

The Brain Browsers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, June 6, 1917

NATIONAL POLITICAL MUDDLE

From the best information available, everything is topsy-turvy at Ottawa. Premier Borden returned from Great Britain a couple of weeks ago and announced that conscription would go into effect at once. Then something happened. What it was we do not know. Last week saw conferences between Premier Borden and ex-Premier Laurier. The leaders of the Liberal party were called to interview the Duke at Government House. The big politicians have been scurrying over Canada to interview provincial leaders. It can only mean that there is a discussion on coalition. Both parties have been playing the mean game of politics so much that it is pretty difficult for them to get together and form a coalition government for the benefit of the country. The political leaders on both sides have kept their heads buried in the sands of party politics and have been blind to the needs of the nation. Public opinion, however, is growing very active and is demanding that the muddlers in both political camps get down to business. If Sir Robert Borden were as strong as he ought to be he would make a public offer of a coalition government. If Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberals refused then the responsibility would rest upon them. There is too much secrecy in the negotiations that are going on. These people seem to forget that they are conducting public business, and that the public have some right to know how they are conducting it. Every country but ours has developed a strong man to conduct national affairs during the war. We are still in a muddle. Let us hope that some improvement will come soon.

MUST THE WEST FREEZE

The great coal strike goes on without any apparent hope of an early settlement. The miners refuse to return to work until their demands are granted. The president of the Coal Miners' Federation for the continent has endeavored to get them back, but without any success. The owners assert it is impossible to pay higher wages. Meanwhile the minister of labor, in reply to anxious enquiries of those in close touch with conditions, gives the most evasive and unsatisfactory replies conceivable. The Ottawa government is playing with fire at the expense of the people on these prairies. Another month of idleness must see us in a very dangerous situation. Such must not be permitted. While the government recommends conscription to make up fighting units for Europe, it refuses to move under anything short of compulsion of public opinion on such a vital matter to the general public of Western Canada and to the successful prosecution of the war. Every day government intervention in this matter is needlessly delayed and lays the government open to the charge of playing party politics with the view to a Dominion election.

CONSCRIPTION AND PATRIOTISM

The latest announcement from Ottawa is that conscription will probably not be put into effect for two months in order to give time for military registration. It is also stated that special efforts will be made to increase voluntary enlistment in the meantime. It is quite evident that the reception of the government's conscription scheme has convinced the powers that be that they should make haste slowly. There has been a great deal of opposition to conscription and this opposition is divided into two classes largely. In Quebec and among some of the labor organizations there is absolute opposition to conscription of men in any form. The other class, and probably the

largest, is composed of those who are not opposed to conscription of men as such, but who are opposed to the conscription of men until the government has made at least some small move to compel a sacrifice on the part of those remaining at home. In Great Britain, in the British dominions and in the United States, a real genuine effort was made to distribute the war burden over the entire population before any attempt was made at conscripting men. In Canada our record in this respect as compared with all our allies is most shameful. The government seems to have been possessed of no backbone whatever. Graft and profiteering and patronage have run riot, and there seems to be no firm hand at the helm anywhere. This is why so many people object to conscription of men at the present moment. There is abundance of money in Canada and a large number of our people are building up huge fortunes out of the war, while others are improving their condition steadily. In spite of this, our soldiers' pensions and the provision for their families remain inadequate. Further still, on account of the cost of living a large number of our people in the cities are living on starvation diet.

Our soldiers are going abroad to sacrifice their lives for democracy and for a square deal, in order that men and women may have an equal opportunity to live and prosper and enjoy life. Right here in Canada, however, the very fundamental principles of democracy for which they are fighting are being violated every day and we are steadily concentrating our national power into the hands of a few. Why should this continue when 400,000 of our men are giving their all for \$1.10 per day in order that democracy may live? It is a national disgrace that those who remain at home are not forced to sacrifice their wealth that the war may be prosecuted to a successful conclusion.

The conduct of our soldiers in this war makes us thrill with pride, but the conduct of our government and our national authorities makes us blush for shame. If the government will conscript our wealth so that those of us who remain at home will be forced to make a real sacrifice we do not believe there will be much difficulty in getting another 100,000 soldiers by voluntary enlistment. But if that fails then it is time to talk about compulsion. The people of Canada want to be taxed. The great majority of them, we believe, are willing to pay and pay well, but the government remains inactive. The big national boot ought to be applied and applied vigorously, to wake up those who are asleep at this time of our national crisis. No man, morally, is entitled to advocate compulsion until he has at least brought himself financially down to \$1.10 per day, as our 400,000 soldiers have already done. How many of those who are making so much noise in favor of conscription are willing to get down to \$1.10 a day? Our soldiers at the front need help. Let it be given them, but let the sacrifice be borne in some measure by all the people of Canada.

NEW ZEALAND'S EXAMPLE

When the great European war broke out, the Hon. J. W. Massey, leader of the Reform party, was premier of New Zealand. Sir Joseph Ward, leader of the Liberal party, and formerly premier, was leader of the opposition. Shortly after the declaration of war, without any fuss or noise, but quite as a matter of course, nearly half the members of the Massey cabinet resigned. Sir Joseph Ward was asked to become a member of the government, and to bring with him the strongest men from his party. He did so. Both parties thus joined hands when faced with a

national crisis, and there has been no party strife in that British dominion. There has been no political patronage. There has been no political jobbery, nor profiteering during the war in New Zealand.

On Thursday last both Premier Massey and ex-Premier Ward spoke in Winnipeg before six hundred members of the Canadian Club. Both expressed satisfaction that conscription was coming in Canada. Sir Joseph Ward, however, said:—

"You need something beside conscription of men. In New Zealand we have had conscription of men for the last twelve months, but we could not get it until we had first gone a long piece towards the conscription of wealth. Neither could they conscript the men in England until they had at first made a real start towards the conscription of wealth."

What an object lesson the visit of these two New Zealand leaders furnishes to our own Canada. Almost ever since the war began Canada has been polluted by cheap partisan bickering and wrangling, patronage run rampant, profiteering on a gigantic scale, and political jobbery of all kinds. Individual wealth has not been conscripted at all, and there has been no attempt whatever to form a coalition or national government. The example of New Zealand should shame our public men of Canada into action.

WHERE EDUCATION IS NEEDED

When Sir Joseph Ward, speaking at the Canadian Club, Winnipeg, last week, referred to "national government" and "conscripted of wealth," there was tumultuous applause. When he proceeded to explain that New Zealand owned her railways, telegraphs and telephones, the applause was not quite so loud. As he proceeded to say that the New Zealand government also owned and operated life insurance, accident insurance, and some of the other great reforms of this most progressive of all British dominions, the applause was greatly reduced. The members of the Canadian Club were not enamoured of the idea of the government entering into competition with private enterprise and the curtailing of private profits, but they will get used to it in time, because the day is surely coming when private profiteering in Canada will be curtailed.

PATRIOTIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Since the outbreak of the war the people of Western Canada have contributed generously to all kinds of patriotic funds. In order to assist in this work The Guide offered to receive and forward to the proper authorities contributions to any of the patriotic funds. In doing this we are not seeking to treat any new fund, nor to interfere in any way with the work of other organizations, but simply to afford an opportunity to those who may wish to contribute through this avenue, or who are not now contributing to other funds. All contributions are acknowledged as received in The Guide. The total received to date by The Guide is as follows:—

Belgian Relief Fund	\$10,768.43
Red Cross Fund	3,428.91
Serbian Relief Fund	188.00
Polish Relief Fund	59.00
Prisoners of War Fund	50.00
Canadian Patriotic Fund	838.00

Grand Total

We shall be glad to receive, acknowledge and forward further contributions to any of these funds, no matter how large or small. They are all for deserving causes. The suffering of the Belgians can never be told in words, and an equal calamity has fallen upon