

(February 12th, 1917.)

Equality of Service

BY LIEUT.-COL. JOHN A. COOPER.*

AT a regular meeting of the Club held on the 12th February, Lt.-Col. Cooper said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—You have certainly paid me a great compliment in asking me to come here and speak to you on what the Executive has termed the twentieth anniversary of the Canadian Club. It is an honor, and one which I prize very highly, to have been the first President of this organization, and I am not sure that I am not even more pleased at being requested, after going in and going out among you for twenty years, to come here to-day to say something to you. It seems to me that perhaps after all that is the higher distinction. In being honored further by having around the head table to-day all the Past Presidents who are within call, I feel that the distinction is one that is really worth while.

And before touching upon the subject under discussion, I would like to say just a word to you if you will let me about the Canadian Club idea. There is always some sort of question in the minds of some people about the exact origin of the Canadian Club. It did not originate in Toronto. Four years before we started to think about it,—while we arrived at our own idea and need for it independently,—four years before we started to do that thinking here, there had been formed in the city of Hamilton by six young men, a Club, founded as the Canadian Club, "having for its object the encouragement of the study of the history, literature and resources of Canada, the recognition of native worth and talent, and the fostering of a Canadian sentiment." This clause is not quite the same as that which was finally adopted as the constitution of the Canadian Club of Toronto, which afterwards was adopted as the one for all the Canadian Clubs in Canada, but certainly they had the idea. They combined with this the club room idea. We decided that the club room idea was not advisable, and that what we required for the city of Toronto was a sort of non-partisan debating club. While we were forming

*Lieut.-Col. John A. Cooper was the first president of the Canadian Club of Toronto. His services to the Club during the twenty years of its existence have been of inestimable value. Lieut.-Col. Cooper went overseas in command of the 198th Battalion (Canadian Buffs).

and getting our ideas in concrete shape here we got into correspondence with Mr. W. Sanford Evans, then in New York, who was coming to Toronto shortly, I believe in connection with negotiations with *The Mail and Empire*. We waited till he came, because he had been the first President in Hamilton, and was very enthusiastic. When he arrived he joined forces with us, and the Canadian Club was formed in that way. I was elected President and he Vice-President. While therefore we can take credit for arriving at the Canadian Club idea independently and giving it a launching as an organization, and while those twenty-six men who met together that night in the upper room of the King Street warehouse of Mason & Risch, were the ones who really deserve the credit for their foresight and patience; yet we must give to Charles R. McCullough, of Hamilton, and W. Sanford Evans, the most credit for the name and to a large extent the idea.

Now for this subject of to-day. You will not mind if I refer to my notes. When a man is in uniform he is not quite as free to speak as when in civilian clothes, so if I appear to be guarded at certain moments during this speech I hope I will have your sympathy.

Speaking of "Equality of Service," you will not connect it with the question confronting Canada within the past two years and a half, that of raising, equipping and training an army of some say three hundred, some four hundred, some five hundred thousand men for the great struggle which has been inflicted on us. Let us discuss it from the soldier's point of view, the relation of the soldier to the State, to society in general, and perhaps to the larger element of international relations.

I think I am better equipped just now to discuss this question than I was some time ago, because during the past fourteen months I have been rather close to the Canadian soldier, and some lessons I have learned have come with considerable tribulation, and some difficulties, and certainly a considerable amount of thought. When I was looking among my papers during the past few days—they were ancient manuscripts, because I did not visit my library for fourteen months—I came across a set of the "Proceedings" of the Canadian Club of the city of Toronto. I went over the index page of each one of those volumes to see if I could find some lecture on this subject, and I am very sorry to have to report to you that during the twenty years of this Club's existence no one has ever delivered to you an address on the Canadian Soldier or the Canadian Militia, so far as I could discover. So anything

I may say is absolutely new, so far as regards the Canadian Club. In December, 1914, after war broke out, you did have an address by Lieut.-Colonel William Wood, of Quebec, in which he dealt with "War—The Neglected Factor in Canadian Problems for a Hundred Years." Certainly the record thoroughly bears out the title of his address.

I went over the Empire Club's record, and found very much the same condition of affairs; although they did have two addresses which might be called addresses on military subjects—one in 1906 by Lieut.-Col., now Brig.-Gen. James Mason, and another by a man who has had perhaps more influence along the line on which I am going to speak than any other man I know of in this country, Lt.-Col. Wm. Hamilton Merritt. I think the condition I have indicated is typical of Toronto and of Canada as a whole. During the past twenty-five or thirty years we have certainly neglected our militia problem. We have had, of course, scattered throughout the country, a number of men who thought the militia problem was important, and the time might come when Canada might have to raise an army for defence or for service of the Empire. A great many of these men kept up their military training, and kept up their study. It is not necessary for me to name them; most of them went over with the first Canadian contingent; most of them are found to-day among the most advanced positions; some of them, I am very sorry to say, sleep in heroes' graves in the soil of Flanders.

Where is the explanation of this? Of course Canada was a new country, with a great deal of territory to develop, and a great deal to think about before the question of war or the question of military organization. But it is not necessary that I should apologize, because after all I don't know that I agree with Canada or that my record agrees with that of the Canadian people as a whole. Personally I had served about twenty years in the Canadian militia, but I didn't say much about it those days, because I must admit I was a little afraid to tell my friends what kind of militia work I was doing, lest anyone should say I was spending my time and my money foolishly. Fortunately in those days we could get down to the Armories at night, for most of our drilling was done after dark, and we could take the horse cars or get down by side streets. I remember distinctly how, when we had Sunday parades, I have often and often gone with my good friend, Capt. Robert Rennie, now Brig.-Gen., who has made such a distinguished mark at the front. We used to chip in together and get a one-horse closed coupe. We have all had our

awakening. A man can wear a military uniform on the streets nowadays without feeling that anyone despises him at least.

The question has been forced upon us, what are the primary principles on which our military system should have been based before the war, and should be based now? I am egotist enough to think that the principle embodied in the phrase which I have chosen to-day as the title of my address, "Equality of Service," is that principle. We have tried the voluntary system; we have tried it in probably the very best form in which the voluntary system could be tried; but we have found it a failure; we found it uncertain, unreliable, and inadequate; it puts a burden upon the patriotic citizen, and lets the unpatriotic go free. It takes four sons from one man's home, and leaves four sons in another man's home. It is expensive, because it presses married men into service when single men should be doing the work. It is wasteful; it takes men from industry who should not be taken from industry, and leaves men in industry who might better be on the firing line.

This principle of Equality of Service, which we have overlooked, is the simple one which underlies practically all our citizenship. It is the basis of our taxation,—equality of burden, equality of service. It is the basis of our franchise, whereby every man is entitled to have a vote, even in the Canadian Club, white or black, Roman Catholic or Protestant, no matter what his stripe or class, each man has the same equality in power. In the courts the principle is absolutely primary. Only in the militia service the principle is lost.

I say "lost," because those of you who know Canadian history, and some of you know it better than I do, know that there was a time when this principle obtained in the whole of Canada. Before Confederation, the principle was established in every Province that every citizen was a soldier. In Nova Scotia in 1866 the general law was that every man between sixteen and forty-five trained for five days in the year and trained without pay; only the staff officers and some instructors were paid,—practically only the staff officers and the officers had uniforms. But every man had to go out and do his little bit every year so as to be prepared for the defence of his Province. It was the same in New Brunswick, and the same in Quebec, and it was the same in Ontario till 1859.

How did that work out? In Nova Scotia—I am quoting Senator Power, who is certainly one of the best authorities on Canadian history—in 1866 58,000 men were eligible for five days' drill, and 45,767 men performed their five days'

drill. That was in 1866. In 1913, in this great wonderful and majestic Dominion of Canada, there were less than 45,767 men who did their annual drill! So that was the progress we made between 1866 and 1913! The cost, Senator Power states, of drilling these men five days in the year, and drilling an army larger than Canada ever drilled as a Dominion, was less than \$100,000. And he also states in this article that if Canada had embodied the same principle in Dominion legislation that Nova Scotia did in her legislation, she could have trained 800,000 men annually at a cost of \$2,000,000.

But we lost the principle, and apparently we in Ontario were the people who lost it, because in 1859 we abolished voluntary service and passed an Act ordering every citizen to drill six days each year and providing for paying them a dollar a day for that service. They say that money is the root of all evil—until to-day we have never seen again the principle that every man owes it as a duty to the State, to his family and to himself, to give himself sufficient military training to prepare him for the day of trial and the day when his services may be needed.

I would like to say something to you on the line of what some other countries in the world have done in relation to this. Three countries that stand out prominently as having lost this principle are China, the United States, and Canada. All other countries seem to have kept it. Australia and New Zealand lost it for a time, but to the credit of Australia—I don't know the date when New Zealand won it back, but between 1903 and 1909 by a series of Acts Australia got back the principle we lost, and made it obligatory upon every man between 18 and 26 to do a certain number of days' drill each year. In consequence, in 1913, the year before the war, when the Australian system had been working in full for three years, there trained that year 53,000 Junior Cadets and 90,000 Senior Cadets, that is those from 16 to 18, and about thirty or forty thousand militia. Australia trained in the year 1913 about four times the number of men that Canada trained in the same year! True, some of these were young; but they are old enough by this time to go to Europe, and if their system had started a little earlier they would have been in a position to have a strong army.

Enough on that point. Enough on organization. The principle has broken down. We have lost the principle, a principle embodied in nearly every country except the three I have mentioned.

Then, of course, the practical question is, how shall we

establish the principle again, and will the principle meet our present needs? That, after all, is the important point.

So far as the law is concerned, the Militia Act of 1868, which is on our statute books, and practically has never been used, provides all the machinery for military service and for equality of service, but only in case of war, and that Militia Act is likely to be our refuge and our strength during the next few months. There are no more recruits coming forward. During the past six months there have been no more than enough to keep up with the wastage.

Let me show how the Militia Act works out. Every male inhabitant of Canada capable of bearing arms shall serve his country in time of war. I should say that in the first place the Act divides the citizens into four classes: young men and widowers without children, between 18 and 30; they are the first class to be called; secondly, the same classes between 30 and 45; thirdly, married men, and widowers with children, from 18 to 45; and fourthly, members of Canadian Clubs, etc., including all gentlemen between 45 and 60,—they come last.

Of course there are exemptions: Judges are exempt, clergy, professors in colleges and universities, teachers in religious work, keepers of penitentiaries and asylums, persons disabled by bodily infirmity, and the only son of a widow being her only support.

The machinery for the enrollment of citizens in case of a levée en masse is provided for; it is very simple: Canada is divided into ten military districts, each district into brigades and battalion divisions, and the battalion divisions into company divisions. The captain of a company is really the genius of the Act, that is, when it is worked. He must go to every house in his district and enroll all the men for military service. When he has made up his roll for the district he gives a call for volunteers; if he can get enough men as volunteers, all right; if not, and if there are more men in the district than are required, which is likely to be the case, they ballot for who shall go. In that there is equality; every fellow has an equal chance; in fact, he has more than an equal chance, for if balloted for and taken he can provide a substitute if he is eligible for military service and has not himself been called.

Now, then, is there any alternative before us? Is the Militia Act our only solution? The only alternative I have heard of is conscription. Conscription is not such a very hideous thing after all. In our case it would be a form of necessity.

But conscription in Canada if it were acceptable would have to be by Act of Parliament. But compulsory service would introduce a thing into this country which I don't think the country is prepared to accept. While the cities are prepared, and certain parts of the country are prepared, for anything, to win the war, I doubt if the rural population would submit to anything of that name or akin to it.

It is, however, a question whether the Militia Act—it has never been decided in the courts—compels a man to serve outside Canada. If the Militia Act is brought into force and men are accepted, this is a question for jurists to decide, whether the Militia Act contemplates service outside of Canada or not.

But in any case, supposing Canada is going on to help win the war, that is for you, gentlemen, to decide. So far as the 198th Battalion is concerned, their decision has been made. As to whether Canada is to contribute another hundred thousand men, and whether she is to contribute the men she has been training and raise another hundred thousand for home defence, she is face to face with the Militia Act or conscription, and it is for public opinion in this country to decide.

Personally I would just like to say this, born of my experience of the past year,—it does not make much difference which you do, but the sooner we come to Equality of Service the better it will be for the future of the national life of Canada as well as for our success in the war.

We are to-day sowing the seeds of discord. Any man with his eyes open is very sure of it, as the recruiting officer is bound to be as he goes down street. In this house live Mr. and Mrs. Jones, who have given four sons to the army. Mr. Jones and Mrs. Jones are old; their four sons are away; and they have not much to live on, and perhaps what little they have stored up in the savings bank is being used to keep themselves supplied and to send their sons the things they think necessary for them to make them more comfortable. Next door to them live Mr. and Mrs. Brown, who have four stalwart sons working for my friend Mr. Irish in a munitions factory and getting—what is it? \$5 to \$8 a day? They have all the luxury there in that home. This is, perhaps, an extreme case, but this case is an example—Mr. and Mrs. Brown with their luxury, and Mr. and Mrs. Jones with only the blessing of the memory that they have given four sons for the Empire, one of whom, perhaps, has an injury that has invalidated him, and two, perhaps three, of the sons have made the supreme sacrifice.

Now, gentlemen, if you think that after the war is over the

people who have made sacrifices are not going to have something to say to the people who have not made sacrifices, then you are mightily mistaken!

Then this word in conclusion: don't go away with the notion that my idea of Equality of Service is confined only to men in khaki. I have stuck only to the narrow sense of the militia to-day, because the other subject is too broad. I am aware that there are a great number of men in the city of Toronto and elsewhere in this broad Dominion up to the present time who have done probably greater service for their country, King and flag during this war than I have done. They have given their service freely; they have given of their talents; they have given of their money, of their thought, and heart, and brain. And I say all honor to these men, because they are doing their work without having the glory of putting on a khaki uniform. And all honor to the thousands of women, who have made even more sacrifices as a class, who have labored early and late, and who have given up their five o'clock teas and their sewing bees without a murmur. I say all glory to these people. Let us not forget, if you agree with me, that Equality of Service applies to every man in the time of war especially, that he shall have the one thought, that is, "I am a soldier of my country; I am willing to do my duty, implicitly, promptly, fully, and whether my country glorifies me with a uniform or keeps me in a back office, I am prepared to do everything which my country demands of me, in order that this great struggle for liberty and for freedom shall go on to a successful conclusion."

This is the broad idea, Equality of Service. I have, though, discussed only the Militia Act, and overlooked the broader aspect of the subject.

I thank you, gentlemen, fellow members of the Canadian Club, for this opportunity of being with you, and I hope you will show the spirit that I would look for in it. I thank you for the honor you have done me to-day. I hope you will remember me occasionally in your thoughts, and some of you in your prayers when the 198th Canadian Buffs have gone overseas; that you will think as kindly of us as you can. And if you hear that the Lieutenant-Colonel has been reduced to a Sergeant-Major, you will remember that the motto of the Buffs is, "To do the best that it can under all circumstances."