

CONSCRIPTION.

Sir:—From what I have read in "Letters to The Editor" on this subject the "big howl" comes chiefly from people who have a very faint appreciation of the bare meaning of the word and still less of the proposed purposes which it is intended to serve here in Canada.

"They're going to take my boy away and send him to France to be shot!!" No Madam, not if he is worth any more to his country in any other capacity.

"It's a shame to gather up so many of our best young men and send them away to be killed!" Yes, but it is not "the best" those most useful to their country, we want. What we want are those who are not aiding in the useful productions of the country or making more useful citizens of themselves, but who are merely a drain upon the country's resources while making no return. These are the ones it is hoped to "round up" for duty at the front.

Yes, it was a shame to send so many of "our best" to the front. Had we had conscription (or rather had we applied it—for we have always had it at our disposal in the existing Militia Act), from the first, many "of our best" who are now under the sod, would still be giving of their ability to their country's welfare while our army in France would be twice what it is today.

"Don't put conscription into force until we are invaded." "Don't prepare to resist the robber until he is in your own house." "That is not what I meant at all." "It is what you said just the same." (Part of imaginary conversations with anti-conscriptionists.)

Many of the pleas against this measure are nearly as sensible as the logical interpretation of the one illustrated above, but no more so.

The real idea of the measure is to mobilize and organize our resources to a somewhat greater extent than has yet been done. The National Service Cards were merely a crude form of conscription. (The names were "written together" for future reference, that was all.

It is now proposed to put this work to more efficient use and procure a more complete organization of our men, money, and resources by a forced enrollment (particularly of those who do not want to help their country in her hour of need). What we want is complete economic and military organization—and in this I am not advocating Germanizing our country at all, but merely a temporary arrangement—till the end of the war.

I know many think of conscription only as a means of raising forced recruits for the military arm of the service. Its chief advantage in this regard is that it does away with the "slackers", of whom it may be said, "We have far too many of them among us." But as has been remarked many times before, our desire is to avoid the sinful waste of useful lives by sending, as far as possible, those who are less useful to their country in other ways.

"Use conscription for Home Defence only." Every argument applies here as for active service. Guards we certainly need for our munition plants, transportation facilities, internment camps and public institutions, and we need them just as much now, since the U. S. has entered the war as before, because there are still alien enemies at large who merely await opportunity to do damage at the most vital points in our national armour.

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