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Special Articles

Standard Cloth for Britain
By E. S. Bates.

Are Indemnities Futile?
By W. W. Swanson, Ph.D.

The Victory Year.

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Railway Rates

INCREASE of railway charges is no more popular than increase of taxes or of the prices of commodities. Therefore there will be many to view with disfavor the decision of the Board of Railway Commissioners, handed down last week, allowing the railways of Canada a considerable increase of passenger and freight rates. Already some of the Western business organizations are proposing to appeal from the decision of the Board to the Government at Ottawa. At a time when the price of almost everything is going up, how can we with reason expect the price of railway accommodation to remain unchanged? The cost of every item of supplies for the railway service has increased largely. Labor, burdened by the increased cost of living, has demanded and received increased remuneration in recent years. The consequence has been that, though the volume of railway business has been large and the gross revenues correspondingly good, the cost of maintenance has outrun the receipts and the earnings of the railways is unprofitable. One effect of this condition has been to weaken the power of the railway companies to provide capital for improvements and equipment, and tends toward the deterioration of the roads. Some relief to the railways seems to be needed. Probably public opinion, while not happy over the increased rates, will have to accept them as one of the many things which war conditions render unavoidable.

The Prevention of Political Hysteria

IT WOULD have been a good thing, as we now see, if the Dominion Government, under the "Defence of the Realm Act"—which apparently is construed to admit of the enactment of almost any kind of measure—had directed that nobody should be permitted to comment on the results of the general election during a period of one month after the close of the polls. Perhaps even more than a month would have been required to enable some writers and speakers to attain that state of calm serenity that is of importance in the discussion of public questions.

Some of the good people who have been expressing themselves very freely will later regret that there was not an Act to protect them against their own indiscretion. Among these may be placed the esteemed citizens of Westmount who, on the evening of election day, seeking consolation for defeat suffered within their own electoral division, found it in the suggestion that a very prominent resident of that place, who had been elected to Parliament by the people of another district, should be drummed out of Westmount!

Such an Act as we have in mind would have

been beneficial also to some of our French Canadian contemporaries who are seeing in the general result throughout the Dominion a wicked purpose of inflicting a great injury upon the people of the Province of Quebec.

No less valuable would the suggested Act have been to those Ontario writers who are still damning the voters of Quebec and demanding that severe punishment in some form shall be administered to them.

And would not such an Act have been useful to the writers who, after pounding Sir Wilfrid Laurier for months, and warning the people of his dangerous character, are now proposing that he shall become a member of the Borden Government?

It is too late, of course, to have the Dominion get the benefit of such an Act as we have suggested as respects the situation of today. But if, out of the extraordinarily mixed political situation that now exists, another election becomes necessary while the war is on, such a measure might still be found useful and necessary.

Australia and Canada

FOR the second time a referendum in the Commonwealth of Australia has resulted in the defeat, by a considerable majority, of the Military Conscription Act. While the first returns indicated a majority of the home vote to be against the Act, there was some expectation that the soldiers' votes would change that result. It appears, however, from latest despatches that the soldiers also have voted largely against conscription and that the complete returns show the defeat of the Act. There will be wide regret in Canada for this result. The recent election here clearly shows that the majority of Canadian people, while they may not like the conscription system, regard it as necessary for the raising of the forces required to do our part in the war. Hence the conscription movement in Australia, so ably led by Mr. Hughes, will have a large degree of sympathy in Canada. In one respect, however, Canadians may learn a useful lesson from what has happened in Australia.

In the Commonwealth the question of conscription seems to have been regarded very generally as one of great importance, yet one on which good citizens might legitimately have a difference of opinion. A writer in the London Times, reviewing the Australian campaign, speaks of the contest as a mere clash of opinion, the result of which has no effect on the sentiment of the country, which is to see the war through to a victorious end.

Strange to say there has not been much evidence of the existence in Canada of the tolerant spirit that prevailed in Australia. If there should be a difference of national spirit between the two countries should we not have more liberality, more toleration, here? Aus-