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APR 10 1918
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The Journal of Commerce

VOL. XLV. No. 15

MONTREAL, TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 1918

Price, 10 CENTS

The Journal of Commerce

Devoted to
CANADIAN INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND
FINANCE.

Published every Tuesday Morning by
The Journal of Commerce Publishing Company,
Limited.

Head Office: 35-45 St. Alexander Street, Montreal.
Telephone: Main 2662.
Toronto Office: 263 Adelaide St. West, Toronto.
Telephone: Adelaide 917.

HON. W. S. FIELDING,
President and Editor-in-Chief.
Subscription price, \$3.00 a year.
Advertising rates on application.

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Special Articles

Get Behind the Government.
By J. W. MACMILLAN.

Economic Factors Affecting Western Farmers
By W. W. SWANSON.

How the Mergers Affect the Bank Taxes.
By H. M. ECKARDT.

Editorials:	Page.
Home Rule and Conscription	1
The Ottawa Debate	1
The Referendum	2
The French Generalissimo	2
War Loans	2
Lawyers in the House	2
How the Mergers Affect the Bank Taxes ..	4
Economic Factors Affecting Western Farmers ..	5
The Montreal Stock Exchange In March .. .	6
Get Behind the Government	7
Mentioned in Despatches	8
Public Opinion	9
Among the Companies	10-11
Bank Clearings	12
A Little Nonsense Now & Then	16
News of the Week	17
The Economic Present and Future	18
Shipping Losses in March	21
Commodity Markets	22-23

Home Rule and Conscription

THE exciting war news of recent days has overshadowed Irish affairs, but the Irish question must quickly come to the front again. Notwithstanding the doubt and discouragement arising from the failure of the Irish Convention up to the present to reach a conclusion, the outlook for a favorable solution is hopeful. The first message of Mr. John Dillon, in his capacity of successor to the late Mr. John Redmond as leader of the Irish Nationalist party, was couched in terms that seemed to bear more of the old-time bitterness towards England than of the conciliatory spirit so strongly manifested by Mr. Redmond. More recent utterances of Mr. Dillon, however, give assurance that he is desirous of following the example of his predecessor in supporting only constitutional movements for the promotion of the Home Rule cause. He has courageously told the Irish people that the "Irish Republic," for which the Sinn Fein party say they stand, is an utter impossibility, and that those who are supporting the movement having that end in view are leading their friends into fields where only disaster can meet them. In several recent elections the Sinn Fein people proved strong enough to elect members of Parliament, who, of course, do not take their seats. It is a good omen that, in the latest contests with the Sinn Fein section, Mr. Dillon and his friends have won substantial victories. Captain Redmond, son of the late John Redmond, became a candidate for his father's seat as member for Waterford. The Sinn Fein party nominated one of their number, and after a strenuous contest, in which the issues between a constitutional Home Rule agitation and the mad movement of the disloyal section was clearly drawn, Captain Redmond won by a handsome majority. Young Redmond had represented East Tyrone, and retired from that seat to make the fight for his father's seat in Waterford. Now the election for East Tyrone has taken place, and the Nationalist candidate, Mr. Harrison, has won by a vote of 1,800 to 1,219 for his Sinn Fein opponent, Mr. Milroy. These events should be helpful to the Home Rule movement generally, and particularly should encourage the leaders of the Irish Convention just closing its labors, to renewed effort to find a ground of agreement between the several divisions of the Irish people.

That without a large measure of Home Rule there can be no settlement of the Irish question acceptable to the majority of the Irish people seems so clear that we may hope the dissenting minority in Ulster will recognize the fact and join their forces with those who, while advocating Home Rule in local affairs, stand for unity of the Empire. A settlement along these lines should bring to Ireland a

peace satisfactory to all but the Sinn Fein party, the numbers of which would, under such conditions, rapidly diminish into unimportance. On the other hand, if reasonable Home Rule efforts of the Nationalists are still resisted, the Sinn Fein section will gain strength and power, which will make for continued and increased disorder.

A union of the loyalists of the North with the loyal Nationalists of the South against the disloyal Sinn Fein men is the most desirable thing to-day in Irish politics. An embarrassing feature of the situation is the revival of the demand in many British journals for the application of the conscription law to Ireland, which has hitherto been exempt from its operation. To those who take only a superficial view of affairs there seems to be but one side to this question. The rest of the United Kingdom is subjected to conscription, why not Ireland? To many readers there seems to be no satisfactory answer to this question. Nevertheless there is another side that must be considered. In a country ruled by an autocracy, and supported as it usually is by a large standing army to enforce the ruler's will, public opinion counts for little; the wish of the ruler must prevail. It is not so in a democratic country—and the United Kingdom is to-day governed by democratic principles. Under these, laws can only be enforced where they command the approval of the community affected, or where there is at least a disposition to submit to them as the will of the majority. Unfortunately that is not the situation in Ireland. The feeling against conscription in that country seems to be as strong as ever. Leading Irishmen are found declaring that conscription, if applied will be resisted. If that attitude continues, it may be that the effort to enforce the conscription law will bring no strength to the cause of the Empire, but will be a weakness, inasmuch as it will call for an army of enforcement almost as large as the army that will be raised by compulsion. Strong though the argument for conscription is, the question may present itself in such a form that the Imperial Government will not feel warranted in taking the action demanded by so many advocates of compulsory service. The question is one full of difficulties, calling for the exercise of much wisdom by the Imperial authorities.

The Ottawa Debate

THE riot at Quebec was followed by a riot of words in the House of Commons. There was a pretty general feeling in the House that no good end could be served by the bringing on of a debate which was likely to evoke angry passions. However, there