

office are the representatives of the people, the members of Parliament and the Cabinet Ministers. An irresponsible dictator is to be particularly authorized to kick them off the doorstep. He is to be independent of Government and of Parliament. He is not only to have plenary powers of administration, but is also to be placed in full control of the people's money for whatever purposes he may desire in connection with the railway. The control of the people's money by the people's Parliament has hitherto been regarded as the very foundation stone of the British constitution. Not even the King is permitted to evade that principle. A Minister of the Crown, responsible to the people, cannot control a penny for the purposes of government until it has been voted from year to year by the people's representatives in Parliament. But this railway dictator would have an unlimited right to draw on the public treasury without coming ("crawling") to Government or Parliament. For ten years at least—and then for another term of ten years—this dictator would be the uncontrolled master of the Canadian people in railway affairs, having no responsibility to Government, to Parliament or to the people.

Of course, nothing of the kind is possible in the Canadian democracy. Since we are to have public ownership of railways, we may as well realize at the beginning that the system is not and cannot be free from the perils that are inherent in all democratic government. If we can imagine our Parliament establishing any such system as our contemporary suggests, it would be doomed to early failure. A new Government would of course be free to abolish the system. But it would not need a change of Government to accomplish such a purpose. The politicians—the members of Government and Parliament—will be held responsible to the people for the management of every piece of the people's property, and being responsible, they will, ere long, insist on having control. The trade union which seeks increased pay for railway workers will not be put off by the railway dictator's refusal; they will go to the members of Parliament and the Ministers, and will insist that these responsible representatives of the people shall deal with the matter. The county M.P., some of whose constituents are inconvenienced by a reduction in the train service, will ignore the dictator and demand relief from the Government which he supports. The member for the adjoining county, who finds that the new fast train is not scheduled to stop at his town, will not wait to be kicked off the doorstep of the dictator; he will go to the Minister and the Government who need his support, and the dictator will be overruled. The widow whose cow strayed through her open gate and was killed on the track will not submit to the decision of the dictator, who says she should have closed the gate; she will go to the county M.P., and to the clergyman, and perhaps to the Bishop, and they will all go to the Government to plead the widow's cause; the cow will probably be an expensive one to the treasury. The dictator might slam the door in the faces of the widow's friends, but the Government will not do so.

The public, in accepting the movement for public ownership of railways, must not deceive itself as to the consequences. A system which is designed to prevent real public control, to evade the essence of public ownership and create a Prussianized dictatorship, cannot succeed. Railways under Government owner-

ship will be managed just as well—or just as badly—as other departments of Government business. When, as may sometimes happen, the work of government is in the hands of strong men, with high ideals of public service, the management will be good, and may perhaps win public approval, though it will at all times have to bear severe and perhaps unjust criticism. Where, as has been known to happen, the politicians are corrupt, or self-seeking, or weak, the railway, like all other business, will be mismanaged. The only remedy will be to turn out the Government and bring in another one, which may do no better.

The Returned Soldier

THERE is no question on which the Canadian people are more cordially united than on recognition of the services of the men who so gallantly volunteered for the military service of the Empire. Every movement designed to minister to the comfort of the men at the front has hearty sympathy and warm support. The memory of the men who have given their lives for the Empire's cause is everywhere honored. That their dependents shall be generously treated by the country for which they made the sacrifice is one of the things beyond question. No less cordial is the feeling that those who have served and suffered and come back disabled shall have the most generous consideration. In appreciation of the service that has been rendered, and in desire that it shall be honored and properly rewarded, there is complete unity in Canada.

There is, however, a danger that this appreciation and desire may be weakened, and this unity broken, through the foolish actions of some of the soldiers, who have been so misguided as to engage in movements that cannot be justified. In several instances men from the training camps invaded and broke up public meetings that were being lawfully held, and thus assailed that freedom of public discussion which lies at the very basis of every democratic system of government. At Winnipeg recently, where a political convention was being held, a body of returned soldiers made a demonstration against some of those present because they were believed to intend to pass resolutions opposing conscription. The Premier of Manitoba was only able to quiet the men by assuring them that there was no such intention. The inference to be drawn is that if the meeting had proposed to pass such resolutions it would have been broken up by the soldiers.

In demonstrations of this kind there is a menace which deserves the serious consideration of all good citizens, and especially of all who particularly desire to promote the interests of the soldiers who have returned, and of those who are yet to come back. If the impression is to become general that the soldiers who have fought for freedom in France are to destroy freedom in Canada—to prevent the holding of lawful meetings of the people, to set aside the authority of the civil power and to establish military mob law, there will inevitably be a change of public opinion in relation to the soldiers. If any meeting is called for an unlawful purpose, it is the duty of the civil power to prevent the holding of it. If any speaker at a public meeting indulges in language of disloyalty, it is the duty of the civil power to call him to account. Cir-

cumstances may arise in which the civil power is unequal to the situation that presents itself, and in such a case the civil power must, in the way provided by law, ask the aid of the military authorities. Military men so called upon, under the direction of their commanding officers, may have an important part to play, in the maintenance of law and order. But military men who, with no such authority, presume to take the law into their own hands and dictate what citizens shall or shall not do, are a menace to the peace and order of the country. The various organizations formed for the promotion of the soldiers' interests should see the gravity of the situation that is produced whenever the soldiers take such a foolish course, and should be foremost in counselling the soldiers to manifest at all times respect for order and for that freedom of discussion which is one of the essentials of good government. He is no friend of the soldiers who counsels, encourages or tolerates interference with the right of all free discussion that is within the law. The militarism which fights in France or Belgium for the world's freedom is something that all Canadians must honor. A militarism which lends itself to disorder of any kind in Canada is a grave menace to the best interests of our country.

A Nation's Recovery

A NATION, like an individual, if it loses its head and plunges into extravagance, must in the end pay the penalty of its folly. The largest and most important of the South American republics has had to learn this lesson. Brazil is territorially a large country, the fifth in size in the world, with a population of about twenty-two million, with rich resources, producing in abundance timber, rubber, sugar, coffee, tobacco, etc. Encouraged by the extent of her resources and the world's demand for her products, Brazil a few years ago entered upon a course of extravagant expenditures on public works, railways, dreadnaughts and other warships, which alarmed the thoughtful men who were interested in her finance. Deficit after deficit occurred. Just before the outbreak of the great war Brazil attempted to raise a loan in Europe to meet her obligations, but before the negotiations made much progress they were terminated by the war which paralyzed the money markets. Unable to raise money by loans the Brazilian Government were compelled to become defaulters. The interest on their securities could not be paid. The Rothschilds came to their relief with a proposed funding scheme to which the bondholders were obliged to submit. The interest on most of the foreign loans was to be funded for a period of three years, and the sinking fund on these loans suspended for ten years. The war has so disturbed Brazilian trade that fears have been entertained that the Government would not be able to comply with the terms of the scheme at the end of the three years, and that an extension of the arrangement would be sought. Happily, however, the Government, by a vigorous policy of retrenchment accompanied by fresh taxation, have been able to overcome the difficulties of their position and have just announced that Brazil will now resume the payment of interest on her national debt.