nation. It leads one country to make war on others for its own aggrandisement, as we see in the case of Germany to-day, and in doing so causes it to cast aside every law of God and man, to kill, poison, outrage, torture, and burn innocent men, women, and children, their only offence being that they have been born in a country whose neutrality Germany had pledged herself to respect by a solemn treaty, which, as soon as it interfered with Germany's will, was torn up and thrown aside as a worthless scrap of paper.

It sometimes seems as if the powers of Hell have broken loose; and one of the agencies which is giving powerful support to Germany in this awful War is the selfishness of men in England who will break their engagements and strike without notice for a slight rise in wages, or will sit boozing in a public-house instead of doing their utmost to help to supply the munitions of war, for want of which their fellow-countrymen have been dying in thousands at the Front. It is probable that it has never occurred to them that they, by their actions, are, in fact, murdering their comrades who are fighting to protect their wives and their children, as well as their country and humanity at large, from slavery so hideous that it is almost impossible to imagine.

If these men realised the evil they are doing by striking and drinking, they would almost certainly give up both during the War, and would do their part in fighting the enemy in the workshops as eagerly and bravely as their comrades in the trenches.

LAUDER BRUNTON.

Dewar, George A.B. 78 (Jul-Dec 1915): 75-82.

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NATIONAL SERVICE

(I)

AN INDIVIDUALIST'S PLEA FOR OBLIGATORY SERVICE: A POSTSCRIPT[1]

SINCE I first wrote on this subject in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, the case for and against the State calling up, by a fair Act of obligatory military service, such men of serviceable years and fit physique as it needs for the War has been discussed in speeches and journals all over the country. That great and supremely important question at length has come well within the sphere of practical politics; this is indisputable, as recent speeches in the country by Mr. Lloyd George and in the House of Commons by Mr. Tennant, so lately as the 21st of June 1915, show clearly enough; we have *not*, said in effect the Under-Secretary of State for War, banged and bolted the door on compulsion—we have not even closed it.

It is true that Mr. Tennant in the same speech expressed a hope and belief that our present system would see us through our difficulties; yet, even so, his candid admission or warning is a sign of the times. Six months ago such an authoritative statement would have been a sensation, eight months ago it would have been an impossibility; now it hardly draws a comment even from quarters where the idea of obligatory service is repugnant in the extreme. We seem to be getting on, gradually.

But though the cause has made some marked progress within the last month or so, and secured a large number of important converts—as well as brought into the open many people who last autumn and winter, from quite excellent and conscientious motives, were only prepared to support it in private—the arguments in favour of and against an obligatory Act for the purposes of the War remain precisely what they were last January, or even last autumn, when the movement first started in earnest. The main argument against a change in the system—it is better

arouse a somewhat bitter dispute. Many people who believe in obligatory service and intensely desire to see it prevail during the War do not agree with me that the opposition would be very earnest or considerable. They are inclined to belittle it. I wish I could think they are right; but I cannot, for I recognise that the opponents, though, of course, far less numerous than a year ago in peace time, are unrelenting in this matter and decline, virtually, to argue or reconsider the question at all. They are dead set against it; they will not hear from friend or political opponent a word in its favour; and they hold that a law of obligatory service means Prussianising this country, making 'Militarists' of us, and the abandonment of all their ideals of pacifism and the civic policing of the world after the War. Their number is perhaps not very large, at least the number of their leading spirits in public life and Press, but they do form a resolute, compact, and powerful body. We should not delude ourselves about this.

It may be urged that this is not an argument at all against a change in the system. Intellectually it is not. But in practice it amounts to one, for we must admit that it is unpleasant, in the middle of a tremendous struggle of life and death against an enemy like Germany, to have a somewhat formidable difference, such as this might prove for a few weeks, among ourselves. I recognise this as I recognised it last January, and, earlier, last autumn when the question began first to engage attention. It is the main objection to, practically the main argument against, obligatory service to-day. It may, of course, be irresistibly swept on one side within the next few months. It is certain to be so swept away, should the War go very badly for the Allies. In such a case the thing will come suddenly of its own momentum, and we shall witness the quick passing through Parliament of a general act of obligatory service, whether or not the ground has been carefully prepared for the step. Meanwhile the opposition to it cannot be overlooked; it is too deplorably obvious.

So much for the real case against, the most formidable objection to a fair and general act of obligatory or national service to-day. The case, the arguments, for the step are exactly as they were six and eight months ago, only they are to-day beginning to be perceived much more clearly, I think, by the public. The argument, once in very general favour, that if we can manage somehow to come through this War on the voluntary system, it will be far better than resorting to compulsion, has weakened.

fair (and besides not economical) for many thousands of patriotic men with home-ties to go to the War, whilst many thousands of young men with lesser ties and a lesser sense of patriotism refrain from going to the War. This feeling is growing stronger and spreading wider. It is a feeling, an instinct, of fair play and common justice that has no relation whatever to class or to party. Democrats and aristocrats, upper class, middle class and working class, Individualists and Collectivists, Liberals, Tories, and men and women who belong to no party and concern themselves with no theory of the State—all alike have begun, some of them dimly and others clearly, to recognise that this arrangement, whether it be pure voluntarism or not, is not working fairly as between man and man.

It is not fair, and it will not pay, people are beginning to say to one another; these are powerful considerations in war as in peace with the British public.

There is another fact in regard to the question of national economy which is now emerging a little clearer than it was some months ago. A rather effective argument against a law of general obligatory service, an argument worked with much industry, was that it would kill our trade. How, it has been asked, can we finance the Allies, and yet take all our men of serviceable age and physique out of trade and turn them into soldiers? It is, of course, quite true that we cannot indefinitely finance our Allies if we destroy our export trade. It would be a most hazardous, even a desperate, step to strip our trade of all the youth and manhood of the nation. But it happens that no thinking man who desires obligatory service proposes any such step. The notion that obligatory service would seize on three or four millions of young men, tear them away forthwith from business, and put them into khaki really is a nightmare. Obligatory service would not call up a man more than it could train and arm.

Obligatory service does not imply that more men would be taken from trade and despatched to the War than it is proposed to take from trade and despatch to the War under the voluntary system.

If it did imply the stripping of trade, my belief in it, I confess, would begin at least to languish; for I am profoundly impressed by the argument that if we strip our trade we cannot hope to continue the William Pitt policy—we cannot continue to finance our Allies. Alike, people of moderation and common-sense who believe in obligatory military service for the War, and people of moderation and common-sense who believe in voluntary military

age and fit physique to the War, we should not be able—in case of anything in the nature of a prolonged struggle—to finance Europe against the enemy. I suggest, with deference, that out-and-out believers in obligatory service now and during the War should make it perfectly clear that they assent to this; because there is a floating and rather general idea that 'bald-headed' advocates of 'Conscription'—to employ a bogey and alarming term, rather an absurd and inaccurate term in this connexion—are indifferent to trade considerations and only desire to put everyone in khaki.

Men of any judgment and sobriety, then, whether they are for obligatory or whether for voluntary service during the War, are in full accord in this matter; both recognise that our business—though it cannot, of course, be 'business as usual' any longer—must be conserved if we are to be effective in a prolonged struggle against Germany, Austria, and Turkey.

Where they differ in a most marked degree, differ vitally, is how best to secure that conservation. So far as I can discover, the voluntarist has no particular plan or system for keeping trade alive; all he insists is that we must not take too many men for the War. He would draw indifferently from all industries, so long as the men therein are willing to enlist. The believer in obligatory service, on the other hand, desires to sort out, to select, and to place the men on a methodical and scientific basis. Obligatory service once in being would enable the State to say to A and B, 'We require you for service in the field'; to C and D, 'We require you for work in the munition factories and workshops'; to E and F, 'We require you to continue in your present occupations on the land and in the factories, etc., where goods are made for export abroad or for use at home.' And so on.

Under obligatory service well organised—a system which cannot, of course, be rushed on the Nation to any good effect, but must be carefully and scientifically worked out well beforehand, say from four to six months at least beforehand[2]—we should attend far more closely and methodically to trade considerations than we can attend so long as desultory and haphazard habits prevail. We should attend rigorously not only to the manning of the munition factories and workshops and to the manning of the Army, but also to the manning of agricultural and of various other essentially civilian industries, which must be kept going and need some proportion of vigorous young men even of a military age and physique. What is that indispensable proportion

[2] Had we agreed to obligatory service last January the problem of the Muni-

or minimum needed to keep alive and healthy various purely civilian industries, which, by trade with Allies and Neutrals, enable us to finance the War and our friends in Europe? It is to be feared that little or indeed nothing definite is known to-day on the subject; probably there are—rather absurd to relate—more facts and figures being even to-day studied and kept up to date by a considerable staff of young men as to such negligible questions as the land inquiry, etc. This is because, when in January, indeed earlier, in October and November, the country was urged at least to prepare the way for obligatory service, nothing whatever was done—it being held that there would never be any need for such a step, and that the War would possibly be over by early May or Midsummer. Is it conceivable that the country will now in the middle of the year take the line it chose at the start of the year—namely, conclude that the War must be over by December, through the Germans, Austrians, and Turks breaking up and retreating; and therefore that there is no need whatever to prepare the ground against a thorough and scientific arrangement of obligatory service, which will solve the problems of men and munitions and help not to destroy but to sustain our export trades? Have we really to wait for another tremendous shaking up before we take the step which every great Power in the world, save ourselves and the United States, has taken, and before we bring ourselves in line with our glorious Allies—France, Russia, Italy, Serbia, Belgium, and even little Montenegro?

Each of these countries has a system of obligatory national service. Australia and New Zealand, whose splendid sons are slowly and surely breaking the power of the enemy in the Dardanelles to-day, have an obligatory service on different lines. South Africa has demanded it lately. The Straits Settlements are debating it even to-day, as the news of the last week or two shows. People who confuse the system of obligatory service with Prussian 'Militarism' and with the Prussianising of the world should turn to the new edition of Dr. Scott Keltie's work, *The Statesman's Year Book*, which the house of Macmillan has just published. Under the head of 'Defence,' they will therein discover what the nations of the world are doing in this supremely essential matter. Obligatory service is the rule to-day throughout Europe, Asia, Australasia, and South America. Except our own country and the United States, there are only two or three trifling exceptions to the adoption of obligatory service by the large and small nations of the world. Empires, Republics, Constitutional Monarchies—all are of the same mind in this: they may differ

carrying with it the perils of the Prussian system, is ridiculous talk; it is on a par with the contemptible and—remembering our gallant Allies and our Australasian kindred—the disloyal talk about obligatory service netting in too many 'cowards.' It is on a par with the boast—which our soldiers laugh at—that one 'free' Englishman is worth three, four, or ten 'slaves' or 'conscripts' in the pressed or forced Armies of our Allies or of the enemy.

Writing six months ago on this subject, I touched on a very grave matter related to the absence of a system of obligatory service which has been, I fear, too much overlooked by the public—namely, the rancour and smouldering illwill which are too likely to prevail all over the country, by and by, as between the families and supporters of those who, being of a serviceable age and physique, answer the call and of those who, likewise being of a serviceable age and physique, do not answer the call. This is the social and—in the unperverted and pure sense of the word—the political rather than the military side of the question. It is, I grant, an exceedingly unpleasant matter; but it is a most important one. Some people, when their attention is drawn to it, try to turn off the question by replying that all we need think of now is how best to carry on the War; that we have a working arrangement in the voluntary system, and that we should not trouble our heads as to what may happen after the War. That is a short-sighted and unwise point of view. It rules out foresight—as if we had not suffered enough, as it is, by ruling out foresight and rubbing along as well as we can by means of afterthoughts! Wise statesmanship is constantly thinking of what may happen after the War: for example, our financial policy to-day is a wise policy that deals with the future largely, and strives to provide against that future. Indeed, a great body of voluntarists are themselves thinking of the future, for they argue that we must not have obligatory service lest obligatory service should in the future—after the War—end in a form of Prussian 'Militarism.'

We are bound to think of the time when, two or three million young men returning from military service, competition—to use a very mild word in this connexion!—arises between them, and their families, and the two or three million young men who have chosen to stay at home. Writing last January I remarked on the bitter reproaches and ill-feeling which the absence of obligatory service must lay up for the country:

> Already we are getting a faint idea, a passing glimpse, of it: there

> under the present system only too natural. Districts are being contrasted with districts, counties with counties; and even the Prime Minister himself the other day seemed to make a claim for Scotland as against other unnamed parts of England. Women are joining in these disastrous but, under the present methods, irremediable disputes; editors of daily and weekly papers receive many letters from the mothers and fathers of sons who have gone or are going to the war; and these letters are often terribly bitter against those who have not gone or will not go. What will happen when the soldiers come back, and hundreds of thousands, even a million or two of them, want work, and in many cases a post cannot be found for them? What is likely to be the feeling between the families and the friends of those who went and the families and friends of those who did not go? It is idle to reply that it will serve those men who did not go quite right if they are reproached and despised, and so forth; and that they will have to turn out of their snug berths when the heroes return. *That* will not banish the ills of rancour and of secret or open hostility between family and family. By not adopting a simple, thorough, and perfectly fair and democratic service scheme, we are laying up for ourselves a world of ill-feeling, envy, and uncharity in the future, a world that may take a generation or more to pass away. Now by an honest Act all this ill-feeling, all these hideous comparisons, must instantly disappear. . . . No invidious and hostile distinctions, under such an Act, will arise as between those who go to the War and those who stay at home.

I venture to think that the ill which must accrue without an Obligatory Act and the complete cure which such an Act would at once effect are not immoderately stated in these words. I have been a voluntarist and an individualist most of my life—since I left college and was forced to make my living by individualism—and I still believe in these principles rather than in State socialism or collectivism. But there are limits to one's belief in the voluntary principle. For example—a perfectly good and fair analogy—it would not answer if the State tried to raise the war taxes by the voluntary method. It might, it is true, raise a very large sum indeed by appealing to the patriotic feelings of the people. It is even conceivable, though unlikely, that the State might raise by voluntary methods all the money it budgeted for. But the result, even so, would not be really good; for many might subscribe far more than their fair share and some might not subscribe anything at all, though perhaps they might be well qualified to help substantially. The effect on the nation would be bad—the moral effect would be especially bad, for example, on those who, being well able to subscribe, declined to subscribe at all.

The voluntary principle has done great work in this War, and it is the bounden duty of us all to support it for all we are

parties—amongst them ungrudging workers such as Lord Derby, Mr. William Crooks, Mr. Bonar Law, and Mr. Henderson, with hundreds of rousing speakers. Above all that Army has been raised through the matchless name and fame of Lord Kitchener. It is the master feat of the kind, so far as my reading of history goes, ever achieved by the voluntary principle. But the experiment has its limits, and we are bound, if the War lasts, to reach them. We should complete and crown this experiment, this improvisation, by the stroke that will establish exact organisation and bring in all the serviceable section of the nation.

Since this article was written Mr. Lloyd George has brought in his Munitions Bill, and we are promised a National Register. Neither, of course, in the smallest degree lessens the case—and the need—for a fair and general measure of obligatory military service. However successful Mr. Lloyd George's Munitions scheme may prove—and we all unreservedly hope that it may prove a complete working success—it leaves the great problem of the men to serve in the field unsolved, and indeed untackled: obligatory military service would have been the master key to the Munitions problem, but the Munitions Bill obviously cannot solve the problem of military service, which, as Captain Guest, M.P., fresh from the Front warned us in this debate, is so pressing now. As to the National Register, it is a benevolent, if a somewhat tentative, move or inclination slightly in the direction we desire. It is, at least, something.

GEORGE A. B. DEWAR.

NATIONAL SERVICE

(II)

INCOME-TAX AND NATIONAL SERVICE

IN the Coalition Government which Mr. Asquith has so far, much to his credit, succeeded in keeping together, there are several surprises, of a more or less generally satisfactory character. Among the latter may, I think, be classed the amazing retirement of Lord Haldane, on the sole ground, apparently, of his literary sympathies. Much more welcome is the diversion of Mr. Lloyd George's indisputable ability from questionable schemes of social reform, more than suspected of a direct party character, to the genuine patriotic activity for the common good which is winning all our hearts. Whether he will be as usefully employed in superintending the provision of munitions as in devising finance for the payment of them may be doubted. I shall prefer to regard him as still having practically a voice in providing or suggesting means for the latter object, and, in that point of view, I venture to reiterate a suggestion of my own, which I have several times brought before public notice already, for reform of the Income-Tax in a quarter from which a considerable increase of revenue might reasonably be counted on. There is little doubt that such an increase will be required ere long, if not for the immediate purposes of the War, certainly for meeting or reducing the tremendous debt which it must leave behind.

Mr. Lloyd George has several times intimated a possibility of making some financial requisition, for the resources of the country, upon the large class which is at present entirely exempt from direct taxation. To this area of taxation I confine my present remarks, except so far as to insist upon the one ruling principle that, for *indirect* taxation, now more than ever, humanity, as well as policy, demands all possible consideration for the necessities of the poor.

Income-Tax has two great conveniences: it can be collected at a moderate and calculable expense, and it can be [illegible]