

W. W. McClellmont, president of the Association of Canadian Clubs, made a notable address at the opening of the annual conference of the Association at Hamilton the other day. He dealt with several matters affecting the public life of the country, and made this reference to the Canadian ideal :

"What is the true ideal of Canadian citizenship? Canada is essentially a civilian and not a military country. The true education of Canadian youth should be for good citizenship and not for good soldiering. But what of the future? Under the present feverish war scare, under the contemplated action of the Canadian Government and the policy of the Opposition, under the almost universal war spirit of her public press and the influence of the school cadet and the Boy Scout movement among our rising generation—under these conditions what future is there for Canada? Militarism receiving its impetus in Canada from such conditions may grow and may corrupt our civilian ideas."

It is not at all unlikely that objection will be taken to some of these expressions; as a matter of fact objection to them has been taken. It is pointed out that as yet there is no militarism in Canada worthy of the name, and that the Scout movement and the cadet movement are not military in their nature. Nevertheless, it is not likely that any harm can come from emphasizing the point that Canada is essentially a civilian and not a military country. There is perhaps a special reason for emphasizing the point at the present time when something like an organized movement seems to be on foot to turn the Canadian people from their old ideal of peace and industry and to stimulate in them a more military spirit. Canada is yet comparatively free from the evils that are bringing the nations of Europe to the verge of despair. It is an important question for the Canadian people how they can best direct their policies so as to retain this freedom. And to whatever criticism Mr. McClellmont may have left himself open, there is no doubt that he does not speak for himself alone in voicing the danger of a substitution of military for civilian ideals. There is good reason to believe that a considerable number of the Canadian people, if left free to express their views without reference to party associations, would be found saying in substance very much what Mr. McClellmont had said.