

Conscription.



THE question, "how to raise an army numerically sufficient for national defence," is becoming nowadays one of great importance. Many secretaries of war as well as military experts have endeavoured to solve the problem, but each in turn has failed. The problem still remains unsolved. What solution shall we propose, knowing that modern society is entirely opposed to military life, and especially to conscription?

Are we to adopt a system of compulsory military service such as was suggested by Lord Roberts some time ago, and plunge whole nations into a state of consternation and dismay? No, such a system is not necessary. The voluntary system of military service, as it is constituted to-day, is quite sufficient for present needs, and the drastic increase of its ranks would only create an offensive instead of a defensive policy. Moreover, the people of to-day are too much devoted to business and to the betterment of their condition in life to pay any attention whatever to military conscription.

Experienced military men tell us that a volunteer system, together with the recruits from military colleges, is quite sufficient to crush any force, and what more do we want for national defence?

Von Bleibstein, a German military organizer, says, that the net results of Lord Roberts' proposal regarding the adoption of conscription in England would only awaken a bitter feeling between England and Germany, increase the burden of the people, and notably increase taxation, and all would be done without bringing advantage of any kind. Now if this is the view held by a man living under conscription, how can it bear itself in the light of our modern constitutional development without causing serious trouble?

No one can deny the repeated assertion that the continental workingman bitterly resents the heavy burden imposed upon him by compulsory military service. This complaint is expressed by all classes of society, and particularly by Europeans who come to America.

Of course conscription is an historic fact, and no nation in the past could have, perhaps, survived without it, but we are not