

querors. Russia, Austria and Germany, sometimes in union, sometimes independently, have in the years of history crushed Poland until the name of the ancient Kingdom disappeared from the map. Through the several partitions of the country its territory was absorbed by its powerful neighbors. Every effort of the patriot Poles to obtain their independence was frustrated by one or other of the more powerful states. What remained under the name of Poland became part of Russia nearly half a century ago. In the early days of the present war the Russian Czar—moved, let us hope, by more regard for liberty than his predecessors had exhibited—made proclamation that it was a part of his programme to give Poland, if not complete freedom, at least autonomy. Since that time the German-Austrian forces have overrun Poland and the country is now under their control. It is in this situation that the Emperors William and Frances Joseph come to the Poles with an assurance of freedom and independence — of course to take effect at the close of the war, and, though this is not mentioned, under the rule of some German prince. From being the most oppressed people in Europe the Poles now find their favor much sought by those who in the past have crushed them. Each of the contending parties seems to say to Poland, "Codin's your friend, not Short." "Help us and you shall have autonomy," say the Russians. "Support us and you shall have freedom, independence, the restoration of your ancient Kingdom," say the Germans. The unhappy Poles may well look with suspicion on the promises with which their old enemies come to them under present conditions. That the Russia of to-day is not the Russia of the olden time we of the British Empire are bound to believe, for otherwise there could be no such alliance as now exists. But the Poles who suffered so much from Russian tyranny in former days may be slow to have the same faith. Many of them may find the German-Austrian proclamation of Polish independence a great temptation. But they will have to look to recent as well as ancient history before they put their faith in Berlin and Vienna. They will do well to remember that the freedom and independence of Belgium were guaranteed by Germany as well as by other powers, and that the moment the interest and convenience of Germany could be promoted by such a course the guarantee to Belgium was cast aside as a worthless scrap of paper. In the broad light of the events of August, 1914, who is there in any part of the world who can put faith in any treaty, guarantee, proclamation or promise of Kaiser William?

### A Press Victory

THE Toronto weekly journal, Saturday Night, has just won a victory in a libel suit brought by a promoter whose efforts to sell stock were sharply criticized by the paper. The plaintiff claimed \$50,000 damages. The jury, before finally retiring to consider their verdict, put this question to the judge: "If the defendants acted in good faith and without malice, even though hurtful to the claimants, would they be guilty of libel?" His Lordship's reply, as reported, was that "if good faith existed and malice was absent, it was always so much in favor of the defence." The jury returned a verdict for the defendants.

The freedom of the press is often, but not too often, spoken of as one of the most necessary guarantees for the protection of the public. It is better perhaps, that occasionally the press shall err than that by fear of prosecution it shall be restrained from criticism which seems

to be called for, and which, as the judge in this case remarks, is not prompted by malice. The criticism of the flotation of public companies is clearly within the line of legitimate journalism. It not unfrequently happens that in their zeal to sell stock promoters make representations that are not fully warranted by the facts. A public journal which in such a case exposes the misrepresentation does a public service. The press generally and the public too should congratulate Saturday Night on its vindication of the freedom of the press.

Journalists, however, while they rejoice at every victory of this kind, should be reminded not only of their high privilege but also of their high responsibility. Privilege and responsibility must always go hand in hand. The undoubted power of the press should be used with moderation, with a sincere desire to be fair and just to those whose actions, whether in the field of business or that of public affairs, are made the subject of criticism. Too often this sense of responsibility is lost sight of and writers, overzealous in their cause, indulge in attacks that are not warranted. Let journalists, while standing for the freedom of the press, stand also for moderation and fairness, to the end that the power of the press may be used for the promotion of the public good and not for a less worthy purpose.

### The Presidential Term

THE close of another Presidential campaign in the United States makes the moment favorable for the consideration of some features of the Presidential office that seem weak and unsatisfactory. The system of indirect voting — the people voting, not for the respective candidates, but for "Presidential electors" who are to make the formal election at a later stage—is admittedly clumsy and inefficient, but actual harm so seldom arises from it that perhaps it may be too much to expect reformation concerning it. The shortness of the Presidential term and the absence of any provision for a retiring President are defects which must be generally recognized. Our American neighbors push the idea of government of the people by the people for the people so far that it keeps the country in perpetual political hot water. In some of the States the election for Governor is an annual affair. It is sometimes said, by way of condemnation of a President, that he is playing his cards to obtain a second term. Why should he not do so? The Presidential office is a great one, of which any citizen of the Republic may well feel proud, and a desire to hold the office for more than the short term of four years is not a quality to be condemned. In the management of the great affairs of the nation, there is but little that can be accomplished in such a short term. There will be many cases in which the experience of a President during his term will suggest reforms which cannot be worked out in such a short period. If the President, instead of being obliged to spend a large part of his time in planning for re-election, had a longer term and was prohibited from being a candidate for a second term, would he not be able to render a better service to the nation? A United States Senator is elected for six years, the President for only four years. It would seem to be the part of wisdom to give the President a single term of say seven or eight years, prohibit his re-election, and provide a very handsome retiring pension, so that the man who had been chosen as the head of the nation might after the close of his term be able to live during the remainder of his life in a manner compatible with the dignity of the great office he had occupied. The case

for such an arrangement as this could be made very strong and if properly presented by leading statesmen would be pretty sure to receive public approval.

### The Little War Chest

THE arrangements that are being made by the Finance Department to receive the savings of small investors, for the war service, should have the very cordial support of the public. It is not merely because the issue of short term certificates as low as \$25 will bring in a considerable amount of money that the arrangement is to be commended. Perhaps all that will be received in this way could easily be obtained from the banks or from large investors. But much good will be done if some thousands of persons of small means in all parts of the country can in this way be induced to exercise thrift, and to apply the fruit of such thrift directly to the war service. Under a condition of affairs that everybody must know is temporary and caused by the war, the mass of the Canadian people who are engaged in the various industries are enjoying much more than ordinary prosperity. There is abundance of work for men and women and wages are at their highest record. Unfortunately this favorable state of affairs does not exist for all. There are many people of the salaried class and others of small income who do not share in this increase of receipts, and who therefore feel keenly the large advance in the cost of living. Apart from these, however, the Canadian people are earning much more than usual and, making allowance as one must for the increased cost of nearly everything they have to buy, they ought to be laying up money for the proverbial rainy day. That they are generally doing so is by no means clear. The temptations to spend are many. In too many instances the money that comes so easily goes out quickly in ways that are not consistent with intelligent thrift. If some of those who are thus spending their money for that which is naught can have their attention arrested by this savings movement, the result will be beneficial to them and to the country. All who are brought into touch with these prospering working people should endeavor to interest them in the movement and induce them to join in it. The investment is a sound one. The rate of interest offered (5 per cent) is a good one. The facilities for investment are convenient. Beyond this is the pride which the workingman should have in a knowledge that by saving and investing in this miniature war loan he is "doing his bit" for the Empire's cause. The investment of even a modest sum in this way cannot fail to make for the cultivation of patriotism and of all the other qualities of good citizenship. Let the movement for turning the small savings into the war chest be general and successful.

The admirers of Mr. Roosevelt have lost no time in placing him in the field for the Republican nomination of 1921 for the Presidency. They say a mistake was made in the nomination of Mr. Hughes, and that if Mr. Roosevelt had been the candidate he would have won easily. Of all the sad words of tongue or pen the saddest are these, it might have been; and Republicans will find little comfort in the thought that they might have won the Presidency if they had taken a different course. Besides, the contention of the Roosevelt people overlooks the important fact that hundreds of thousands of Republicans held Mr. Roosevelt responsible for the defeat of 1912 and would certainly not have voted for him if he had been nominated this year.