

THE CAUSE IS EVERYTHING

To the Editor of The Globe: The mere machineries of politics cannot answer unto the end the tests which the war imposes upon the nation, and the men who serve it in high places. Party and racial frontiers are obliterated between Canadians who face the unspeakable foe. A corresponding change must come over us who remain at home if we are to do measurable justice to our trusteeship for those who die for freedom. There are signs that at Ottawa there is a new realization of this supreme need, among those who recognize that what is happening in the world is a rebirth of liberty, and a reorientation of the methods by which liberty may be served by her sons. Parties are in a state of flux. It is obvious that Canadian politics are in a period of drastic evolution, even if a revolution in the system we have known be not already advanced. A true soldier cannot escape the consequences of his enlistment; and a true Parliamentarian is bound to follow the leading of his own acts, especially when they are of the beaten course of partisan allegiance.

The Liberal conscriptionists are in such a position to-day. Differing from their venerable leader in a matter which goes far, far deeper than the customary party cleavages, they have pledged their devotion to the soldiers at the front by vote; which mean a continued fealty to their convictions until the battle in blood is won. So they are meeting on Monday to determine their future course. Nothing else was open to them. Men who, broadly, think alike must act together. They must give to the country an example of what courage, unselfishness and resource can do in times that are exceeding hard. Happily, the record of conscriptionist Liberals in the east, in the centre and in the west is guarantee that whatever is demanded of character, experience and vision will be forthcoming. They will surely support, not only every measure which is dictated by the awful need of the trenches, but will give leading and cohesion to the public opinion which welcomes courageous, far-seeing statesmanship wherever it is displayed.

The situation at Ottawa is more confused than it is in the country. The people long for a united dynamic, for a reconsecration to the war, as the parched ground hungers for the early and the later rain. Leadership has hitherto failed to measure up to the requirements of a nation at war. Every day makes more evident the duty of groups to get together for the winning of the war and the complete preservation of Canada's faith and Canada's good name. The party is nothing; the cause is everything. The cause can only be vindicated in support of the firing line and in the reconstruction at home, which is as inevitable as the dawn, on lines which are as surely Liberal as liberty itself. There is no fear of Liberalism losing its identity because it stands erect among the tottering fabrics of partisanship, which have served their turn, and are now ready to fall before the blast of a reawakened patriotism.

Nothing that has recently happened is more heartening than the calling of a convention of Liberals of the four western Provinces, the first declaration of which will certainly be an unfaltering continuance on the road of sacrifice which leads to victory. The four Legislatures beyond the Great Lakes are all fresh from the people, and each enjoys the confidence of its commonwealth in remarkable degree. In those commonwealths are many thousands of Canadian citizens of alien origin, who are also fathers of the Canadian native-born. We have given them scraps of paper which makes them members of a democratic State, which should be an example to the old world they have

forsaken. They, in turn, have given their trust to leaders whose record is in keeping with the liberties we have guaranteed to such as have thrown in their lot with us. These people, of whom their fellow-citizens should not speak as **foreigners**, have been threatened with the deprivation of their franchise. They express the fear that the title to their lands is in like jeopardy. Dread of conscription among such unseasoned Canadians is not unnatural. Their members of Parliament have voted for conscription, prepared to take the consequences. Nothing more reputable has been done in Canadian public life for many years. But they are meeting the need for leadership by a convention which will surely be the beginning of a campaign which will produce a striking vindication of conferred citizenship, in a declaration at the polls of readiness to fulfil all the responsibilities of Canadian nationhood. The western Liberals are win-the-war Canadians, and they will act as such before their conglomerate constituencies in the West as well as before Parliament.

Some politicians in Quebec talk as if they have done enough for their own honor and too much for the war. Perhaps conditions there are more ominous than serious. But, when it is demonstrated that there is practically a solid West for the utmost mobilization of all our resources in men, material and wealth for Canada's war, and that Ontario and the Maritimes are in similar case, the task of accepting the will of the nation will be rendered infinitely easier, and national unity may be renewed in the very strength of unbroken goodwill. For such a blessed consummation nothing must be lacking in those who profess and call themselves Liberals—neither in the maintenance of their own identity and force, nor in the co-operation with patriotic men and women of all parties, and of none which is essential for immediate salvation from calamitous division.

The conscription vote of a week ago carries responsibilities which cannot be escaped. It is a refreshing sign that Liberals who, in face of other attractions, exhibited uncompromising devotion to their convictions on the war, are taking the inevitable step, without bitterness and without hesitation.

Onlooker.

Ottawa, July 12.