

In Union There is
Strength!

The Union Advocate

United We Stand;
Divided We Fall!

NEWCASTLE N.B. DECEMBER 6

OVER THE TOP THEY GO! BACK UP THEIR BAYONETS AND BULLETS WITH YOUR BALLOTS!



An Election Under Fire!

Many of the ballots which will be cast in this election will be marked within the sound of the German guns. There is precious little doubt about the way in which these particular ballots will be marked.

They will be marked for—

Union in Canada;

A Party Truce until after the War;

A Steady Stream of Reinforcements for the ever-thinning ranks that hold the vital lines in Western Europe.

It is almost impossible to conceive of a soldier, standing in the freezing Flanders mud with death whistling in the air and a pack of baying hell-hounds in front of him hungry to break through upon the peaceful homes they have not already torn and ravaged, showing any patience with the petty party issues that used to amuse him in Canada. They count far less with him today than the composition of his next ration or his chance for a few hours' healing respite. There is but one issue in all the world before his mind; and that is how best to beat the Bosches.

He is risking his life in the shambles—he stands daily over the rough grave that covers or the reddening stretcher that bears his comrade—he is fighting scientific wild beasts in this modern Ephesus. When he chances to think of party names or party cries—the things that interested him in the old safe, happy days back home—it is only to recall them along with the lacrosse championships or football contests at which he was wont to cheer. That any one should turn aside from this tragic and terrible business of damming back the Teuton tide of horror, murder, brutality and barbarism to waste a ballot or a moment on these trivialities would seem to him utterly incomprehensible.

There will be no party ballots marked in the Ypres salient. They dare not do it in the presence of their dead. The physicians who slip out of the moaning hospital wards behind the lines to vote in these elections, will not be thinking of Grit or Tory but of how most swiftly and surely to end this horrible slaughter and stop this unceasing carnival of pain. There is not a case-hardened partizan in the Dominion of Canada today who could step from beside the hospital cot on which one Canadian lad lay moaning—in spite of his determination—from the tearing pain that the Germans had given and all the palliatives of medicine could not take away, and still cast his ballot for his beloved party and not solely for the speediest ending of the war.

The only reason why there is a party election in Canada is because the voters in this protected country are not compelled to vote within sound of the guns. Some of us lack the imagination to realize what our boys are going through—that is the whole explanation. Who are the heartiest and most convinced Liberal Unionists, leaving their old party with regret but without hesitation? Are they not men like Rowell and Ralph Connor and Stewart Lyon who have visited the scarred battle-fields of France and Belgium, talked with the men living in that inferno of danger, agony and death, realized the menace to all civilization that crouches behind the Hindenburg line, and had burned into their consciences the conviction that any man who is anything at this crisis but a Canadian, pure and simple, without thought of self or party or predilection of any sort, is a TRAITOR, a BETRAYER OF THE MEN AT THE FRONT, a practical ALLY OF PRUSSIANISM.

We want it to be perfectly understood that this scoring of the partizan is not directed at the men of one party only. It is meant for any citizen of Canada who puts the fortunes of any party before the fate of his country. If it seems to fall upon one party alone, it is only because organized opposition to the Union Government seems to come from one party a one.

The formation of the Union Government was an effort to bring together the entire Canadian nation behind the lines on the Western front. There is no section of the Canadian people—except the Germans who were disfranchised by the War-time Franchise Act—which was not asked and even urged to join that Government. If any section is now outside of it, it is by its own deliberate and determined choice. No one was excluded.

The overwhelming majority of the Canadian people—if their habitual leaders may be assumed to speak for them—have rallied to the Union Government. Liberals and Conservatives alike, the present Ministers have put in their pockets all the old issues which formerly divided them and are now ready to concentrate on the one task of finishing the war with a smashing victory, at the earliest possible moment—if the country will but give them the necessary mandate to do so. It is a mandate which should be made unanimous. If there are any domestic questions which must still be fought out—and there undoubtedly are—we can attend to that after the war. First, let us get our boys home—let us stop the butchery in the only way it can be stopped, by disarming the butchers!

It is unthinkable that the Canadian people should vote against this policy of "carry on." But as the opponents of the Union Government invite them to vote against it (this is a short statement of their policy whose correctness we shall defend in a moment), we are bound to consider the consequences of accepting this invitation. Perhaps we had better consider first the correctness of this summary of the Opposition Policy.

The former Borden Government, drawn from one party, has been carrying on the war for over three years. Its record will some day be discussed, and praise or punishment led. But no nation in a war can afford to look away from the single job of beating the hold enquiries into the conduct of political parties. When these parties fail or

feel inadequate to carrying on the job, they should be and usually are summarily dismissed or replaced. That is what has been done twice in London, many times in Paris and at least twice in Italy. It has now been done once in Canada. That Sir Robert Borden himself voluntarily and even eagerly sought the substitution of a new and broader-based Government for his old Ministry, does not alter the fact that we have had our change of Government which is a tacit admission that the old Government had proven too limited in capacity for the tremendous task. Having made this bald statement, details can be left until the war is won.

One advantage, however, Sir Robert and at least some of his late Ministers had. They had been in close contact with the actual carrying on of the war; they had been out official representatives and so had been constantly trusted with inside information by the British Government which could be shared with very, very few; they knew exactly how well we were doing under the voluntary system, and how far short we were falling; they knew the immediate future needs and our prospects of meeting them. And it was their considered and certainly unwilling opinion that we could only keep up our essential stream of reinforcements to our army in Europe by adopting the selective draft. There was not a man of them who liked the idea. Some of them hated it as the British nation has always hated the odious word—"Conscript." But, with their special and necessarily secret information, they saw no other way out. So the first step they took was to accept the responsibility of their exclusive knowledge, and to declare that the country must at last accept the policy of military compulsion.

The first man asked to join them on that platform was Sir Wilfrid Laurier. He was asked to come and bring a number of his Liberal colleagues with him—in fact, he was offered a fifty-fifty division of the Cabinet, with the exception that Sir Robert Borden would naturally retain the Premiership. We now know that a clear majority of the Liberal leaders wanted to accept that offer and loyally share the responsibility. The best of them did finally accept it and are now in the Government. But Sir Wilfrid and his friends took another view. They flatly contradicted the official statement that compulsion had become necessary. They still flatly contradict it, though they are ready to submit the decision to a vote of the people. They will accept compulsion if the people say so. That is, they are not opposed to it on any ground of principle. They merely argue that it is not expedient; and they set their opinion on this point—necessarily an outside opinion—against the informed official opinion, based on full and confidential knowledge, of the Canadian Ministers who know the secrets of our War Office and enjoy the confidence of the British War cabinet. So on this point when the Canadian elector goes to the polls, he must decide between accepting the guess of an outsider and the positive knowledge of an insider.

That is the one point, we want to make in this article. Elsewhere in this issue arguments will be found on the ethics, the efficiency, the essential democracy and other vital factors in this great question of compulsory military service. It is now the settled policy of every great nation, including the American Republic. But the question before Canadians is its application to Canada; and, however convincingly we may argue for it as an effective and democratic system, we all know that our people would not accept it today if they did not deem it grimly necessary. The Union Government declares it necessary. The Laurier Opposition denies this. It talks of an appeal to the people in a referendum; but everybody knows that that appeal will come in the pending elections. If Laurier wins, there will be no need for a referendum. The people will have voted against compulsion. So the situation is crystal clear—if the Union Government is beaten, compulsion will not be applied, voluntarism will again be invoked, and, in the opinion of every man in a position to know, the stream of Canadian recruits will no longer equal the Canadian casualties, and the Canadian divisions at the front will gradually be wiped out by the triumphant Germans. Canada will sink from the field. Canada will tacitly sign a separate peace.

That is why we say that the Laurier Opposition are inviting Canadians not to "Carry On." Some of their speakers are suggesting that we might recruit the cooks' camp and feed the real fighters. Others are urging that Canada has done enough, though we have done less relatively than any important nation in the war with the exception of the United States which is just beginning—and beginning with conscription. Others, again say that we should never have fought until the Germans landed in Canada. We refer these valiant gentlemen, and especially their women folk, to the Bryce report and other blood-curdling and authentic statements of atrocities contained in this issue.

But we shall not labor the point. On the Laurier banner is written the motto—"This Way Out." If we want to quit, we should vote for the Laurier candidates. That is the one sure way to do it. The consequences to Canada if we do this, and so produce that little breach in the Allied line which has proven so fatal in Galicia and in the Carnic Alps, will be nothing short of colossal disaster. If the Allies lose, there is not a safe investment in the Dominion. Our industries, in common with other Allied industries, will be kicked out of the markets of the world by the German jack boot. It is our solemn belief that in course of time, Canada will become an overseas German possession—possibly the German United States of the future. No paint can picture the prospect too darkly if we open a gap in the defences of freedom and let through the flood. We shall dishonor our dead and shame our children yet unborn. We shall brand Canada as the coward nation of the world—the Judas Iscariot which sold the cause of Christian civilization with the traitor's kiss of betrayal.