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A COALITION GOVERNMENT

FOR CANADA

FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE WAR

A SERIES OF EDITORIAL ARTICLES

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WRITTEN BY THE EDITOR

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MAYOR OF ST. CATHARINES

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CANADA'S FIRST AND GREATEST DUTY.

(Saturday, Nov. 4.)

To every true Canadian there must come the most poignant feeling of regret that our country is not as united as it should be in the prosecution of Canada's share in the war. At a luncheon given by the Association of Chambers of Commerce to the Duke of Devonshire, our new Governor-General, at London, the other day, Sir Thomas White, Canadian Minister of Finance, said the first duty of the Empire was "to win the war." It is a phrase which falls naturally from the lips of every statesman and public speaker. No doubt it is spoken also with sincerity. But are the actions of our statesmen and leaders in both political parties in Canada in keeping with a sincere determination to first win the war? Does it not look as if there were too many politicians in both parties whose first thought is winning the next general election? And this continual eye upon the polling booths is paralyzing in its effect upon the highest National and Imperial interests involved in the most vigorous prosecution of the war.

Today and for months past recruiting has not filled the gaps where our own brave boys have fallen in the great offensive since they reached the firing line on the Somme front. The appeals for recruits, from the lips of the most eloquent orators, are not responded to with any degree of avidity. Even the appeal of our First Minister, Sir Robert Borden, has fallen to a large extent upon deaf or unwilling ears. Why should this be the case? Is it not that the canker of political ambition and selfishness and patronage has been eating at the roots of our national unity?

The example of sacrifice should be set at Ottawa. Not alone by the leaders of the party in power or the party in opposition, but by whoever holds or seeks the seat of political power. The statesmen at the capital who believe that the first duty of Canada, as well as of Britain, or the other overseas dominions or our Allies, is to "win the war," should manifest their sincerity by their works. They should "get together." Where? In the Cabinet? Yes. Why not? That's the place where unity should exist. Not alone among the ministers of one party, but of both. Our soldiers of both parties, of all races and religions, are fighting side by side on the firing line. They are dying side by side for their country—for their Empire—for the glorious cause of Freedom and Righteousness. Should these principles be dearer to our sons and brothers and fathers than to the leaders of political parties at Ottawa? To have unity at Ottawa is to have more than a truce. There must be coalition—union. Yes, some members of the Conservative Government should make way for Liberals. And why not? Charity, it is said, begins at home. So does sacrifice. It may be said that some politicians in each party are non persona grata to the other. But these is a time to forget these animosities. They are not worthy to be considered at such a time as this. To secure victory—to secure that our thousands of brave Canadian boys have not fallen in vain—to secure the perpetuation of the liberties and heritage for which our fathers were not unwilling to give their lives, our armies must be kept well reinforced. Our Premier—the first Canadian of our land—speaking for Canada, has said, and we have all agreed with him, that 500,000 men from Canada shall be fought. Are we going to implement his promises—the obligations which

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every true Canadian has endorsed? If we are, it is not by planning and scheming upon a general election in war time. What would be the effect of a political contest from one end of this Dominion to the other upon recruiting or fulfilling our obligations to our Empire, to our Allies, and our glorious cause? We all know too well what political contests in this country mean, and it would be to our eternal shame if, when our brothers are falling and bleeding and filling graves in France and Flanders, we should be fighting political battles at home. Yet that is what we are facing unless the best men in both parties, and the best newspapers in both parties, and the independent men and papers, speak out in tones that shall not be mistaken, that what we demand is not disunion but unity, not selfishness but sacrifice, among the leaders at Ottawa as among our people generally.

Let our leaders—Sir Robert and Sir Wilfrid—get together, not to make a truce, but to sit together in the same cabinet, if such be the best solution. Premier Asquith and Lloyd George and Reginald McKenna sit at the same council-table in the British Cabinet with Bonar Law and Arthur Balfour and Lord Lansdowne, and why not the statesmen of both parties at Ottawa? Is there any good and sufficient reason why they should not, when the interests at stake are so tremendous? It is a time for plain speaking by those who love our country more than the spoils of Egypt or the panoply of power. Let us stand by and for our boys at the front, who take their lives in their hands, and are willing to make the supreme sacrifice which man can make, and when we show that we have set aside all our political difficulties and animosities until the war shall have been brought to a glorious close, then will we see a rallying to the colors, and a heartening of all our people who love triumph of Righteousness, Justice and Freedom.

COALITION IS THE LOGICAL STEP.

(Monday, Nov. 6.)

Every loyal and patriotic Canadian who desires that the Dominion should do its whole duty to the Empire and to our Allies in the great struggle in which we and they are engaged, will heartily assent to the proposition that there should not be a war-time election for the House of Commons. It would hopelessly divide our people and give the greatest comfort to the Kaiser and his political and military advisers. They would naturally magnify such evidence of disunion to the people of the Germanic powers and encourage them to continue the struggle, predicting to them the disintegration of the British Empire.

Hon. A. E. Kemp has delivered a message from the Dominion Government in which, after referring to the extension of the Parliamentary term for one year authorized at the last session, declared that the government proposes to ask for such further extensions as may be necessary. He says that upon the Liberal party will rest the responsibility of determining whether a war election shall be avoided or whether party strife should be precipitated and carried on during the pending struggle.

The Standard rejoices that the Government recognizes that a war election should be avoided. That is excellent. But it would be better—much better—if we can avoid all occasions for party strife while the great

war is on. A war election would not precipitate party strife. Such strife unquestionably exists, but a war election would intensify it a hundred fold—yea, even a thousand fold. At present it exists mainly among the politicians—among the political leaders. It is not troubling the people much. A political contest for the mastery in Dominion politics—for the control of the House of Commons and the administration of the country's affairs, would carry this strife into every community in the Dominion.

The country does not want that state of affairs, but how is it going to be avoided? There is only one logical method of averting this strife, which not only Mr. Kemp and the government, but every citizen who earnestly desires victory for our cause, must deplore. And that method is by uniting in one cabinet both political parties and carrying on the affairs of the country on a non-partisan basis until the war is concluded.

The Government must admit that so far as the electorate has given any mandate, the period of such authorization has expired. It is living upon borrowed time—upon time consented to by the Liberal opposition, and confirmed by Imperial enactment. That was asking a good deal from political opponents, but it was granted. Now, another request for extension of the parliamentary term is to be asked, not for a year only, but for "such further extension as may be necessary." An extension of the parliamentary term is necessary to the end of the war if a war election, with all its horrors, is to be avoided, but that should not necessarily imply an extension to one political party of the seats of power and authority. The extension of the term of the Imperial Parliament is not a precedent which would justify the continuation of a party government in office, for there they have a coalition government in which the Liberals, the Unionists and the Laborites are represented, and the Nationalists could be if they desired it. A Coalition Government is the fair thing if party strife is to be avoided.

There are many advantages which would accrue through the coalition for the period of the war of the political leaders of the Conservative and Liberal parties. The important question of recruiting—the most important before the country today, because it involves National honor and Imperial safety—could be solved without either party seeking a political advantage.

There are 19 vacant seats in the House of Commons, counting the dual seats held by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Hon. Mr. Forget. Many of these seats have been vacant for a long period, because of the inability of the leaders to agree. With a coalition government in power it would not be difficult to bring about agreement for election by acclamation. For all the new members would be government supporters.

A coalition government would be the means of abolishing the patronage evil. Patronage lists in peace times are bad enough, but in war times they are a scandal and a curse to an infinitely greater degree. We do not appeal to Conservatives alone to do the fighting. The appeal is to Liberals as to Conservatives. Let us treat them alike as loyal citizens. Loyalty should be the badge—not politics.

When the parties at Ottawa are unified, and there is no good reason why they cannot and should not be unified, then we will have a rallying to the colors which will cheer the brave old Mother Country and our sister dominions and our Allies, and shatter the hopes and expectations which the Kaiser may be cherishing about disunion and political strife in Canada.

OPPORTUNITY TO ELIMINATE WORST FEATURES OF POLITICAL SYSTEM.

(Tuesday, Nov. 7.)

In every Canadian home represented in the Canadian forces by father or son, husband or brother, whether those loved ones are in the fighting line in France or Flanders, or in training in England or Canada, or are filling heroes' graves, there is no other feeling than that this country should be spared the horrors and feuds of a bitter partisan election conflict during the period of the war. That is not going far enough, even. If possible, we should put our affairs in such shape and conduct our country's business in such manner as to eliminate the worst features of our political system. And it is possible. Our leading statesmen have but to come together in a mutually honorable spirit, and agree, whatever the mistakes or blunders of the past have been, from this time till peace comes, they will work in harmony for the advancement of the just cause for which our soldiers are fighting side by side and heroically facing the enemy's shot and shell.

Some will say that such a coalition—a union—of political leaders, is now too late. While it would have been better if it could have taken place in the earlier stages of the war, or even a year ago, when The Standard so strongly urged a coalition, it is not too late now. While the war has been on two and a quarter years, there is no sign on the horizon of an early peace. So far as human foresight can penetrate, the war is likely to go on for a year or possibly two, or, peradventure, still longer. It is, therefore, not too late. We may be only at the middle of the war period rather than near its close, and that being the case, no person can say it is too late to lay down in Canada the weapons of political strife and strike earnestly to promote peace at home and a more vigorous prosecution of the war so as to bring it earlier to a close.

The urgency of a coalition of our political leaders and forces is greater today than at any period since the war began. In the earlier stages of the war, the recruiting of a hundred thousand men in Canada was no great thing to accomplish, nor even the second hundred thousand. The third hundred thousand became much more difficult, and it requires the straining of every nerve and effort to reach the total of the fourth hundred thousand. But we have promised still another hundred thousand, and we are compelled to admit that our present voluntary system, under present conditions, has about reached its limit. While such is the case, we find that both political parties are sparring for positions in an expected general election, rather than find a way of coming together, and setting an example to the country at large.

While the party leaders and party press on both sides publicly profess an interest in recruiting and prosecuting the war, the actual work of recruiting is practically paralyzed, so much so that the total does not come within a long distance of filling the gaps. We must have a change somewhere, and it should begin at Ottawa. That change will come if the press will forget for a little while petty partisan advantage and speak out for a cessation of strife in Canada. A truce is not what is needed. That has been tried and largely failed. The coalition in Great Britain has succeeded. It has accomplished what a party government never could have done, and should be an encouragement to a similar movement in Canada.

THE STATUS QUO; A WAR ELECTION OR A COALITION?

(Wednesday, Nov. 8.)

When the Government, through the Hon. Mr. Kemp, announced its policy of seeking a further extension of the life of Parliament, to the close of the war, if necessary, and failing the consent of the Liberal Opposition, a war election, it must have been to invite discussion, and the time is opportune for an expression of opinion through every avenue. Both people and press have a duty corresponding with the opportunity. The future of Canada during the war will be influenced by the action of the political leaders of the country in the next few weeks. What will it be?

The status quo—things as they are. Does that appeal to the citizens of the Dominion? We speak only of the military and recruiting situations. Paralysis in recruiting, while yet we lack 150,000 of the men promised as Canada's contribution of man-power to the Empire. What little achievement results from the present recruiting efforts is very costly and far inadequate to meet the demands of the wastage from casualties and other avenues, let alone supplying the other 150,000 men—nearly one-half as many as have already enlisted, and nearly one-third of the half-a-million men promised. The problem is a very serious one. Some more drastic methods than now exist must be adopted and even conscription must be calmly looked forward to as a possibility. The present voluntary system has broken down under our party system of government, and it would have been the same if a Liberal Government had been in power instead of a Conservative Government. No party government could have gone as far as Britain did under a coalition government in applying pressure even before conscription was adopted and partially put in force. The Standard would certainly have no desire to minimize the magnificent work accomplished by Sir Robert Borden and his Cabinet in raising an army of 350,000 men, of all branches of the service, equipping them, and transporting two-thirds of that number overseas. But under our system, if a party government assumes the responsibility it must be prepared to accept the party risk and meet party criticisms. We may be sure that the Premier and his colleagues would go further than they have but for the ever-present fear of hostile and unreasonable party criticism. It would have been infinitely preferable, as may now be seen, to have called in the co-operation of the Liberals at an earlier date, but no one in Canada foresaw the duration of the war, as Lord Kitchener did, and the marvellous extent to which Canada and the other overseas dominions, as well as the Mother Country, would have been called upon, and the equally marvellous response.

A war election would have as its first effect the practical cessation of all recruiting effort until the contest should be over. One familiar with Canadian elections can well understand that with a political contest on, party meetings being held all over the country, and race and creed appeals filling the atmosphere, that there would be no place for recruiting. Such divisions and feuds also would be created that it would be months before the country could get back to a normal condition, and it is doubtful if ever a truly national spirit could be revived during the war, or ever Canada would be just the same again. There should be no war election.

The Standard feels certain that most thoughtful Canadians, who put Empire and Country before party, wants either that things should remain

as they are, or that the Dominion should be plunged into a cauldron of political unrest, agitation and excitement. It would be no advantage to substitute one party for the other, if a change should come out of the uncertainties of a political contest. There would still remain all the evils and weaknesses of the party system. But the request of the Government for another extension of the parliamentary term, before the extension authorized at last session has been in force a month, is not magnanimous or fair, or worthy of broad statesmen under existing war conditions. An extension carries with it automatically the extension of the power and authority of a Cabinet which has already existed for a full five-year term. The onus of refusal to consent to the proposed extension of the parliamentary term may be upon Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal Party, but the onus of placing an unmagnanimous request that the political party which happened to be in power at the outbreak of the war should be given an indefinite lease of power, must equally be upon the Premier and his Conservative colleagues. Perhaps it was made only for the purpose of opening negotiations which may lead to a coalition. It is satisfactory to know that the government has made it known that it is opposed to a war election, with all its known and unknown horrors. It now remains for the press of the country and all loyal Canadians to aid in bringing about the co-operation of both political parties in the administration of the country's affairs until the war is over—and in the meantime a united nation—all the provinces as one putting forth every energy to fill up the gaps in our fighting force, and bring the war to an early and victorious conclusion.

A COALITION GOVERNMENT IS SURELY WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF POSSIBILITY.

(Thursday, Nov. 9.)

As The Standard intimated in its article of Wednesday, it is not unlikely that the proposition of a further extension of the parliamentary term, as made by Hon. Mr. Kemp, was calculated not to be received as an ultimatum, but as an opening for negotiations with the Liberal leaders, looking to a workable understanding and agreement being reached. We must assume that the Government is sincere in desiring to avoid the turmoil and bitterness of a political contest, and that it is willing to be fair to the Opposition. We must assume, likewise, that the Liberal party is not determined upon forcing a general election. That party consented to the extension upon which we have just entered. The way is open for the negotiation of an agreement which will be satisfactory to both parties, and there are indications in the press, not confined to one party, that such an agreement would be acceptable, though the leading organs have not as yet spoken, which is quite understandable, as they are usually looked upon as being more directly representative of the leaders and therefore have to be most cautious.

The Brantford Expositor (Liberal) in an editorial upon the proposed extension of time, after presenting some of the reasons why Sir Wilfrid declined to act upon the National Service Commission, referring to the present extension to six years, says:

"This is an unusual advantage to give one political party, and is only justifiable because of war conditions. In recognition of war conditions the time of the present Imperial parliament has been extended, but it is safe to say this would not have been done had the Asquith Government not invited the co-operation of the Unionists, and formed a coalition government. No such course has been followed by the Borden Government, which has cold-shouldered the Liberals at every turn. Manifestly, if there is to be a further extension of time it must be on a different basis, and this is voiced by The St. Catharines Standard in the following terms:

"Let our leaders—Sir Robert and Sir Wilfrid—get together, not to make a truce, but to sit together in the same cabinet, if such be the best solution. Premier Asquith and Lloyd George and Reginald McKenna sit at the same council-table in the British Cabinet with Bonar Law and Arthur Balfour and Lord Lansdowne, and why not the statement of both parties at Ottawa? Is there any good and sufficient reason why they should not, when the interests at stake are so tremendous? It is time for plain speaking by those who love our country more than the spoils of Egypt or the papnopy of power. Let us stand by and for our boys at the front, who take their lives in their hands, and are willing to make the supreme sacrifice which man can make, and when we show that we have set aside all our political difficulties and animosities until the war shall have been brought to a glorious close, then will we see a rallying to the colors, and a heartening of all our people who love the triumph of Righteousness, Justice and Freedom.

The Expositor adds the following comment: "It is all right, and probably in the public interest, that there should be a truce until after the war, but it can no longer be a one-sided truce, and the government should be made to clearly understand this fact."

The Conservative Government should not seek to impose a one-sided truce, which is about as bad as none at all. One of the lessons of the war is that we should trust each other more, and build up a united nation on broad, fair, just and equitable foundations, eliminating as far as may be possible a narrow spirit, unjust and unworldly words and actions. The Kingston Standard (Conservative), expressing its belief that Sir Wilfrid's refusal to follow "the example of the British Government" as to an extension of the parliamentary term, is "unthinkable," says: "This is not a time for politics. The Empire is at war and sore pressed. We need unity—not discord, political or otherwise." If we follow the example of the British Government, it will be a coalition government which will ask for an extension of the parliamentary term, and it will have the warmest support of the people who have no heart or patience for politics or self-seeking. It is gratifying to see the expressions of a desire for unity from the papers quoted, and such a feeling cannot but spread and leaven our whole political fabric in these days of stress and strain and sacrifice.

A TIME FOR MODERATE COUNSELS.

(Friday, Nov. 10.)

There can be no doubt that privately a great deal of consideration is being given to the question of a coalition government in Canada for the period of the war. Today the expression in some quarters is that it is too late. Such a movement, it is said, should have been made at the beginning of the war, or at least a year ago. It must be recognized, however, that no person in Canada dreamed for a moment that the war could go well on in the third year, as it has, and with prospects of continuing for a year or more at least.

The British Government continued for a considerable period after the war began to be a party government, but the day came when the

leaders of both parties had to come together in order that every force the country possessed should be utilized for the successful prosecution of the war. No doubt there were many misgivings on both sides. It must have been very difficult for Mr. Asquith to ask some of his colleagues to give way to men who had so long been opposed to them, and to invite the leaders of the opposition to take seats at the council board. The Unionist leaders had to give up all idea of possibly being victors in an appeal to the people. They had to take a minority of the cabinet positions. But it has worked out magnificently. Great Britain has never had so stable a government at such a critical time.

It is not to be forgotten, either, that at the outbreak of the war, the political situation in Britain had never been more critical. For months the feeling between the Irish parties had been at a point where it seemed civil war would be the only outcome, and that the feelings of the Nationalists and Ulsterites were reflected in the Parliament. Surely, no observer could have thought it would be possible to bring such violently opposite parties together as was done in Britain. Criticism there has been and always will be in a free parliamentary assembly, but it has been robbed of the party sting and the party advantage.

Are the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal parties in Canada farther apart than they were in Great Britain? If so, it does not augur well for the country. Are they less prepared for the sacrifice of Cabinet position or prospect than the political leaders in the old land, or the thousands of Canadians, who have given up splendid positions and prospects, have gone to face the enemy, and fighting for us, have made the supreme sacrifice of their lives? We cannot bring ourselves to the belief that such is the case.

There was no apparent necessity for a coalition in Canada in the early period of the war, nor was the seriousness of the situation so apparent a year ago as it is today. The tension was not so great at Ottawa, nor in the political rank and file at any previous time as it is today. That's where the danger lies, and that's why moderate men of all parties, and men independent of all parties, should now use all the influence they possess to prevent the spread of a fire which may be extinguished in its incipiency, but if allowed to continue, may lead our country to the very verge of a civil war. It is not too late to bring the parties together, but if too long delayed, the opportunity may pass, never to return.

Difficulties innumerable will be seen in the way of a coalition government, but we are sure they would be found not so serious as we imagine. There may be questions about this or that leader on this side or that, but no one person, or Cabinet member, or political leader should stand before a union of Canadian people at home just as they are united in the trenches. We have no more business to be engaged in hurling charges of disloyalty and other base political epithets back and forth in the press, on the platform, and in parliament, than our soldiers in the trenches, when about to charge the enemy, should stop to engage in a political controversy as to whether Conservatives or Liberals were more loyal and more ready to sacrifice for the common cause.

Some doubtless say we must take things as we find them, but we don't have to do anything of the kind until we have exhausted all possible effort

to make things as we believe they should be. If those who favor bringing about peace in Ottawa; peace among our political leaders; peace between our various races and provinces, peace between Canadians, who, even without the mellowing influence of tribulations and tragedies such as the world has never before seen, should be brothers; peace all the way down and through, would speak out their views, there would be no fear of the ultimate result, which would redound to the solidarity of the Confederation, and enable us more unitedly to meet every demand upon our resources for the prosecution of the war.

PRESENT TIME OPPORTUNE FOR BRINGING "IRRECONCILABLE ELEMENTS" CLOSER TOGETHER

(Saturday, Nov. 11.)

The Toronto News began its leading editorial article of yesterday with the statement that "it is suggested that there should be a coalition of political leaders at Ottawa in order that the patronage system may be destroyed," and follows this erroneous statement by remarking that "there is no evidence that any such result would follow." The weakness of the argument against a coalition government is very conclusively shown by this effort to make the News readers believe that the advocates of a coalition government at Ottawa for the period of the war are basing their appeals solely or principally to destroy the patronage system. Our contemporary surely knows that the patronage evil was mentioned only as an incident, but even at that many of its worst features would undoubtedly be eliminated. The great underlying purpose of a coalition or national government is to bring both political parties together in a government where confidence rather than suspicion, where co-operation rather than distrust, should prevail.

Our contemporary expresses its doubts whether, as to the conduct of the war, in a country with so many elements as comprise the population of Canada, a coalition would be an advantage. It thinks it sees a danger that "the conflict of prejudices, opinions and interests in such a Cabinet would block effective action in many directions." Its fear is quite unfounded. The "conflict of prejudices, opinions and interests" in and out of Parliament now and in the present conditions is effectively blocking action in many directions, and principally in the way of recruiting, of making good the wastage in our training camps here and overseas and on the firing line, not to speak of placing in training at an early date the other 150,000 men promised as the minimum of our contribution in men to the cause of our Empire and Allies. The "conflict of prejudices, opinions and interests" is now effectively blocking that united action which should characterize all the war moves of the Dominion. The "conflict of prejudices, opinions and interests," as witnessed not a thousand miles away from The News office, is producing taunts of disloyalty and statements on the public platform and in the press most assuredly not conducive to national unity. What is occurring now because of this "conflict of prejudices, opinions and interests," is only a foretaste of what would be a concomitant of a war election.

The News will agree with the Government that a war election should

be avoided. The country is unanimous on that issue. The Liberal leaders can scarcely take the position that a war election which in their opinion was bad a year ago, is all right now. But they can argue that the terms for an extension of the parliamentary term shall be fair. They can hardly be expected to agree to any one-sided terms, and they will not be justified in asking anything other than what is fair. We ought to expect from the leaders of the people on both sides of the House a mutually fair and equitable agreement, the main purpose of which is to avoid a war election, to enable the Government of the day to concentrate all its energies upon the most vigorous prosecution of the war, the mobilizing of all our resources of men, money and munitions, and the consideration of all the war problems which now and will confront the country, and which can best be solved by a coalition or national government representing and being composed of the best men of both parties.

The News contends that "there are other and very weighty reasons against any attempt to secure genuine co-operation between inharmonious and irreconcilable elements." It may be quite true that there are inharmonious elements, but it is assumption to say that they are irreconcilable. They may not be more irreconcilable than they were in Great Britain, where they were on the brink of civil war, and it is worth the effort to bring these at present inharmonious elements together. They must indeed be very weighty reasons which could be openly urged against an attempt to bring unity out of discord, and effectiveness in war measures out of the paralysis which now more or less exists.

The bringing about of coalition in Great Britain was a commendable stroke of statesmanship which gave the utmost satisfaction to all the loyal people of the British Isles and throughout the Empire, but probably dismay to the Kaiser, for it told him in unmistakable terms that Britain was in the war to a victorious finish. So would the coming together of the statesmen at Ottawa be hailed with delight from the Atlantic to the Pacific. And it may not be out of place to say that the people, not Cabinets nor caucuses, should rule.

May we be permitted to say also that Confederation was brought about by a coalition government, and that it would be quite fitting if the semi-centennial could be celebrated with a coalition government in power at Ottawa.

Let us be Canadians and patriots, rather than partisans, during the war at least.

CANADA IS DRIFTING IN A DANGEROUS DIRECTION; THE TIME TO CHANGE THE CURRENT IS NOW.

(Monday, Nov. 13.)

The editorial in *The Toronto News* of Friday, on "Coalition and Patronage," and reprinted in *The Standard* on Saturday, was very brief, but it contained enough to make a suitable text for several articles.

Evidently *The News* looks with askance at the idea of a coalition in Canada—at Ottawa, and does not believe that any temporary incidental agreement between a few political leaders will have any great or permanent effect. Those who fear a coalition have only to look around to dis-

cover that the great world-struggle is that of a coalition or alliance of several great democratic powers to perpetuate liberty and freedom and righteousness in the earth. No one of the great powers alone could successfully resist the Prussian idea of world domination. An alliance of the British Empire with France and Russia and Italy and Belgium and Serbia and Montenegro and Roumania will do the work and do it well. Is that alliance anything other than a coalition?

Every one of the great powers in the Entente has discarded party government and has invited the co-operation of all sections of the people in fighting the common enemy. Under a party system of government Great Britain could never have put up the magnificent fight she is doing—never could have enrolled a volunteer army of five million men—never could have mobilized her resources as she has done—never could have built the ships and arsenals and guns and every munition of warfare that she has. She never could have financed this titanic work at home and aided her allies to the extent she has under a party administration, whether Liberal or Tory. Only a coalition government could have accomplished this marvellous work. The same is true of every one of her powerful allies. Party considerations or advantages have been put aside without compunction in order that the nations could be united to perform the great task before them.

Were there no "inharmonious or irreconcilable elements" in each and all of these countries? There were, most unquestionably, but in the hour of national danger and trial these differences disappeared or were subordinated completely to the higher duties and responsibilities. Are there in all free countries "irreconcilable elements"—elements that cannot and will not be reconciled? If ever there was one where it would be considered impossible to reconcile the "irreconcilable elements," that country would be South Africa. Less than two decades ago Boer and Briton were fiercely fighting each other. It was one of the marvels of statesmanship and conciliation that Boer and Briton were reconciled, and see the harvest today! Instead of South Africa being a danger spot to the Empire, the British forces of that dominion, under Gen. Louis Botha, the former Boer commandant, have done their part heroically in driving the Germans out of South Africa. Are the "irreconcilable elements" in Canada more "irreconcilable" than they were in South Africa?

The Dominion of Canada itself is a monument to a coalition government, wherein the apparently "irreconcilable elements" united to bring about Confederation. Today, Confederation is in greater danger than ever before in its history. So reputable and influential an exponent of public opinion, as the Toronto News, in this critical period in our affairs, declares there are "weighty reasons against any attempt to secure genuine co-operation between inharmonious and irreconcilable elements." Is that a fact? What is meant by the statement? Are these "irreconcilable elements" controlling the situation at Ottawa in both parties? If so, do they represent the people of this dominion? If such a condition exists at Ottawa, who is responsible for it? Can the press, who should be guides and leaders of public opinion, say there is no responsibility with them? We are going to get further apart or we are going to get nearer together in the very near future. The people of the country are mainly desperately

in earnest that Canada shall be true to herself and to the Empire and to our soldiers who have heroically volunteered to fight for freedom, for righteousness, and for Canada, and ten thousand of whom have made the supreme sacrifice, while fifty thousand more have been wounded in our service. The men who would precipitate or allow a war election in Canada, or who would sit quietly and silently in editorial chairs and not protest against such a desecration, are not, we submit, thinking first of the great duty they owe to the cause for which we have asked half a million men to risk their lives. The watchmen upon the towers must speak out.

Each party is ready and striving to put the blame upon the other for the war election they are permitting to come upon the country. By their course in thus endeavoring to shift the blame on the other side they admit that their action will not be looked upon with favor. They know the people do not want an election, and the people should rule. There is time to prevent this war election, which would engender more race hatreds than could be healed in many years, even if it were not risking a civil war and the breaking up of Confederation. More than that, Canada's divisions would give great comfort and encouragement to the Kaiser and his advisers, who would affect to see the weakening of the British Empire and the disruption which Bernhardt and other of their military and political caste have predicted. Are our leaders at Ottawa going to play into the enemy's hands? If they are not, if we are going to be a united nation to the end of the war, and for centuries after, then we must get closer together. The statesmen at Ottawa must put aside their differences now, as John A. Macdonald and George Brown did in the pre-Confederation era, and unite for the good of Canada and the glorious cause for which a quarter of a million of our bravest men are now overseas ready to make any and every sacrifice—even to the laying down of their lives, compared with which the laying down of Cabinet office and political power is not worthy to be mentioned.

CANADA IS A STEP NEARER NATIONAL UNITY TODAY.

(Tuesday, Nov. 14.)

For the past week or more The Standard has been making an earnest appeal for unity in the higher political circles of the Dominion that would ensure that no war election would be brought on to create and perpetuate strife where the vital interests of both the Empire and our Dominion absolutely demand that all our efforts should be concentrated on the most vigorous prosecution of the war to a victorious issue. The honor of our country, which has promised half a million men as Canada's contribution, is at stake. We must fulfill our national obligations, when the call is going forth for more and more men. The manner in which recruiting had steadily fallen off from 25,000 in a month at the beginning of the year to only a little over 6,000 in the month of October, is sufficient to arouse the utmost anxiety. We have had but slightly over 350,000 enlistments, and nearly 150,000 more are required, even to make up the number which we have promised. Where are they coming from and when?

Canada has rejoiced at the success of the Allied offensive in the Somme front, and the glorious part which our Canadian forces have taken in that steady driving back of the enemy. The progress is necessarily

slow and the cost is great, yet we must carry on. The British may have to take over a larger portion of the front, and the armies both of Britain and France must be steadily reinforced to make up the wastage and to give the brave boys a chance to rest and from time to time reorganize as the military necessities arise. In this Canada must do her share.

As we pointed out, recruiting in Canada has fallen off steadily month by month until the smallest number was reached in October. Is that the way we are going to reinforce our Canadian forces at the front, who are so heroically doing and dying for our sakes? It is a crying shame that at this critical period, when our recruiting should be at its highest, it should be at the lowest. Yet both parties at Ottawa have seemed to be thinking more of politics than recruiting. It is not for The Standard to enter into a discussion as to whether the Conservative party or the Liberal party are mostly to blame for the lamentable condition of things. It would be most unprofitable. What we have to deal with is the existing conditions and how to improve them.

No person will question that too much politics is the bane of this country, and it has been the cause of bringing about the present critical period. Very few will doubt that if our leaders could really have put party considerations aside in the early stages of the war, and could have united in a coalition cabinet as was done in Britain, things would have been better today. Fear is now expressed that it is too late to unite the political parties in a coalition, but The Standard cannot view it in that light. It has looked as if no possible contingency could arise to prevent a war election, but it is not too late to avert that.

There has unquestionably been growing up a strong feeling that we must have no war election, and that we must have, as the only alternative, a coalition government. So far as we know, none of the great party journals has expressed itself on this question, but that is not necessarily discouraging. They cannot speak without danger of being regarded as inspired. The big party papers have had no words to say in favor of a coalition, but at the same time it is significant that not a line scarcely has been written against it, as was the case a twelve month ago, when The Standard as strongly urged the formation of a coalition government. Some of the other newspapers of the country, in the smaller centres, are strongly supporting the idea of unity at Ottawa, even if it be by means of a coalition government.

The agitation for this utmost degree of unity among our political leaders cannot be allowed to rest. The interests at stake are too enormous. The raising of the other 150,000 men and the successful and single-minded prosecution of the war are the great objects. To bring about such a desirable, such a vitally necessary result, it is our duty and the duty of those like-minded, to use every means in their power to arouse public opinion in Canada.

Who are the persons most interested in this question, of those who are staying at home? Beyond any doubt it is the kith and kin of those who have gone to risk wounds, imprisonment and death.

Everything we have and enjoy at the present month is bought with a high price—it is the price of blood. It is the women of Canada who are paying the price. They are the proper persons who have a right to say

what shall be done about sending reinforcements to the aid of their loved ones in the trenches. They possess an immense, immeasurable, latent power. It is time this great force was set in operation. Canadian women don't know their power at the present time. Let them get together and they will soon find it out.

What effect will the resignation of Sir Sam Hughes have upon the prospects of a coalition government? We cannot but think that it will be favorable. We are not now going to deal with the matters which led up to his resignation. The fact is that reorganization has started. If the interests of the country, in the estimation of the Premier, requires that one Cabinet Minister should retire, the same interests may require others to acquire the virtue of resignation. The same interests—the interests of Canada, those most vitally important—might require that Liberal leaders should be invited to seats in the Cabinet. A ministry of statesmen, representing both parties, who would unitedly and unanimously subordinate party interests to those of the country—a Cabinet of moderate men, not extreme partisans—would receive the hearty support of the people of Canada, and to such a Cabinet there would be complete unanimity in the extension of the parliamentary term and the consequent avoidance of a war-time election.

HOW TO AVOID A WAR-TIME ELECTION.

(Wednesday, Nov. 15.)

The Toronto Telegram says that "a general election with a war unfinished and the soldiers in the trenches should not be permitted." There is scarcely any difference of opinion anywhere in the country on that point, excepting possibly at Ottawa and in the places where the politicians reign supreme.

But the election will only be averted by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, and that Act will not be passed, we may feel sure, unless there is a practically unanimous request from the Dominion Parliament. The Imperial House of Parliament will not extend its own existence on a mere majority. There will be a large majority in the House of Commons in favor of an extension or there will not be one.

Sir Robert Borden would not approach the Imperial Parliament for another extension of the Parliamentary term unless with the almost unanimous consent of the Liberal Opposition. He made that plain through the announcement made by Hon. Mr. Kemp at Toronto, and the country so understood it.

The Liberals are making it plain that their consent is contingent upon a fairer agreement and fairer conditions than have heretofore existed. It is possible to bring that about and to avert an undesirable and menacing political conflict while the war is on. Not only should a war election be avoided, but there should be a general agreement among the politicians and the press to set aside partisan strife and the making of party capital until peace is declared. An administration of the country's affairs by a Government representing both political parties would be an assurance of the cessation of party warfare and the prosecution of the great war.

The newspapers and the politicians can find plenty of useful employment.