

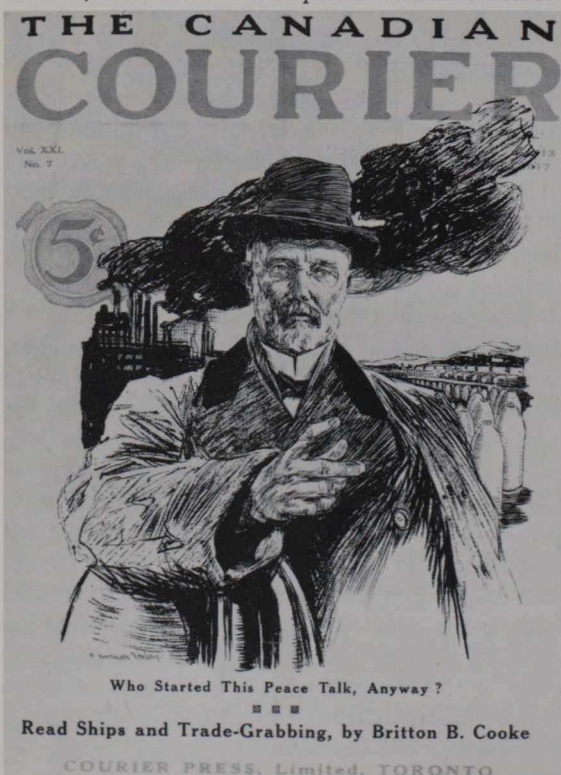


Borden, with hat and cane, reviews the troops in France.

By the third year of the war Canada had become, in Hugh MacLennan's phrase, two solitudes. Borden's Unionist coalition survived the war, but barely, and his own Conservative party would in the future have extreme difficulties in Quebec.

Michael Bliss's *A Canadian Millionaire: The Life and Business Times of Sir Joseph Flavelle, Bart., 1858–1939* (Macmillan of Canada, 1978) is a first-rate picture of a well-intentioned man.

Joseph Wesley Flavelle symbolized the pure spirit of capitalism—he was Canada's prime meat-Flavelle, chairman of the Imperial Munitions Board.



packer, president of National Trust, chairman of the Bank of Commerce and the principal owner of Simpson's Department Store. With only a grade-nine education, he became one of the most articulate spokesmen for private enterprise and social conservatism. He was, as the man in charge of munitions production, the first Canadian industrial hero of World War I. But in a few weeks in the summer of 1917 he became the symbol of the greedy profiteer.

Sir Joseph was the son of Protestant Irish immigrants—a weak, drinking father and a strong, teetotaling mother. He grew up surrounded by the self-righteous who were sure that God had blessed the profit maker. His world consisted of home, church and counting house, and the folks he met in the first and second were the ones he preferred to deal with in the last. In 1915 he was appointed head of the Imperial Munitions Board, and he refashioned the munitions industry into a smooth, efficient machine. He enjoyed the total confidence of Sir Robert Borden and the enmity of General Sam Hughes, who wished the munitions business to remain in the hands of his own cronies. Sir Joseph could not resist preaching, and one day he called on munitions makers to put aside their urge to make safe profits, to be willing in time of war to take risks. The message captured the nation's fancy. Word spread that he had told the munitions makers that wartime profits should go to hell. (This was an exaggeration. Sir Joseph still believed that profits were part of God's plan.) A short time later the public learned about the wartime profits of Sir Joseph's own meat-packing enterprises.

The first misinformation indicated that Sir Joseph was making five cents from every pound of bacon sold to his fellow Canadians and their beleaguered British allies. Actually he was mak-