

## Military Training

**M**R. MOWAT, member for Parkdale, Toronto, has a resolution before the House of Commons—the debate on which has been adjourned—favoring a system of compulsory military training for the youth of the country. He is seconded by Mr. Griesbach, member for Edmonton, who would begin the training at an earlier age and utilize the schools of the country for the creation of a cadet system. Both these views will undoubtedly find some favor in the country and at another time they might command a large measure of support. The recent great war was often described as a war to end war. One may doubt whether that excellent purpose has been or is likely to be accomplished. All the nations have not yet been educated to the point of believing that war is to cease. It is noticeable than even those nations which have the strongest hope of a permanent peace are still spending large sums in naval and military organizations. Even Canada will not be able to entirely avoid expenses of this kind. A moderate sized standing army—the Permanent Force it is called—will be required to ensure the maintenance of order at home and to form the nucleus of a force to resist possible though not probable aggression: and though for the moment nothing may be done in the way of naval expansion, the time is not far off when a modest Canadian navy will be felt to be a necessity for a maritime people.

Admitting all this, however, it is to be hoped that Mr. Mowat's resolution may do nothing more than provide an interesting and instructive debate. This is not a time when Canada should undertake a system of compulsory military training. The idea of compulsion in such a service is certain to call forth a considerable measure of hostility, and whatever may be said concerning the need for compulsory service in the recent conflict, there is no good reason why our people should now be divided by the introduction of such a question into the practical politics of this peace-time. Most of the men who fought so gallantly in Canada's army will desire now to put aside all thought of war and get back into the field of service which calls for the arts of peace.

Whatever may be thought of the possibilities of war in the future, nobody regards it as, for Canada, close at hand. War there still may have to be in Europe, where the situation today makes almost anything possible; but the prospect of another war in which Canada may be concerned is too remote to justify any extensive military preparations at present. The efforts of Canada's statesmen and Canada's people at this time should be exerted to restore industry, trade and commerce to their normal conditions, and then to effect the expansion that is necessary to meet the greater obligations that are facing us. When a fair degree of progress in this good work shall have been

recorded, it will be time enough to consider what new part Canada should be prepared to take in military organization. To-day, let us have peace.

## The West Indies

**T**WO enthusiastic Canadians, Mr. T. B. Macaulay, of Montreal, and Mr. Harry J. Crowe, of Toronto, continue to employ voice and pen in interesting the Canadian people in the present condition and prospective future of the British West Indies. Mr. Crowe, it will be remembered, thinks the only proper thing is for Canada to initiate a movement to make the West India islands and British Guiana a part of this Dominion. Mr. Macaulay sees more readily than the other the difficulties that stand in the way of the larger scheme, and argues that a commercial union, or some form of closer trade relations than at present exists, is a more useful and more practicable project. Each gentleman feels that West Indian public opinion is ready to respond to any movement of the kind that he advocates. While Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Crowe have been considering the future of the West Indies as a part of the British Empire, some unwise American writers have been talking of a project to have the United States acquire the islands as a part of the settlement of accounts between the two nations. Of course this notion has had no foundation except in the imagination of sensational writers in the American press, yet the wide extent of the discussion has caused notice to be taken of it in Great Britain. That the suggestion of any acquisition of the West Indies by the United States would be warmly resented was to be expected. In the course of the English discussion, however, some views have been expressed by responsible writers that are not in harmony with the impressions that Canadians have received as to the sentiments of the West Indians towards Canada. Mr. Gideon Murray, an ex-Governor of one of the islands, recently wrote to the London Times warmly declaring the desire of the West Indians to retain their membership in the British Empire. With his letter as a text, Sir Sydney Olivier, an old Colonial Office man and an ex-Governor of Jamaica, writes that there has been too much loose talk about the disposal of the West Indies. These communities, he says, especially such units as Barbados and Jamaica, have a long organic life and spiritual history of their own, which has developed them into small national units—not so very small either, for the population of Jamaica is nearly as large as that of New Zealand. It is an island largely colonized by the English and thoroughly infused with English tradition and feeling. The people of all classes, Sir Sydney says, conceive of themselves as Jamaicans and of Jamaica as a State in the British Empire. The whole group, with well informed and sympathetic handling, might

possibly be fused into a West Indian nation. "Amalgamation with Canada," writes this ex-Governor, "would be most uncongenial to them. It really hardly ever occurs to the inhabitants of any of them to think of such incorporation; they only discuss them when these journalistic or political kites are flown."

Sir Sydney Olivier should be a good authority on West Indian affairs. It is, however, some years since he served in Jamaica, and it is quite possible that there is now a more sympathetic interest in relation to Canada than there was when he filled the Governor's chair at Kingston.

## Fixed Election Days

**T**HE Farmer-Labor Government of Ontario have introduced into the Legislature a novel measure—novel so far as British Legislatures are concerned. It is proposed that the elections at the close of a legislative term shall be held at a fixed date in October, instead of the election day being left to the choice of the Government of the day; provided, however, that the right of the Lieutenant-Governor to dissolve the Legislature at any time shall not be affected. There is something to be said in favor of the proposal. It is a self-denying ordinance on the part of the Government, who propose to yield up a part of the authority which they now possess. The power of a Government to bring on elections at the time that best suits their own convenience has often been used to the advantage of the party in power, and often have Opposition speakers and writers complained of unfair advantage thus taken by the Government of the day. The proposal of the Ontario Government seems, on the surface, to be an answer to such criticisms. But a little study of it will show that it does not very materially change the present situation. The Opposition are not usually placed in a position of material disadvantage by the uncertainty of the date of the election when the Legislature has run its full term. In that case they are well aware that there must be a general election very soon, and they are looking forward to it for some time.

If there is danger in the present system, it is not in the power to fix a chosen date for the election at the end of the term, but in the power to dissolve the Legislature at any time, and, in the case of by-elections, the power to fix the date. The threat of a dissolution has been known to make a legislative chamber bow to the wishes of a Government. That may be admitted to be a weakness in our British system, as compared with the American system, in which the legislative body is chosen for a fixed period and the election held at a fixed date. On the other hand, the power of dissolution when properly used, brings the affairs of Government into immediate touch with the people, and thus makes our system really more democratic than that of our Republican neighbors.