

that the Prime Minister's motive in taking up conscription was to win the elections, if it be the fact, as alleged, that the great majority of the people of Canada are solid against it.

TOWARDS AN IMPERIAL CONSTITUTION The argument in favour of some form of closer union among the component states of the British Empire has been considerably advanced by the forward step recently taken under the leadership of Mr. Lloyd George. It will be remembered that at the Imperial Conference of 1911, Mr. Asquith stated emphatically that under the existing constitution responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs and imperial defence must remain exclusively with the British Cabinet; and though he subsequently made the concession that, if the Dominions were coming forward with offers of help, some recognition would obviously have to be accorded to them, his former utterance has always been relied on and appealed to by those to whom the idea of closer union is distasteful. Since 1911 we have had arguments from one side in favour of a scheme of Federation, issuing ultimately in an Imperial Parliament, while another school holds that we ought to rest content with the ideal of a galaxy of Allied States. In this way, the "Centralists" on the one hand, and the "Autonomists" on the other, seemed to have the floor to themselves, till it occurred to the Prime Minister of Great Britain to take a practical step towards imperial partnership on the lines of the old adage, "Solvitur ambulando." It was towards the end of last year that Mr. Lloyd George, acting on behalf of the British Government, assumed the responsibility of summoning an Executive Cabinet of the whole Empire, including India; and for six weeks, in the spring of 1917, the various heads of the Governments of the Empire met for the first time on an equal footing with the British Prime Minister and those of his colleagues who are directly charged with the conduct of imperial affairs. The British Cabinet became in fact, for the time, an Imperial War Cabinet, and it has been arranged that similar meetings shall be held annually, or at any intermediate time when mat-