

CANADA'S OPPORTUNITY.

By CAPTAIN W. GILMOUR
(Khaki University of Canada—France).

I bring to the columns of THE BEAVER a message, and the message I bring is not a catch phrase such as we were wont to fashion in election days. It is just a statement of plain fact—and a plain question. It is this: Canada's sons have been worthy of their home country, have added lustre to the British race, and have struck a mighty blow on the jaw of autocracy in the cause of allied democracy. Will Canada now strike a mighty blow for her sons?

We know what the answer of the home people will be. It will be: "Tell us plainly what our sons want us to do, and we will start it good and hard right now."

The problem for which solution has to be found in the interests of Canada's fighting-men, is the problem of after-war provision for their return into civil life, and the foundation of the solution of that problem must be laid now. But someone may say: "Why peace has not yet been signed and our Canadian Army is still intact." True, but the success and prosperity of our Dominion depend on the absolute completeness of our preparedness when the days of Peace—the allied peace of honour—cast their light on democratic lands—a light that will show the German nation plainly and mercilessly that their tinsel Hohenzollern Empire is but an ashpit of their own making.

The Germans, before the War started, laid concrete bases for their guns in the lands they were plotting to murder. We want to lay concrete bases in our own country to extend the edifice of our national life so that when "our boys come home" they will find the open door of their civil life waiting for them.

Unity is Victory.

The Allies swirled hither and thither in the crucible of war for four years, before they realised in practical form the gospel of unity, and the placing of our armies under the control of one man led to the swift and decisive overthrow of the enemy. This unity then is an accomplished fact, and now we want the same expressions of unity from home—unity in this sense, that every one in the homeland will join together in the task of seeing that the Canadian soldier shall have his chance in Canada, by giving him the opportunity of re-equipping himself in knowledge. Unity of impulse, and unity of support in this great work means a civil victory; it means that Canada will have cause to say that her sons were re-absorbed with the least possible confusion into the life of the nation, equipped with knowledge, and given the opportunity of putting it into practical expression. This will be the secret of the renewed and increased prosperity of our country.

Canada the Pioneer.

Canada leads in the matter of the re-education of the soldier. It was Canada who first thought of utilizing the rest time and the spare time of the soldiers by giving them properly organised opportunities for continuing their studies, or with acquainting themselves with vocations such as they might have done in pre-war days. It is a fact of which the Dominion has the right to be legitimately proud, and that is why we now ask Canada to lend a hand in the great problem which

men of her own land had the insight to envisage.

The pioneer work in this great enterprise is not a question of individuals or of personages, it is a national impulse and a national work, and the men who are already engaged in carrying out this programme are but the missionaries of the Canadian Soldiers' future on behalf of Canada. Is it not an enheartening fact that Canada was quick to foresee the coming needs of her sons; is it not vivid evidence that Canada possesses the capacity for initiative that knows not tradition, and the will for progress that knows no conventional fetters? Is not that a fair promise that Canada will solve the problem of the soldiers re-entry into home life when the time comes?

Youth in the Van.

Knowledge is power, but how much more significant that truism becomes when we think of it in connection with our young men who have grown to the stature of men in the stern test of war. War has so quickened and speeded up life that boys have passed into manhood a decade sooner than they did in pre-war days. It means too that in future, in the public life of our country and in all activities of livelihood, we shall see the young man taking a keener and more intimate interest at an age earlier than before. Therefore, it is a paramount duty that we should see that he is given the knowledge that can alone give him the power of coming to a ripe and wise judgment of matters appertaining to the national welfare, by giving him technical and vocational equipment.

For warfare you must spare nothing in providing the soldier with the equipment to win victory; for after-war days you must spare nothing in providing the ex-soldier with the "munitions" to win his part in communal success.

Re-education is not an experiment: it is the very commonsense of a necessity that is being satisfied in the national interest.

Canada has a great opportunity—first, in the field with the idea of refitting her soldiers for the days of the future, she now but needs to see that the idea is crowned, by expanding it to its fullest extent, for herein lies the solution of a vital problem, and herein too, lies the concrete base of Canada's destiny.

We are proud that into the League of Victory Canada came early: we are proud that our men have done such mighty deeds in humanity's name: they have carved their names on Canadian history, and have left a legacy of priceless character to the world.

Think for a moment of the assaults of a vastly numerical foe our Canadian fathers, brothers, sons and husbands have withstood in these years of war. Poison gas! Liquid flame! Tear shell! That is the measure of the Kaiser's hatred, born of his failure to quench the indomitable spirit of our sturdy race. Canada has every reason to be proud of her sons.

When the history of this mammoth war and its aftermath is written, the part that Canada played in stern dark days for the Empire and the free peoples, will find a very honourable place. But in remembering the glory of Canada's part, we must remember its

poignancy, for there are those sleeping who will never again see God's sunshine light up the broad and sparkling waters of the St. Lawrence, on whose bosom they started on their crusade from Canada to place their bodies in the breached wall of menaced civilisation. The countless little wooden crosses in France and Flanders mark the resting places of those gallant lads who nobly fought and died. They lie there awaiting the final great Reveille.

The sacrifice of the dead, the selflessness of the living who dared again and again the gates of the Kaiser's Hell, are our inspiration and our promise of sure and lasting victory.

Forward to the New Dawn.

If we already see the star of a generous destiny gleaming behind the Rocky Mountains of this War's problems and its hazards, we know there is still a long march ahead of us, but there are no longer mists obscuring the journey's end. And men of a pioneer people who have hewn the homeland from its rough mould to a mighty Dominion know, that resolution for perseverance, rather than infinite capacity for unthinking optimism, is the ardent and enduring spirit that takes them over the mountains into the fertile lands of the final triumph.

We are standing on the threshold of a world renaissance, and in that re-birth, Canada's sons have played, and will play a glowing part. Now that the time has come for them to obey the call "all's clear in the west," and take the homeward trail, it is our duty to see that the homeland for which they have fought, has ready for them a welcome, not of lip, but of real service. It is our duty to those whose souls are shining in eternity, whose fathers and mothers gave them to their country, to see that Canada stands not merely where she did, but that she strides forward to further greatness, along the road that bears the promise of the new dawn, for which they, high on the tide of patriotism, laid down their lives.

Y.M.C.A. AND G.W.V.A.

The following is an extract from a speech made in Sydney, N.S., by Col. Purney, Dominion President of the G.W.V.A.:—"There is no bone of contention between the G.W.V.A. and the Y.M.C.A. The G.W.V.A. hold the highest respect for the Y.M.C.A. Speaking as President of the Dominion Organization and on behalf of our members, I wish to say that we wish the Y.M.C.A. God-speed in their splendid work Overseas and that they are now doing at home. Any soldier who returns from the War and speaks words of censure regarding the Y.M.C.A. is a fool."

FARM FIRE PREVENTION.

The protection from fire of farm properties is a problem which has seldom been attempted in any practical way, aside from the exceptional use of fireproofing materials. In a small town in Ohio, Hollandsbury, the villages and the farmer within a radius of five miles have combined forces. They have purchased a motor truck, equipped with chemical extinguishers, ladders, etc., and arrangements have been made for answering fire calls anywhere in the district. If this experiment proves successful, a wide-spread adoption of the plan should follow.—"Industrial Canada in Conservation."

"The air is tremulous with the soundless feet of the new day."—HELEN KELLER.