



THE NEW MILITIA POLICY

THAT the Minister of Militia has adopted a policy which is similar to that advocated in the columns of the *Canadian Courier*, with regard to annual camps, does not prove that he is right. Indeed, judging from the number of indignant letters received at the editor's desk from the officers of the rural militia, there is a grave danger that both the Militia Department and the military staff writer of this journal are entirely wrong. However, there is this to be said for the Minister, he has not been quite so abrupt in his utterances as the journalist in question. He has been careful to state that there are great benefits to be derived from occasional large camps where the conditions more nearly approach those of real service. In the same way, hunting and canoe trips are valuable to members of militia because through them they are taught scouting, portaging, cooking and camping. There is no doubt also that the annual camp teaches patience. Any one who has gone to one of these functions and stood through an hour's drum-head service on Sunday or waited two hours in the broiling sun for the reviewing officer's salute will understand.

Sir Frederick proposes that the local regiment shall drill in its own locality and give the people of the district in which it is recruited a chance to see how it looks on parade. Whether that means local camps for each battalion or drill at company headquarters is to be determined, no doubt, by circumstances. In the West, the small regimental or battalion camp is the rule, and it seems to bring fair results. The regimental camp will afford training for the army service corps, the medical and ordnance officers, the signalling and other subsidiary corps in a way in which drill at company headquarters will not. If it is held close to the best rifle range in the country, there is added another important advantage.

Whether the Department is right or not in making this change, the experiment will be most interesting. It is to be hoped that the officers of rural battalions will give the new idea a fair, square trial. Little harm can come of trying it for a couple of years, and much good may result. If it is clearly shown that the annual camp is much the better, no doubt the Department will be as willing to admit it as the military staff writer of the *Canadian Courier*.

Sir Frederick Borden, in his address, had nothing to say as to the possibility of adopting the Swiss system of drill-sergeants in so far as this would be possible under our system. There can be no doubt, nevertheless, that this will be tried to some extent. The local militia officers cannot achieve the best results in drill without the temporary presence of an expert. There is a large number of fairly good non-coms. in the permanent militia and the distribution of these on itinerary through the rural districts would be of undoubted service and advantage.



CHILDREN AND THE THEATRE

THE stage seems to be very much in the lime-light during the last two months—if one may use such an expression without being accused of carrying coals to Newcastle. New York has been talking about a censor and Toronto aldermen, who hate to see any city on the continent outdo their own in a show of virtue, have also discussed gravely the matter of censorship. There does not seem to be any useful conclusion out of all the debate, although the press, all over the continent, is of the opinion that the plays of the year 1909 are of lower order than those of twenty years ago. Musical comedy is blamed, vaudeville is blamed, everything except the poor taste of the public is held to account for the doubtful productions which visit Canadian cities from time to time.

However, in the midst of all the talk concerning censors and public officials, it seems clear that the attendance of children, unaccom-

panied by parents or guardians, is highly undesirable and should be prohibited. The lurid melodrama is no sight for youngsters and the small person, whose parents are so ill-judged as to take him to the performance, is to be regarded as a juvenile victim. Of course, some good people will remind one of "Peter Pan." But that play is as rare among the modern monstrosities as a rose in a swamp. For Peter and all his tribe, we are profoundly grateful, but must admit that his like is hardly to be discovered at the afternoon performances at the cheap theatres. Voice, manner and matter at these "shows" are such as cannot prove profitable to the juvenile attendant. The question of what amusement adults shall choose, or shall be provided with, appears to be acutely vexed at present; but there cannot be much doubt as to the desirability of keeping unprotected and unaccompanied children from witnessing a choice assortment of murders in a vitiated atmosphere.

In some cities of the United States, the question of a theatre for children has been considered, but there are, as yet, few theatrical productions fit for the Small Person.



THE RELIGIOUS TURMOIL

WHAT an incessant turmoil over theological questions! To-day it is Mr. S. H. Blake fighting with the ritualistic section of the Anglican Church or with some other person who has attracted his fighting eye for a moment. Yesterday it was Bishop Carman, to give him his ancient title, fighting with the members of the Methodist clergy who refuse to be tied to the apron-strings of Old-Fogeyism. To-morrow it is Archbishop Langevin struggling to establish more firmly the special privileges of Roman Catholics in this country. The religious turmoil is nearly as great as the economic and political turmoil. The only difference is that in religious circles, peacefulness and gentleness and long-suffering are supposed to be predominant qualities; in economics and politics other qualities are more usual and are not the unexpected.

It is unfortunate that Dr. Carman and Mr. S. H. Blake cannot make us believe that the whale swallowed Jonah, or that the earth was created in six calendar days. The scientist and the other scholars have made us wiser than those who lived in the Middle Ages, and a change has been worked in the basis of our faith. To fail to recognise this is to prove that one has lived too long.

It is probably equally unfortunate that the Dominion Government cannot see its way clear to guarantee separate schools in the new territory to be added to Manitoba and has decided to leave the matter in the hands of the Manitoba people themselves. That this is a perfect enforcement of the principle of provincial rights, Archbishop Langevin must admit even if he cannot approve. That the present Government at Ottawa has not always upheld with enthusiasm the principle of provincial rights is not an argument against abandoning this great principle.

There is a danger that all this turmoil, bickering and wire-pulling will injure the faith that is in us as a people, affect our moral fibre, and cause us to wander far towards that carelessness and selfishness which is often wrongly named infidelity. Such a disastrous course of conduct would not be justified, however, and those inclined that way would do well to remember that another's sin is no excuse for theirs.



MR. BORDEN'S POSITION

BEFORE and after last year's general election there were many rumours that Mr. R. L. Borden, leader of the Opposition, would retire in favour of some other Conservative leader. Many of us wondered why the rumour should arise and why there should be any doubts in the question of Mr. Borden's permanency as the leader. It