

it has long been in contemplation by the Dominion Government, and it will, I venture to prophesy, be put in force ere very many months have passed. Yet it was this very modest and wholly innocuous suggestion which appeared in various newspapers under headings about "militarism," and with denunciations of the latter. It would be about as relevant for a teetotaler to denounce a man for signing the pledge to abstain from drink, on the ground that he was thus engaging himself to imbibe alcohol every night, as for one who objects to "militarism" to denounce a proposal to create that which I have already shown to be the antithesis of militarism—viz, naval force.

Since, however, in our days men are the slaves of words rather than of ideas, and phrases totally destitute of any real meaning, like the oft-quoted words "vortex of militarism," are bandied about until they acquire a sort of influence, it may be worth while to enquire what significance, if any, it truly bears. This expression, then, appears certainly to refer to the system of compulsory service which prevails in Europe, and the fear presumably conveyed is that somebody may want, or does want, to introduce this same system into Canada. Now the first observation I have to make on this point is that I cannot conceive it to be possible that any person other than an idiot in an asylum, who was suffering, in addition to congenital infirmity, from an acute attack of mania, could feel such a wish, or make such a suggestion. Further, I am not aware that any idiot has been actually found sufficiently far gone to give it vent. The danger of Canada's being forced to adopt this system is about as real as the danger of its being suddenly turned into green cheese and given to the man in the moon to eat.

The only "vortex" indeed which really appears imminent is the "vortex" of horrible mental confusion into which those are falling, who, without stopping to analyze its meaning or to demand its relevance, adopt this silly catchword.

It is instructive, however, to consider why the nations of Europe do adopt this scheme of compulsory service. From the manner in which their action is sometimes written about, one would suppose the idea to be entertained that they adopt it because they particularly like it. Yet vast burdens and enormous obligations are not usually incurred voluntarily or with pleasure by human beings. The reason, however, is very plain. It is that the alternative before the peoples of Europe is either to arm, or to lose their national independence. They have no other choice, and can have no other, while nations live the intense self-conscious life which is their characteristic now. Can Germany disarm, placed as she is "between the hammer and the anvil," between the vast and swiftly growing population of Russia, and the immemorial hate of France? Can France disarm, while Germany holds her dismembered provinces, and while ambition and revenge still live and move within her? Can Russia disarm, with her immense designs of nearly universal conquest not yet perfectly fulfilled, with Constantinople and Peking not yet seized, with India still held by Britain (and not, pray God, to be surrendered without a desperate contest), with Germany intruding into her intended preserve of Asia Minor, with millions of savage subjects, not yet slaughtered, under her sway? Not one of these countries could cease that compulsory service, which is its shield, without the certainty of swift attack and certain overthrow, at the hands of its neighbours. Nor, apart from the progress of invention, which may possibly substitute small highly trained armies, on the eighteenth century model, for the huge armed forces of to-day, does there appear any hope of a change of conditions.

Why, then, is England absolved from the heavy necessity laid upon the shoulders of her European rivals? Obviously and simply by reason of the sea which encircles her, and of the victorious navy which that sea bears on its breast. Take away that sea, or destroy