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THE SOLDIER'S WELFARE AND HOW HE AND THOSE WHO SYMPATHIZE WITH HIM CAN PROMOTE IT.

By
Bernard Rose.

Hardly had the last shot been fired in Flanders, and before it was even known that the Huns were at their last gasp and were imploring an armistice, politicians were already making plans and weaving schemes to capture the support of the men, who, through all these dreary and bitter years, stood ready at any moment to make the supreme sacrifice in order to thwart the ambitions and designs of a brutally militarized and power-loving autocracy.

The very men and leaders who, in order to win a measure of support and secure a return to power catered to those who opposed conscription and sending of necessary reinforcements, are showing an anxiety to do justice to the soldier!

What an abominable hypocrisy! What an insult to the intelligence of every man in khaki and those whose hearts went out to him! Do these politicians who place party and pelf before patriotism and duty think that they can so easily deceive the men who have dared death so often and so fully? Do they imagine that their protestations and expressions of admiration for the brave men who are fortunate in returning will be accepted as evidence of regret and a desire to do better? If they do, they are sadly mistaken.

The average party politician and tactician looks at everything from the standpoint of his party success at the polls. He will suggest and recommend the inclusion in a programme which his party prepares, such concessions and inducements as he believes will placate and win over those whose support he is so anxious to obtain.

The citizen soldier will not, however, be misled by such plausible and specious attempts to obtain his cooperation in electing candidates and a party that is hungering for power. The first question he must ask and answer is this: Who were the men and the leaders that were determined to help my comrades when they were sorely tried and in urgent need of reinforcements to stem the Hun tide? Are they deserving of my support? Will they do as much for me and my comrades as those who, while professing to be our friends, deserted us in the direst hour of our peril? Can we rely upon the promises of those who were prepared to let the men from Canada go to their death, knowing that all the

honour and glory they had won (which has added so much luster to our banners), would be lost, as a result of the divisions which had won this glory being so much under strength that they could not carry on operations? Can we depend upon getting justice from those who favoured voluntary system of recruiting after it was demonstrated beyond any doubt that it was a lamentable failure? Is there any likelihood of our claims getting the consideration they deserve from the men who ask us to exercise our franchise in their interest, and were supported by men and newspapers that said Canada had done enough and had no business to participate in the war? Upon whom can we place greater reliance—the party or government that was thoroughly British and ready to stand by the Mother Country and its Allies to the last man and the last dollar, or the party and group that did not think Canada's position in the Empire justified us in going to any and all lengths necessary to preserve that Empire which has given them so many liberties and privileges?

All honour is due to the men who, regardless of party and politics, stood by the boys in the trenches, and I think that, if it is made patent to them that their duty did not end in sending reinforcements but must be fulfilled as a continuous one until every soldier has been properly and fully protected in the matter of pensions, employment, and pecuniary assistance to re-establish himself in civil life, the dependents of those noble men who are no more will be as well cared for as if their natural protectors and supporters were still in the flesh.

No matter what cost such justice and generosity may entail, the Government must not falter. If Canada bulks largely in the eyes of the world it is due altogether to the fame which its citizen soldier heroes won on the bloody fields of Flanders. If Canada becomes a nation it is because so many of its citizens answered the call of their King and died to save it. If, as Lord Charnwood stated, Toronto may yet become the seat of the Empire, who will have contributed to this more than the splendid men and glorious youth who rallied so quickly and joyously to the call that was made for their services.

We can never sufficiently compensate them or their dependents for the great sacrifices that have been made. Every soldier who died gave his life in order that his fellow citizens might live. The bodies of those who fought and fell formed the rampart that, like

a wall of iron, stopped the brutal Huns from continuing their march to Calais, in order to strike at Britain and thence invade and conquer the proudest gem in the Imperial crown.

Every Canadian who has profited by these sacrifices and neglects or refuses to stand by the soldier will be an even worse traitor than was Judas in selling his Master for the thirty pieces of silver. A strong sentiment must be awakened and fostered that will champion the Cause of the soldier in anything and everything pertaining to his welfare. However, the men who were "over there" must not depend upon this alone. The old proverb "God helps those who help themselves" has in it an element of truth and practical wisdom. The soldier must help himself.

The feeling of comradeship which association in the dug-out and camp generated, must be cherished and kept at white heat. In his return to civil life he will find the struggle for existence as keen as ever. Unless he can rely upon the help of his former brothers in arms he will be elbowed hither and thither and eventually thrown on to a scrap heap, to be regarded with pity and commiseration by his sleek, well-fed, and prosperous fellow Canadians who stayed "over here" while he was "over here".

As I pointed out in a previous article, he must ally himself with the men and women who love and respect him for what he did and who will help him elect or reject any government or party that will forget the men who did the fighting. I am not advocating a soldiers' party in the sense that it is popularly understood. What I mean is a body that will stand together, aided by the men and women who voted to help the men at the front and who are ready and willing to still help him obtain what is due.

When all the boys return, they, together with those who are already here, will constitute together with their families and friends the largest and most powerful element in the voting strength of this country. They must see to it that such strength is not uselessly dissipated or exploited by selfish politicians. They should only support such a party and such men as those who thought of them in their hour of trial, and in whom they have a certain measure of confidence as a result of past conduct.

How timely and noble are the words contained in the letter published in the Montreal Daily Star of November the 9th from