as the Canadian nation, whatever that may happen or turn out to be.

Well and good. I admit all that. But I'm not within thirty years or more of being dead yet, if things go as well with me as I hope they will. Technically, I am past military age and I have a good-sized family, all of whom were born here. That, however, will be no excuse for my declining to go wherever and whenever I may be required in the interests of this country. If I never budge out of here to fight, I can at least work as hard as possible to get the most out of my citizenship in Canada, and to make the country still more worth coming back to for the men who have taken the one big chance of never seeing it again. When I confess that with all my desire to know Canada I am as yet comparatively a Canadian ignoramus, I express also my ambition to know this country as a true Canadian should. If I don't do this I can't expect my children to do it. If they fail I might as well have driven stakes somewhere else as far as possible from here.

But I expect to know Canada. And for the next thirty years that will be about as big a hobby as I shall be able to accommodate.



HER BUSY DAY.

cabinet. The recent rumpus over the coal question illustrates. H. K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, is at the root of it. Lane is a Canadian; the only Canadian who ever held an American portfolio. And in this case, Lane is right. As Secretary of the Interior he is declared to have got big concessions from coal operators on coal prices to the Government, which, of course, was better than commandeering the coal. In a speech of thanks, he said:

You have responded as men should to a call made upon you in the name of the people of the United States. If all the industries of the United States will have the same spirit there will be no question as to our ability to mobilize the resources of the country and carry this war to a successful conclusion.

True words well spoken. But in saying them, H. K. Lane spoke as Secretary of the Interior, not as any member of a responsible Cabinet. Along come Secretaries Baker and Daniels from the Army and Navy Building, each of them absolute because individual in his own department, and they get a lower rate by threatening to conscript the same coal; which, it is pointed out, may result in the general consumer having to pay high prices to offset the low one and the resentment of the coal owners at being clubbed after they had been willing to conciliate.

That is a peculiar weakness of the American kind of Cabinet. Had all these Secretaries been members of Congress it would have been very different. But of course we have no business teaching our grandmother to suck eggs.

A CARTOON in a New York comic paper of serious intention depicts the Kaiser laughing fiendishly at the death agony of an emaciated child poisoned from a well. In the background comes democracy followed by Uncle Sam. The arrival of these people is supposed to settle the thing. The child will probably get better. Reminding us of a passage in the July issue of the North American Review, which starts off, "Since America must win the war—"

You may imagine the rest. Of all the Allied belligerents we in Canada claim the United States most closely as an Ally. It may be counted bad form in Great Britain to criticize the United States. But Canada claims special privilege. Part of our regular business in normal times is gibing at Uncle Sam. And in the business of who is supposed to win this war anyway we would ask Uncle over the border if he remembers:

The family that tried for twenty minutes to get the glass top off a quart can of preserves; when along comes Johnnie, and with a twist of the wrist he yanks it off and goes out to tell his pals how he did it. But suppose Johnnie had been one of the first on the job?

WE need no longer be supremely agitated over this or that big man suddenly let drop from high places. The war has made a scrap-heap of nearly all the big men who started off. The scrap heap is still growing. Now and then a bit of junk is reclaimed because it is found to be, after all, a better piece of goods than some of the properties on stage. In England, in Russia, they are still shaking the dice. Russia has marched ahead marvellously. There is very largely one reason. It is summed up in one big flaming patriot of brains. Kerensky is the soul of Russia. With him at the top all things are possible. He is the Lloyd George of the new democracy.

A WESTERN editor violently remarked, the other day, that Canada should trust no man of German name or lineage. This is fire-eating. There are many men of German lineage which this new country is bound to respect. Among them we may casually mention Prof. Riethdorf, who has lately been released from the intelligence service, to which he had been appointed at Halifax after his enlistment in the A. M. C. For two years Riethdorf, a German-born, has been more or less persecuted. We believe Prof. Riethdorf to mean all he says about his enmity to Prussianism. He is a loyal citizen who should be useful to the country.