

## Aliens As Scapegoats

The question of the treatment of returned soldiers is a much broader question than the position of aliens. It is not the aliens who stand in the way of justice to returned soldiers, though it may be convenient to make a scapegoat of the alien. If anything is wrong Governments are to blame, and to some extent the whole community is to blame.

The attitude of the returned soldier is easily understood. He was asked to give up his position, to leave his family and his country, to sacrifice comfort and safety in order to secure the safety and liberty of us who remained at home. He answered the call. The result is that the rest of us were allowed to remain in practically the same condition as if there were no war at all. Some have made huge profits out of the war. Even those who are free from that reproach have been living in comfort, following their usual occupations, taking their usual amusement, living their normal lives.

Into such a community the soldier returns, crippled, shell-shocked, gas-poisoned, handicapped in the race of civil life. There is to the returned soldier something exasperating in the atmosphere. There is occasionally something cool and patronizing even in the attitude of those who want to be kind and helpful. There is not the heartfelt gratitude that would be expected from people who owe the security of their property, their liberty, and their lives to the men in France.

It is unfair and it is cowardly in the general civilian population to allow all the blame to be borne by a few aliens, who have little to do with the making of our laws and the conditions of employment. Rather let each of us examine his own conduct, and see whether he is doing his full duty to the returned soldier. Let us examine our laws, and see whether they are just to the returned soldier. Let us ask whether returned soldiers are carried back to Canada in comfort and decency. Let us ask whether the pensions are adequate. Let us criticize ourselves and our law-makers rather than the aliens.

Aliens may in some cases be making big wages, but the returned soldier would be little better off if the wages were reduced, or even if all the aliens were deported from the country. What the country needs is wise and just legislation—laws that will be just to the whole community, while acknowledging the soldiers' claim to special recognition.

The remedy does not lie in rioting, neither does it lie in the suppression of rioting, necessary though that is. The riots should be regarded as symptoms of discontent with which the Government, Parliament, and the community should deal.

We have now on our hands the problem of the returned soldier, which will be immensely greater and more difficult when soldiers return in hundreds of thousands. The continual nagging at aliens serves only to divert our minds from the real problem, and to postpone the solution. It encourages the rest of us, to shirk our own duties.