

## THE SOLDIER VOTE.

IS the Administration afraid of the soldier vote this year? If not, then why does the War Department make it next to impossible to extend the election machinery for the use of the men in uniform?

For instance: General Orders No. 63 reads in part: "It will not be possible to take the vote of any soldier who is actively engaged in military operations, unless such soldier be able to cast his vote by transmitting an executed ballot through the mails as ordinary correspondence." Then the order continues to the effect that the War Department cannot undertake to even forward blank ballots to the soldiers when addressed in care of the Department. The only assistance available is the offer to furnish to each state upon request with the organization address of its qualified electors in the service.

Which implies that the War Department contemplates doing nothing to materially facilitate the canvass of the soldier vote. It will be pleased to furnish each voter's address, of course, but are the army authorities not already bound to forward all legitimate mail and messages to the men at the front, wherever they may be? But the rub comes in the decision to regard an executed ballot as ordinary mail correspondence. This means that every soldier's ballot will be censored, a proceeding absolutely contrary to the theory and practice of the American franchise. Surely the soldier is as much entitled to exercise his right to cast a secret ballot as the civilians at home. He did not forfeit this right when he joined the colors. Also, he is entitled to the assurance that when he has cast his vote, there can be no possible tampering with his individual ballot.

It would seem that the War Department, if it were so disposed, could evolve some practical plan for taking and transmitting the vote of all eligible electors in the army to their proper destination. It is due the soldiers that the right to vote shall follow them wherever they follow the flag.

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## MERE SPECULATION.

"AS Maine goes, so goes the nation," has been a fairly safe political speculation for the past half century. No wonder, then, that the Republicans are optimistic over the outlook. The elections are over in Maine and the G. O. P. have made a clean sweep of everything in sight. Which would seem to augur for a Republican year.

But it is to be noted that the Democrats made serious inroads into the normal Republican majority, cutting it down in several instances to a margin altogether too close to be comfortable. If the same percentage of gain is registered throughout the country, the party in power is sure to carry most of the doubtful states and thereby retain the control of Congress. This, at least, is the view taken by the Democratic prognosticators, who do not seem at all downcast over their first defeat.

But this thought comes: The people in Maine have been enjoying unprecedented prosperity—more, in fact, than their fair share,—due to shipbuilding and other war contracts. It is a fairly safe rule to follow in politics that when times are good and the pocketbooks of the people are fatter than usual, then they feel more friendly to the party in power. This circumstance undoubtedly accounts for the shifting of a few thousand votes from one column to the other. In a number of other states, however, this rule is bound to work in inverse order and do substantial detriment to the Democratic party.

All told, the political situation at present has so many angles that no one short of an inspired prophet can safely speculate on the outcome of the ensuing elections. But it is safe to say that the party in power will not have a walk-over at the polls. The primaries in a number of the big states show that the Republicans are more than holding their own and are rapidly getting in shape for a showdown fight. Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and California all seem to be safely in the G. O. P. column, and we will yet hear from others. It looks like a close contest for the control of Congress.

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Breathitt county, Kentucky, has but one man of draft age left. All the others are volunteers in the army.—Macon Telegraph.

## THOSE GREEDY COTTON-GROWERS.

IT was to be expected that the Southern contingent in Congress would set up a howl over the proposal to fix the price of cotton at a reasonable figure. They are all patriots, of course—to hear them talk; and they believe in the principle of price-fixing—and the practice, too, so long as it does not put a crimp in the pocketbooks of their constituents. But the governmental price-fixers must not tamper with the cotton market. Oh, no! that would never do! It might discourage production, and cotton is needed to win the war. What logic, this?

Yet these are the same fellows who opposed fixing the price of silver at \$1 per ounce. They had the nerve to take the position that this was more than the metal was worth and that the finances of the government were in no shape to guarantee a royalty on the product. And when, in spite of their objection, this price was agreed upon, then they undertook to crow about how generous the government was with the mining industry of the West. Had not Senator Smoot sharply reminded them that silver in the open market would sell for \$1.29, and that the price-fixing of this commodity amounted in fact to a contribution on the part of the mine owners and operators of 29 cents on every ounce of silver produced, to the cause of winning the war, the chances are that they would have really succeeded in making the country believe that a Democratic administration had guaranteed a royalty to a Western industry.

And so with other commodities. The Southerners in Congress are more than willing to curtail abnormal profits on any article produced north of the Mason and Dixon line, but cotton must not be molested. And to make sure that the cotton-growers get the top price, it is perfectly all right for Secretary McAdoo, himself a Southerner, to indirectly advance a few hundred millions of federal funds to these growers to enable them to hold back their product for the highest possible price. Cotton is still king in America—and will be so long as the South is in the saddle.

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## FACING THE FACTS.

ONE cannot very well escape the conviction that when it comes to plain speech and matter of fact discussion of war questions, the British have the best of us. Their leaders have long since determined the wisdom of taking the people into their confidence, with the result that the papers and publicists and political leaders of the kingdom are held in higher regard than is the case in America.

In speaking of the advantages of telling the truth, no matter how it may hurt, and of its bracing effect upon the morale of the people, Mr. Asquith took occasion to observe recently in the course of a speech before Parliament:

"What, then, is our duty at the present moment? What are the faculties we most need? Courage, of course, and patience—the courage that can face facts and cannot only dare but endure; patience that cannot be driven from its equipoise by any alterations either of hope or fear. \* \* \* But let me suggest one or two ways in which they may be helped and fortified. In the first place, let us be able to feel whatever comes or goes, that we know the truth and the whole truth. \* \* \* In my judgment we have reached a stage of the war when far more is to be gained than lost by laying before our own people all the actualities, be they favorable or adverse, of an unexampled situation. \* \* \* There is no reason, there never was less reason, why the voice of honest and patriotic criticism should be hushed into silence, but let us keep our eyes fixed and our hearts set on the great dominating purposes to which we have deliberately consecrated the resources and energies of the Empire, with an unwavering faith both in the worthiness of our aims and in the certainty that they will be achieved."

To which Colonel George Harvey adds in behalf of America: "All that we want is discussion, and then we are sure to do well, no matter what our blunders may be. One error conflicts with another; each destroys its opponent, and truth is evolved." Hence criticism that counts.