

were men on the Government side who were dissatisfied with the manner in which the Military Service Act was being used, and a discussion of that matter seems to have been the real object of the movers, the Quebec riots being used as a convenient peg on which to hang the formal motion to adjourn, which is employed under the rules to bring up a question of urgent importance.

The debate which, beginning early on Friday afternoon continued until daylight on Saturday morning, proved to be very interesting, and in the case of most of the speakers was marked by a moderation that was almost surprising. It afforded an opportunity for many of the new members on both sides to make their first appearance as speakers, and quite a number displayed oratorical powers of a high order. On the whole the debate was agreeably disappointing in its moderation, and perhaps it may do less harm than was feared when the notice of motion was given.

The Referendum

ALTHOUGH the "initiative, referendum and recall," the full programme of many of those who call themselves Progressives, may not be very widely accepted, the middle part of the plank finds much favor among public men who wish to avoid the responsibility of dealing directly with the issues that arise. At present in a number of the States of the neighboring Republic the referendum is being proposed as a way of settling the pending question of a prohibitionist constitutional amendment. The United States Congress, after a long contest, adopted an amendment of the constitution providing for total prohibition of the liquor traffic. The proposal now goes to the Legislatures of the States for ratification. There is, of course, in all quarters a strong prohibitionist party calling on the members of the Legislatures to endorse the proposed amendment. Opponents of the measure in a number of cases are endeavoring to avoid this direct action by way of a reference to the vote of the electors. In New York a referendum movement has just been crushed by Governor Charles S. Whitman. While the subject was still before the Legislature, without waiting for the presentation to him of a measure which he would be obliged to veto, Governor Whitman sent a message to the Assembly in which he strongly condemned the pending referendum bill. He would not object to a reference of the matter to the electors, he said, if under the constitution it could be settled in that way. But, as he pointed out, the constitution of the United States required that the proposed constitutional amendment be passed upon by the Legislature. Consequently, after all the trouble of the referendum, the matter would be left just where it was before: the Legislature, and the Legislature only, could confirm the proposed amendment. In concluding his message, the Governor said:—

"In other words, the result of a campaign under this proposed measure would be without meaning and without effect. It is an evasion and a deception, and I am not willing to be a party to the foisting upon the public of a dishonest measure.

"It is interesting to note that this plan, plainly a subterfuge, has been

proposed once before in the history of this State in its Legislature. This is not a new idea. It originated with the so-called Tweed minority in the Senate of 1869. It was the way the minority in the Senate, not conspicuous for loyalty to the Federal Government or to the interests of the State, endeavored to beat the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, the amendment which provided that the right to vote should not be denied on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.

"It is inconceivable to me that the method devised by William M. Tweed to defeat the provisions of the constitution of the United States, or at least for the purpose of avoiding the performance of a plain duty imposed by the instrument, should be adopted to-day by the Legislature of New York for the same purpose."

The Governor's vigorous message, and particularly his suggestion that the Republican Legislature of New York State was asked to follow the method established by the notorious Boss Tweed, of Tammany Hall, seems to have had the desired searing effect. The Assembly, by a vote of 110 to 35, decided to "postpone indefinitely" the referendum bill. The effect of this will be that the whole matter will go over for the consideration of the Legislature of 1919. In the meantime, no doubt, there will be an energetic campaign throughout the State in support of the ratification of the constitutional amendment proposed by Congress.

The French Generalissimo

THE announcement that the French General Foch has been chosen as supreme commander of the Allied armies—French, British and American—on the Western front, has not unnaturally produced some unfavorable comment in England. The Englishman does not like the idea of his chief military commander being placed in a position of inferiority. Sir Douglas Haig has acquitted himself well as the commander of the British forces on the Western front, and his admirers would be pleased to see him in the highest office at the seat of war. But there need be no doubt that the choice was made on military grounds, and that it was best for all concerned that the general command in France should be held by a French officer. The splendid record of General Foch will make it easy for the British commander to accept him as chief and to serve him with all loyalty. The concentration of authority over the whole field in one officer should make for greater efficiency. In view of the gallantry of the French soldiery, as well as the fine record of the French General, it is a pleasure as well as a duty for the British and American armies to be thus brought more closely into co-operation with the army of France.

There are times when a "one man power"—the concentration of authority in one cap-

able person—becomes necessary. This seems to be the situation of the Allies on the Western front, and General Foch seems to be the man for the duty.

War Loans

THE United States Government are now asking the people of the Republic to invest in the third "Liberty Loan." The amount to be asked for—three billion dollars—is less than was expected by the public. The Secretary of the Treasury has explained that the expenses of the war, enormous though they are, prove to be below the earlier estimates, and therefore he asks less than many thought would be required. He will, however, hold himself free to accept any amount that may be offered in excess of \$3,000,000,000. The rate of interest is to be 4¼ per cent. The Government have found it necessary, as has been the case in Canada, to increase the rate of interest on every new loan. The first Liberty loan was for \$2,000,000,000 at 3½ per cent. The total subscriptions were over \$3,000,000,000, but the excess was not accepted. For the second Liberty loan it was found necessary to offer 4 per cent. For the \$3,000,000,000 asked the Government received offers of \$4,617,532,300. They accepted 50 per cent. of the excess. Now the third loan comes with an interest rate of 4¼ per cent.

There is not much room for doubt that the great sum called for will be readily supplied. The organization which so successfully floated the last loan has been retained and enlarged, and is preparing for a whirlwind campaign which will arouse the patriotic enthusiasm of the country.

In proportion to population the calls upon our Canadian people for war money have been larger than those made in the United States. The development in Canada of the resources and the willingness to provide at home the vast sums needed for our war obligations is one of the most remarkable facts of war-time. Ere long we shall have need of another Victory loan, and there is no doubt that when the call comes it will be readily responded to.

Lawyers in the House

AN analysis of the list of members of the new House of Commons shows that the profession most largely represented is that of the lawyers, who number 75, or one-third of the House. Probably the discovery of this fact will cause some expression of disapproval among the rural voters, who are prone to think lawyers are no better than they ought to be. Perhaps some of the lawyer-members could comfort the farmers with the assurance that once was given by a member of the profession who was a candidate in Nova Scotia, in an agricultural constituency. Although admitted to the bar he was not in active practice. Learning that there was some dislike of members of the profession, he spoke of the matter at a public meeting, expressing a hope that he would not suffer on that account, since he could assure them that he "was not much of a lawyer." It may be possible to have too many lawyers in Parliament, but it is certain that a House without lawyers would be a weak and inefficient body.