

BORDEN : CONSCRIPTION AND UNION GOVERNMENT

by

James A. Crowley



Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa through the School of Graduate Studies as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Degree conferred May 22, 1958

E. H. [Signature]

Toronto, Canada, 1958.

Secret Graduate Division

UMI Number: DC53290

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform DC53290
Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author deeply appreciates the assistance of the many who aided in the preparation of the thesis. To Dr. Brault of the Public Archives of Canada and the University of Ottawa the author extends his appreciation for the advice and guidance received on the preparation of the manuscript. To Dr. Buxton of the University of Ottawa the author extends his gratitude for the supervision of the research and direction on the development of the thesis. To Father Thivierge, O.M.I., of the University of Ottawa, the author expresses his thanks for the kind advice and encouragement given.

For assistance in research the author is indebted to the staff of the following: Public Archives of Canada; Reference Division, Toronto Public Library; University of Toronto Library; and Library of Parliament.

Thanks are also due for assistance received from the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, the Provincial Library of Alberta, and the reference divisions of the following Public Libraries: Hamilton, London, Montreal, Ottawa, St. Catharines, Saskatoon and Quebec.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	vii
I. - BORDEN'S VIEWS ON IMPERIAL RELATIONS	1
I TRADE AND ECONOMICS	1
II CANADIAN AUTONOMY	11
III IMPERIAL DEFENCE	21
IV NAVAL MATTERS WITHIN THE EMPIRE	36
II. - POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON THE PASSAGE OF THE MILI- TARY SERVICE ACT AND THE FORMATION OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT	74
I 1914: THE BORDEN GOVERNMENT GIRDS ITSELF FOR WAR	74
II 1915: INTERNAL DISSENSION: ITS EFFECT ON RECRUITING	83
III 1916: VOLUNTEER RECRUITING SLOWS: DEMANDS FOR CONSCRIPTION ARISE	99
IV 1917: CONSCRIPTION AND UNION GOVERNMENT	120
1. Volunteer Recruiting fails to meet the Government Goal of 500,000 men: Borden Resorts to Conscription: Results	120
2. The Liberal Party and the Failure of Coalition in June 1914	135
3. The Liberal Party and the Passage of the Military Service Bill	168
4. The Liberal Party and the Formation of the Union Government	190
III. - INFLUENCE OF NEWSPAPERS AND PUBLIC OPINION ON CONSCRIPTION AND UNION GOVERNMENT	239
I NEWSPAPER INFLUENCE ON CONSCRIPTION	239
II NEWSPAPER INFLUENCE ON UNION GOVERNMENT	257
III PUBLIC OPINION: ITS EFFECT ON CONSCRIPTION.	283
IV PUBLIC OPINION: ITS INFLUENCE ON UNION GOVERNMENT.	301
IV. - IMPERIAL INFLUENCES ON CONSCRIPTION	317
I THE IMPERIALIST OUTLOOK OF BORDEN: ITS EFFECT ON CONSCRIPTION	317
II INFLUENCE OF THE IMPERIAL CABINET ON BORDEN.	326
III IMPERIAL PRESSURE FOR REINFORCEMENTS	333
IV ANALYSIS OF THE BORDEN POSITION IN RELATION TO THE OTHER EMPIRE WAR EFFORTS	339
V. - MILITARY INFLUENCES ON CONSCRIPTION	349

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
CONCLUSIONS	368
ABSTRACT	385
BIBLIOGRAPHY	388

ABBREVIATIONS

- Armstrong, Crisis of Quebec : Armstrong, E., The Crisis of Quebec, 1914-18, New York, Columbia, 1938.
- Borden, Memoirs : Henry Borden, (ed.), Robert Laird Borden, His Memoirs, Toronto, Macmillan, 1938, 2 vols.
- C.A.R. : Canadian Annual Review, 1902-1918.
- C.H.R. : Canadian Historical Review.
- C.M.A. : Canadian Manufacturers Association.
- Debates, Commons : Canada, Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons.
- Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy : Dewey, A.G., The Dominions and Diplomacy, London, Macmillan, 1929, v.I.
- G.A.Q. 10-47C : General Staff, Administration, and Quartermaster-general file, Army Historical section, National Defence Head Quarters.
- H.Q. 1982-1-71, v.I : Headquarters Files, Army Historical Section, National Defence Head Quarters.
- Hopkins, Canada at War : Hopkins, J.C., Canada At War, 1914-18, Toronto, The Canadian Annual Review Limited, 1919.
- Lucas, Empire at War : Lucas, Sir C., (ed.), The Empire at War, Oxford, Milford, 1923, v.II.
- P.A.C. : Public Archives of Canada.
- Senate, Debates : Canada, Official Report of the Debates of the Senate of Canada.
- Skelton, Laurier : Skelton, O.D., The Life and Times of Sir Wilfred Laurier, Toronto, Gundy, 1921, v.II.
- T.P.L. : Toronto Public Library Scrapbook Series, Reference Library, Toronto Public Library.

ABBREVIATIONS (Continued)

Note: in the footnotes of the thesis the letter 'p', referring to pages in a source, is omitted.

Note: in the case of newspapers, where the date only is recorded (and not page or column) the reference is to the editorial page.

Note: with reference to the Debates of the House of Commons, the term "col." is used to denote the pagination of the volume to which it refers.

INTRODUCTION

After years of studying and teaching Canadian History I became intrigued with two themes, conscription, and French Canada, during World War I, because it appeared to me that most of the attitudes I had encountered on these matters were merely opinions, and were not based on conclusions drawn from research. Like other English speaking Canadians I had always accepted conscription as being the result of a genuine desire to supply more reinforcements.

As an admirer of French Canada, with its rich traditions and cultural heritage I felt it a pity that the French Canadian point of view on conscription was so little appreciated in the rest of Canada.

Thus I set out to find exactly why conscription was passed, and to determine whether it was merely an act of military necessity (as has been popularly accepted) or whether it had deeper, political overtones.

The resultant thesis sets forth the influences behind conscription and has satisfied me that I can no longer accept the prevailing notion that conscription was brought about solely by the desire to get more reinforcements.

My research has deepened my admiration for the French Canadians because of their willingness at all times to defend their rights as Citizens of Canada.

It is my hope that my research has thrown a different sense of perspective on the issue of conscription. It is my desire that this thesis will promote a keener understanding of the political and social traditions of French Canada, and in doing so, provide a better appreciation of the role French Canada has played in the history of Canada.

CHAPTER ONE

BORDEN'S VIEWS ON IMPERIAL RELATIONS

1

TRADE AND ECONOMICS

In the field of trade and the closely related problems such as preference and tariffs Borden was a firm adherent to a mutual preference within the Empire and above all, with the Mother Country. He felt too that Canada, as a member of the Empire, should be given the same treatment as was afforded England herself in her relations with other countries. He made this emphatically clear in a speech delivered in Toronto at a Liberal-Conservative rally in May 1901.

We gave a preference to Great Britain in 1897 and have increased that preference since. In consequence of representations which have been made in previous years, in consequence of complications which were brought about by reason of that preference, the Belgian and German treaties were denounced and brought to an end. The German treaty of commerce was continued by which Great Britain gets a lower tariff rate in Germany than certain other nations. Germany has not given us that low rate under the new arrangement. We stand therefore, as far as Germany is concerned, in this position, that we have to meet in Germany a higher tariff than that which is encountered by goods imported in Germany from Great Britain or the United States. We think that in giving a preference to countries within the Empire, Great Britain should not suffer us to receive that treatment from Germany.... Is it right and just to say that in giving a preference to Great Britain and other portions of the Empire we should be excluded from that lower tariff in Germany to which Great Britain is entitled. The German Zollverein makes what tariff it likes among countries that compose it. Shall we in the British Empire have the same right without incurring the hostile legislation and without

it being incurred in by the Mother Country?¹

Borden carried this same message across the country, establishing it as a Liberal-Conservative tenet. "At a banquet tendered to me by the Liberal-Conservatives at Halifax on July 1st, (...) I affirmed our belief in mutual preferential trade within the Empire"².

Borden was obviously conscious of the economic entity of the Empire which he felt could and should be the goal of the Government in Great Britain. "Regarding his own views upon the tariff, he said that he believed that a factory in Canada was as valuable to the Empire as if it was situated in Yorkshire"³.

On April 14, the Chancellor of His Majesty's Government announced a higher duty on imported grain. This included Canadian wheat exports to England and Borden was moved to make a great appeal for preferential treatment of Canadian goods in general and grain in particular.

We on this side have been asking the government for the past two or three years to endeavour to secure for Canada a preference in the British markets has my hon. friend had the courage to say to the Mother Country, we in Canada do desire a preference in the United Kingdom; and as we have given you a preference, which, whether it has done you good or not, is well intended, will you give us a preference by exempting Canada, at least from the operation of this duty on bread stuff?⁴ (...) does (the right honourable gentleman)

1. Quoted in The Mail and Empire, Toronto, May 28, 1901, p.1, col.7.
2. Borden, Memoirs, I, 81.
3. Commentary in The Globe, Toronto, Aug. 15, 1902, p.1, col.7, Speech at banquet of C.M.A. in Halifax, Aug. 14, 1902.
4. Borden, Debates, April 14, 1902, col.2747.

adhere now to the view which we on this side of the House expressed last year by a resolution (...) that it is a good time and the proper time, and the proper thing to do, to ask the Mother Country that the products of Canada at least shall be exempted from the tax which is being placed on food stuffs, and that the farmers and agriculturists of this country shall receive from the Mother Country a preference by being exempted from that tax¹.

Borden's incessant demands for Imperial preference saw his party officially adopt it as a mainstay in their platform in 1907.

The Conservative party has always stood and still stands for a policy of preferential trade within the Empire. (...) I submit to you as another article of Conservative policy, the promotion by negotiation, legislation and other constitutional means, of a system of mutual preferential trade within the Empire².

While Borden regarded the Empire as an economic entity and his mutual preference plan within the Empire was based on this principle, nevertheless he sought preference primarily to aid Canadian producers in finding markets within the Empire. At heart he was an economic nationalist.

In 1911 he voiced his feelings in these words.

I propose to throw the trade of this country into British Channels; but I would not destroy a factory in Canada to build a factory in Yorkshire; I stand for Reciprocity within the Empire, and within the Empire I stand for Canada first³.

Obviously Borden was willing to discriminate against the products of any country so long as it resulted in

-
1. Op.cit. col.2749.
 2. Quoted in The Liberal-Conservative Platform (as laid down by R. L. Borden, M.P., Opposition Leader, at Halifax), Aug. 28, 1907, N.p.N.d., p.20.
 3. Quoted in C.A.R., 1911, 95. Speech at Grandview, July 6, 1911.

protection of native Canadian industries. As this included English products too, his motive was obviously to build up Canada as a solid unit in the economic entity of the Empire.

In cherishing, encouraging and protecting the industries of Canada, we are not only true to the interests of Canada herself, but we are true to the interests of the whole Empire¹.

But this attitude was merely the logical development of a viewpoint ably expressed by Borden in the House of Commons in the form of a proposed amendment.

This House regarding the operation of the present tariff as unsatisfactory is of opinion that this country requires a declared policy of such adequate protection to its labour, agricultural products, manufactures and industries, as will at all times secure the Canadian market for Canadians. And, while always firmly maintaining the necessity of such protection to Canadian interests, this House affirms its belief in a policy of reciprocal trade preferences within the empire².

He further substantiates this viewpoint.

Canada was the third best customer of the United States, Mr. Borden said, and it might not be difficult for it to become a slaughter market. But the people of Canada were determined that this country should not be allowed to become such. Our industries must receive a full and adequate protection³.

While Borden favoured a tariff to fulfil the obvious functions of (1) protection to Canadian industries (2) as a source of national revenue afforded the Federal Government under the British North America Act, he also desired a

-
1. Quoted in Industrial Canada, II, no.4, 1901, 148. Speech at Annual Banquet of C.M.A., Montreal, Nov. 6, 1901.
 2. Borden, Debates, Mar. 18, 1902, col.1322.
 3. Quoted in The Mail and Empire, Toronto, Aug. 15, 1902, p.1, col.7.

tariff revision to remove the unfavourable trade ratio between British and American exports and imports in the field of Canadian trade. He gave figures to prove his desires.

My honourable friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce, in dealing with this matter in 1897, said that in the very last year of the Conservative term of office, we exported to England apparently \$66,000,000 worth of our products, and to the United States, \$44,000,000 worth, and we bought from England \$32,000,000 of their merchandise and from the United States, \$58,000,000 worth of their goods. Well, hon. gentlemen you will at once realize that the figures are very much more in favour of the United States and against England today than they were then. Does the Minister of Commerce say that there is now a genuine, practical discrimination to an enormous extent against England and in favour of the United States under the Liberal policy? Look at the figures now. In 1901 we exported to England \$105,000,000 worth of our products, and to the United States, after deducting gold bullion and silver concentrates, \$44,000,000 and we bought from England \$43,000,000 worth of goods and from the United States, goods to the extent of \$116,000,000¹.

In this discrimination Mr. Borden saw more than a mere unfavourable trade balance to English goods. To him it meant that the American Colossus was so vast it could out-ride any discrimination and still beat an economic "favoured nation neighbour" (England) in the Canadian market. Any form of reciprocity with the United States was out of the question.

What we want in Canada is a tariff framed for the purpose of preserving the Canadian Markets for the Canadian people (...). And if we have this reciprocity of tariffs that is talked of, how would we stand with these enormous American trusts which are beginning to control all the industries of that country².

-
1. Borden, Debates, March 18, 1902, col.1326.
 2. Ibid. col.1377.

Mr. Borden was more than annoyed at the protectionist attitudes of many Americans including President McKinley¹ and Mr. Champ Clarke, an American Manufacturer. The latter's views are worth repeating because they provide an understandable background to Borden's opposition to reciprocity in the period of 1910-11.

In 1898 Canada put into effect a tariff which now gives to the British exporter 33 per cent better rates than you (American exporters) can get if you export to Canada. Here was a chance to see how reciprocity would work under favourable circumstances. With what result? You would think England would have made enormous gains. I will not bother with figures but will say that up to and including 1900, England had absolutely lost ground and we gained it, with a 33 per cent differential duty operating against us. The Canadians had every kind of inducement, the money inducement and the loyalty inducement and the desire to buy British goods, and yet we beat the Englishman on Canadian ground with a 33 per cent duty in their favour².

To Borden the basic argument against any reciprocity agreement with the United States was based on two premises.

(1) economic danger to Canada (2) a threat to Canada's political position within the British Empire.

(1) Economic danger to Canada: Borden felt that the proposed reciprocity agreement on natural resources, sponsored by the Laurier Government would place Canada on a too-dependent position on the United States. He cited the reciprocity agreement of 1854 which was abrogated in 1866. To him future agreements might fall the same way.

During the past six years we had sold to Great Britain \$300,000,000 in excess of our imports to that

1. Op.cit. col.1332.

2. Ibid. col.1327.

country; in the same period we had purchased from the United States \$500,000,000 in excess of our exports to that country. The British preference had ceased to be a preference. The policy of the Government pointed toward absolute Free Trade and commercial union with the United States. After lines of trade had been diverted, after we had become absolutely dependent upon the newly established trade relations with the United States, Congress could, and in a moment of pique might, abrogate the agreement in a day and dislocate the conditions of trade. This dislocation would mean little to the United States but might be ruinous to Canada¹.

Any policy which suggested destruction of the British preference and which indicated a possibility of economic ruin for Canada, was stoutly resisted by Borden and his followers much to the discomfiture of the Liberals. In substantiation of his own views Borden quoted from a letter written by President Taft to ex-President Theodore Roosevelt and made public in 1911. Taft had written:

It (reciprocity) might at first have a tendency to reduce the cost of food products somewhat; it would certainly make the reservoir much greater and prevent fluctuations. Meantime the amount of Canadian products we would take would produce a current of business between Western Canada that would make Canada only an adjunct of the United States. It would transfer all their important business to Chicago and New York, with their bank credits and everything else, and it would increase greatly the demand of Canada for our manufactures. I see this is an argument against reciprocity made in Canada, and I think it is a good one².

Borden felt this was very offensive to Canadians "who looked forward to the development of their country as a great nation within the British Commonwealth"³.

-
1. Borden, Memoirs I, 305.
 2. Ibid. 319.
 3. Ibid.

(2) Political danger to Canada: Economic union was to be followed by a political union. Of this Borden was convinced. He agreed with the views of an eminent German economist, Professor Von Schultze-Gaevernitz whose views were published by a visitor to Canada, Mr. Geoffrey Drage.

As Professor Von Schulze-Gaevernitz has pointed out, a Zollverein between the United States and Canada would be both commercially and politically the death of British Dominion in North America. Political union must follow commercial union¹.

Mr. Drage added himself. "Such a union would also be the political suicide of Canada, who would lose the political identity which she has developed and of which she is so jealously proud...."²

Annexationist feeling was very rampant in the views of Mr. Champ Clark, a man more competent at indiscretion than realizing the harm he was doing to the reciprocity movement in Canada.

I hope to see the day when the American flag will float over every square foot of the British North American possession, clear to the North Pole.... I have no doubt whatever that the day is not far distant when Great Britain will joyfully see all North American possessions become part of this Republic. That is the way things are tending now³.

Even President Taft referred to the Canadians as "parting at the ways"⁴.

1. Borden, Debates, Feb. 9, 1911, col.3309-10.
2. G. Drage, The Imperial Organization of Trade, London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1911, 68.
3. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 319-20.
4. Quoted in Borden, Debates Feb. 9, 1911, col.3309.

Much to Borden's pleasure, an eminent Liberal summed up the problem (as seen by the Liberal-Conservatives) when Sir Edmund Walker addressed a Board of Trade protest meeting in Toronto on February 16, 1911.

Although I am a Liberal, I am a Canadian first of all, and I can see this is much more than a trade question. Our alliance with the Mother Country must not be threatened. We must assimilate our immigrants and make out of them good Canadians, and this Reciprocity Agreement is the most deadly danger as tending to make this problem more difficult. The question is between British connection and what has been called "Continentalism"¹.

More Liberals caught up the rallying cry until eighteen of them published a manifesto opposing the reciprocity agreement. They described Canadian nationality as "threatened with a more serious blow than any it has heretofore met with"².

Borden met with much opposition from the Grain Growers of Western Canada, who sought his support of the reciprocity agreement at a meeting at Brandon. Their demands fell on deaf ears.

Of your powerful influence in this Western country, I am fully persuaded; but if it were ten times what it is and if you were able and were prepared to make me Prime Minister tomorrow on condition that I would support this pact, I would not do it³.

The closing days of the Liberal-Conservative campaigns are studded with summaries of the Borden viewpoint.

-
1. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 307.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid. 316.

In summing up the platform of his party in the forthcoming election, Borden spoke clearly of the threat to Empire solidarity, inherent in the reciprocity agreements.

And lastly we pledge ourself to a course of policy and administration which will maintain independent and unimpaired the control of our own affairs by the Parliament of Canada; a policy which, while affording no just cause of complaint to any foreign nation will find its highest ideal in the atonomous development of Canada as a nation within the British Empire.

Borden spoke in the same vein.^{29217.}

In the past we have made a great sacrifice to further our national ideals; we are now face to face with a misguided attempt to throw away the result of these sacrifices.

The true issue is this. Shall we continue in the course which has led us to our present enviable position of prosperity and national development, or shall we at the moment of greatest success and achievement, lose heart and abandon the fight for national existence.

Upon this momentous issue I appeal to the people with the utmost confidence and in the firm belief that their verdict will be for the unity and not for the disintegration of Canada; for the strengthening and not the loosening of the ties which bind this Dominion to the British Empire¹.

To Borden more than economic freedom was at stake. He made out reciprocity to be the end of Canada as a politically independent nation. In one of his last appeals, made at Halifax, he threw down the challenge in unmistakable terms. His former references to Clark and Taft made him aware of the rise of American annexationist feeling.

And let us never forget that Canada cannot become physically and commercially a part of the United States and remain politically a part and an

1. Op.cit. 325.

important part of the British Empire....

Less than two years ago, by the Treaty of Prohibitory Duties they forced our Government to alter our tariff; do not imagine that the spirit which compelled this unwarranted concession to our powerful neighbour will die on the morrow of its first great success....

I believe that we are in truth, standing today at the parting of the ways. This compact made in secret and without mandate points, indeed, to a new path. We must decide whether the spirit of Canadianism or of Continentalism shall prevail on the northern half of this continent¹.

Thus Borden feared Canada's future as a political entity if any steps were taken towards the reciprocity agreement. There could be, for him, no half-way position. It was either reciprocity or "the preservation of our heritage (...)
the maintenance of our commercial and political freedom, (...)
the permanence of Canada as an autonomous nation within the British Empire"².

II

CANADIAN AUTONOMY

The relationship of Canada to Great Britain afforded Borden the medium for expressing some interesting views.

Borden was essentially an autonomist

because I yield to no one of these men in the attitude they have taken that Canada must not in any way give up the rights of self government for which so much effort has been expended and which have developed so very gradually but surely during the past 50 or 60 years in this country³.

1. Op.cit. 327.

2. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 328.

3. Borden, Debates, Feb. 11, 1907, col.2898.

Borden also observed that he was prepared "to go as far" as the Prime Minister "as far as any gentleman in this house, in absolutely maintaining in this country of ours the full control of our own affairs which we have enjoyed in the past...."¹ Again Borden noted: "Within the Empire I stand for Canada first"².

As early as 1902 Borden had expressed a deeper appreciation of Canadian autonomy while addressing the House of Commons.

I shall maintain that Canada should advance so far as the right to govern herself is concerned. The preservation of that complete self-government which is dear to every great dependency must go hand in hand with the co-operation which is necessary in the larger matters of Imperial concern³.

In the election of 1911, Canadian Autonomy in the Empire was a plank in the Conservative platform. According to Borden

we pledge ourselves to a course of policy and administration which will maintain independent and unimpaired the control of our own affairs by the Parliament of Canada; a policy which, while affording no just cause of complaint to any foreign nation will find its highest ideal in the autonomous development of Canada as a nation within the British Empire⁴.

But Borden was quick to point out the danger of any commercial union with the United States.

As Professor Von-Schulze-Gaevnitz has pointed out, a Zolleverein between the United States and

1. Op.cit. Mar. 29, 1907, col.3513.

2. Quoted in C.A.R., 1911, 95.

3. Borden, Debates, April 15, 1902, col.2747.

4. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 325.

Canada would be both commercially and politically the death of British Dominion in North America. Political union must follow commercial union.... Such a union would also be the political suicide of Canada, who would lose the political identity which she has developed and of which she is so jealously proud¹.

Borden further substantiates his hatred of independence from the Empire.

The Liberal Party is constantly preaching the autonomy of the Dominion of Canada along the line of the independence of Canada, and separation from Great Britain in the near future, while the great Conservative Party holds staunchly to the idea of a great Canadian Nation within the British Empire².

Borden personally pledged his loyalty to the Empire.

I am not one of those who look to see the integrity of the British Empire menaced by the future independence of Canada. Like Sir John Macdonald, I was born a British subject, I shall remain a British subject, I hope to die a British subject. I trust the day will never come when the British flag will cease to float over this Canada of ours³.

There could be only one future for Canada out of a possible three. He stated:

There are three possible futures before this country, one is existence as an independent nation; another is absorption in or annexation to the United States of America; the third is a continuance of the relations which at present exist between Canada and the United States. The last is the future condition of this country to which I look forward as likely to be permanent⁴.

What was the true position of Canada within the Empire? To the question Borden afforded a penetrating analysis.

-
1. Borden, Debates, Feb. 9, 1911, col.3309-10.
 2. Ibid. Nov. 25, 1910, col.285.
 3. Ibid. March 29, 1909, col.3518.
 4. Ibid. May 12, 1902, col.4706.

What did we accomplish first after the troubles of 1837. We got responsible government, responsibility of the executive to the people, the absolute control of Parliament over the revenues of the country. Then, we got control of our public lands; they were thereafter managed not in the Mother Country but by the Canadian Parliament and the Canadian Executive. Then we got absolute control of our fiscal policy. Then we advanced to the control of our own Commercial treaties. So, from the rudiments of self government that prevailed before 1837, we have by degrees advanced to a period when Canada is a nation within the British Empire, having practically complete self government¹.

Self government then, to Borden, was the keystone to Canada's autonomy within the Empire, and underlay Canada's relationship with Great Britain.

Now with respect to the relation of Canada to the Empire - this remarkable fact impresses one in looking at the history of Great Britain and her colonies in the past, namely that the greater the control, the greater the self-government that has been entrusted by Great Britain to her colonies, the closer and stronger the tie that exists between those colonies and herself. We know to what a very great extent Canada enjoys the right of self-government, and every Canadian knows that at no time in the history of the past has the tie between Canada and the Mother Country been closer and stronger than at the present time².

Thus to Borden Canadian self-government, rather than weakening the bonds of Empire union to the point of disintegration or independence, tended to strengthen them.

In securing the right of self-government in domestic affairs, Canada had taken the lead not only in its initiation but in its continued development. The most eminent British statesman had believed that self-government for the colonies meant separation from the Mother Country. If it had not been granted, the Empire would have been dismembered. Canadians had claimed self-government as a gift and as a right.

1. Op.cit. May 15, 1913, col.10035.

2. Quoted in Industrial Canada, II, no.4, 1901, 149.

It had strengthened the ties that bind the Dominions to the Mother Country....¹

While Borden admired this strengthening of the bonds, he nevertheless stood for a firm establishment and protection of Canadian rights. Within the British family, Canada must have the maturity of an older son, with the responsibilities and rights consequential to such a role. Commenting on the Alaskan Boundary settlement in 1903 Borden had this to say. "I am as loyal a British subject as is to be found in Canada but I stand first of all in matters of this kind for the rights of Canada which must be maintained"².

Of particular interest is his interpretation of the power of the British Parliament inherent in the Colonial Laws Validity Act. The issue arose over Canada's right to amend the Canadian Shipping Act. In a lengthy exposition of his views Borden made the following stand in his attempt to clarify the rights of Canada in this matter.

(In such matters) it would be the duty of the Imperial parliament always to consult the government of Canada with respect to any amendments which concern this country. Constitutional writers as the Minister of Marine and Fisheries and every lawyer in the House who has paid attention to constitutional law knows, affirm that there is a vast difference between the legal power to pass a statute or to perform a legislative Act and the constitutional right to do it. The King in Great Britain, as part of the imperial parliament, has the technical right, the legal power to disallow any statute of Great Britain since the reign of Queen Anne, and it may be said to have fallen into desuetude. Other instances could be given. While the imperial parliament has the absolute technical right to repeal the British North America Act, pro tanto,

1. Borden, Memoirs, I, 82.
2. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 101.

in respect to legislation affecting this country, I would respectfully submit that it has not the constitutional right to do so, without first consulting the government of this country and ascertaining whether or not the proposed legislation will meet and fulfil the wants and requirements of the people of Canada; so I think it might well be stated to the imperial government that in respect of any proposed amendments of the Merchant Shipping Act which concern or affect this country the government and parliament of Canada ought to be consulted in the first place before bringing about any such state of confusion as that which apparently does exist at the present moment. I would suggest that a respectful despatch along those lines would possibly prevent instances of this confusion being brought to our attention in future¹.

He made his point even more emphatic when he spoke the following words, claiming that

it is certainly only constitutionally right that we should be consulted before any Acts of the Imperial government are passed which conflict with the opinion of the people of this country as expressed in their parliamentary enactments affecting the inland waters of Canada².

Borden held forth on the future of Canada within the Empire. It was inevitable that this topic would be probed by the Liberal-Conservative leader and his attitude is thought-provoking as well as stimulating. He had already made clear his views on the autonomous role of Canada within the Imperial orbit. The following typifies this viewpoint.

How shall we stand in the future within this Empire? Shall we, as Mr. Goldwyn Smith desires and predicts, become part of the great American Republic? Shall we follow the aspirations of Sir Wilfred Laurier who hopes and believes that Canada will sever her connection with the British Empire as a ripe apple drops from a tree?

Or, shall we follow the ideal of Sir John A. Macdonald who foresaw and predicted a cordial and

1. Borden, Debates, Feb. 12, 1908, col.3031.
2. Ibid.

healthy alliance with the Mother Country by which Canada would become a powerful nation owning allegiance to the British sovereign and flag and maintaining the advantage of connection with the greatest Empire of the World?¹

On Sept. 19, 1911 he sent forth a similar message in a final appeal to the Canadians.

I make an earnest and sincere appeal (...) for the preservation of our heritage, for the maintenance of our commercial and political freedom, for the permanence of Canada as an autonomous nation within the British Empire².

Borden spoke of future ties within the Empire that would probably be bound more tightly than the already existing ones. The existing harmony between Canada and Great Britain

may point to even closer ties in the future. Men have speculated, men have dreamt of what these closer ties might be. For my part I do not think that any change of that type will be sudden or abrupt. The genius of the British peoples points to gradual changes. How these changes will come - as I believe they will come - in the future, it is not for me to say. That they will be closer in the future I, for myself, believe, and believe this further, that as to the closeness of these ties in the future, the fact that they will be closer will come from the initiative of the colonies.

If we look at history we find that in almost every single case the advance has come from the colonies. I think that it will be the same in the future....³

Furthermore Borden felt these speculated closer ties would undoubtedly follow commercial lines. He argued "and I

1. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 258-9.

2. Ibid. 328. Speech to Halifax County Convention, Oct. 15, 1909.

3. Quoted in Industrial Canada, II, no.4, 1901, 148. Speech to Annual Banquet of C.M.A., 1901.

believe that when those closer ties do come, they perhaps will come in the form of closer commercial relations between ourselves and the Mother Country"¹.

But Borden realized the difficulty facing any such tightening of the ties binding the Empire. "I do not disguise from myself the difficulties which surround the subject at the present time. We all, in Canada, are a unit with regard to the desirability of some such project as that...."²

Thus while Borden was unsure of the eventual outcome of the impending closer association between Empire members he felt Canadians approved of such a scheme. Any changes would be gradual in the mind of Borden.

Further I believe the development of those relations will be gradual and according to the necessities of the moment. The British people have not been apt to take cut and dry schemes. Constitutional government in Britain, as in Canada, has been gradual and according to the necessities of the moment, and I believe that the closer union between the Colonies and the Mother land will be one that, on the initiative of the Colonies, will come gradually as the necessities of the time may call for it³.

The logical topic for Borden to express himself upon was that of Imperial Federation, the Joseph Chamberlain step-child that had already been ousted from the minds of the Dominion leaders. In Canada Laurier had consistently and persistently given a negative reception to it. Borden was

1. Op.cit.

2. Ibid.

3. Quoted in C.A.R., 1905, 513.

not known to discuss the matter in itself but some notion of where he would have stood can be garnered from remote allusions. In 1902 he mentioned "that the closer relations which I speak of may come in that way (closer commercial relations) or they may come through some scheme of Imperial defense"¹. He pointed out "I believe that the closer union between the colonies and the Mother land (...) will come gradually as the necessities of time may call for it"².

These views were held up to 1905. In 1907, while commenting on Laurier's refusal to attend an Imperial defense discussion, Borden remarked "there is no reason why we should not at least discuss with the Mother Country, when invited in a courteous way to do so, the question of imperial defense"³.

But in 1907 Borden had his greatest opportunity to comment upon the possibility of Imperial Federation. It arose when Colonel Sam Hughes introduced a motion pertaining directly to this topic.

"That in the opinion of this House the interests of Canada and the British Empire would best be served by a full partnership union between Great Britain and her colonies"⁴.

Sir Robert replied, saying,

the tendency in recent years (has been) (...) along the line of a council which might be regarded as an imperial council in which there should be

-
1. Quoted in Industrial Canada, XI, no.4, 1901, 149.
 2. Quoted in C.A.R., 1905, 513.
 3. Borden, Debates, May 12, 1907, col.4706.
 4. Ibid. Feb. 11, 1907, col.2840.

representation from every one of the great colonies of the empire, and which should have the duty of advising the King in respect of matters purely of imperial concern. Whether or not it shall be along that line or along the line of the suggestion made tonight (...) I cannot tell. All I desire to say in conclusion is that I do not believe that these closer relations will fail to benefit by the process of growth and development. That is the lesson we should draw from the experience of the past. That the ties that bind us all together within the empire will be strengthened in the future I firmly believe. I believe that they will be closer, not only for the benefit of the empire, but for the benefit of the empire as a whole¹.

Borden explained his reference to the council in which the great colonies would sit.

He (Mr. Haldane, Minister of War), advocated a consultative council in which all the great self governing dominions of the empire should be represented (...) its consummation must necessarily be accompanied by a parliament for England, a Parliament for Scotland, a Parliament for Ireland².

For Borden, the future indicated a closer tie between Canada and the Mother Country, a tie based on Canadian initiative primarily, but one probably pivoting on some defensive scheme. For the autonomist Borden, Canada would never surrender her sovereignty in such dealings with England. He declined to be any more definite than this in referring to Imperial Federation or any movement or activity that remotely suggested it.

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Ibid. col.2899.

III

IMPERIAL DEFENSE

Borden's whole approach to Imperial defense was based upon one premise viz: that Canada was an inseparable portion of an indivisible whole which constituted the British Empire. He made this clear when he stated: "We are either of the British Empire or not of it; we are either in the Empire for weal or woe, or we are out of it"¹.

Therefore any member of the empire must be at war when England is at war. Dewey summed it up when he stated "the central fact which throughout the Brittanic controversy prior to the War, governed the reactions of all participants was the legal unity of the Empire"².

Borden stated the problem most succinctly in these hard hitting words.

That Canada must be at war when the Empire is at war, any man who has the slightest acquaintance with international law knows that this is absolutely the case. Yet my right honourable friend (the Prime Minister) has somewhat receded from that opinion today, because he has told us that under conceivable circumstances the rest of the Empire might be at war while Canada was at peace. Such a proposition is absolutely impossible. So long as Canada remains in the Empire, Canada is at war when the British Empire is at war. So long as the English flag floats above Canada, Canada is at war when that flag is attacked. The moment a shot is fired, or a blow is struck at that flag, Canada is at war with the nation, or country which fires that shot or strikes that blow³.

-
1. Borden, Debates, March 29, 1909, col.3519.
 2. Quoted in Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, I, 23.
 3. Borden, Debates, Feb. 3, 1910, col.2982.

Borden made it clear that Canada was thus bound up in the fate of the British Empire. What was the best means of defense for the Empire? To Borden, British naval supremacy was the paramount means of defense, because

the loss of the control of the seas by the British fleet means the dismemberment of this great Empire. Great Britain having once lost control of the seas it is impossible to conceive that this Empire would longer survive. A world-wide Empire such as ours, an empire which reaches out on every continent can only be maintained by absolute naval supremacy. The moment a naval power arises which can effectively challenge the supremacy of Britain's navy that moment may the British Empire be dismembered and that moment Canada may cease to be among the nations of that great Empire¹.

Borden was quick to point out that British naval superiority could be destroyed without even undergoing the experience of a war.

It should never be forgotten that without war, without the firing of a shot or the striking of a blow, our naval supremacy may disappear, and with it the sole guarantee of the Empire's continued existence².

To Borden this condition was likely to come about because England in order to protect her home waters had shifted her Malta based ships to a concentration at Gibraltar. Again the fleet at Gibraltar was moved closer to home. Thus "trade routes, vital to the Empire's continued existence are inadequately defended and protected"³ Therefore:

Under such conditions the British flag is not predominant in the Mediterranean and with every available exertion on the part of the whole Empire,

-
1. Op.cit. March 29, 1909, col.3518.
 2. Ibid. Dec. 5, 1912, col.686.
 3. Ibid.

it will be impossible to regain the necessary position of strength in that great highway before 1915 or 1916¹.

In the same breath he sounds a more ominous warning.

Austria-Hungary, with only one hundred and forty miles of sea coast, and with absolutely no colonial possessions is building in the Mediterranean a formidable fleet of dreadnoughts which will attain its full strength in about three years, and which will be supported by strong battleships of the pre-dreadnought type and by cruisers, torpedo craft and other necessary auxiliaries. The fleet of Italy in the same theatre will be even more powerful and more formidable².

Borden's gloomy discussion was based on the stark reality of the menacing combination of the Dual Alliance and Triple Alliance a relationship of great power - potentiality. He was aware, as was the entire Western World of the contrasting power, largely implied, in the casual relationships existing within the Triple Entente.

Borden went on to issue a strong challenge to place the British Navy on its once impregnable pedestal.

The withdrawal of the British flag and the British navy from so many parts of the world for the purpose of concentration in home waters has been necessary and unfortunate. Our navy was once dominant everywhere, and the white ensign was the token of naval supremacy in all the seas. Is it not time that the former conditions should in some measure be restored?³

How was it to be restored? Obviously the answer was an increased British navy. But Borden was quick to point out that Britain had striven to restore the ratio but was unsuccessful because the potential enemy fleets were

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

outdistancing her. He makes this point very clear.

Do not imagine that this result has been brought about by any reduction in expenditure, for the case is precisely the reverse. Great Britain's total naval expenditure in 1902 was less than \$152,000,000. For the present fiscal year (1912) it will exceed \$220,000,000. Why, then, has the naval force of the Empire been so enormously reduced throughout the world, while at the same time the expenditure has increased by nearly fifty per cent? For the simple reason that increasing strength of other navies, and especially of the German navy, has compelled Great Britain not only to increase her fleet, but to concentrate it in the vicinity of the British islands; and there has been of course, a substantial increase of strength in home waters. In short, the strain of meeting changed conditions has been so heavy and unceasing that, in spite of largely increased expenditure and every possible exertion, the Admiralty have been compelled to withdraw or diminish forces throughout the world which in time of peril safeguarded the security and integrity of the King's dominion and in time of peace were a living and visible symbol of the tie that unites all the subjects of the Crown¹.

What then did this state of affairs presage for Canada? Borden makes his answer clear and defined. For him

the loss of the control of the seas by the British fleet means the dismemberment of this great empire. Great Britain once having lost control of the seas it is impossible to conceive that this empire would longer survive. A world-wide empire such as ours, an empire which reaches out on every continent and spreads over every ocean can only be maintained by absolute naval supremacy. The moment a naval power arises which can effectively challenge the supremacy of Britain's navy that moment may the British Empire be dismembered and that moment may Canada cease to be among the nations of that great empire. I am not one of those who look to see the integrity of the British empire menaced by the future independence of Canada².

1. Borden Debates, Dec. 5, 1912, col.685-6.
2. Ibid. March 29, 1909, col.3518.

Canada must help the Mother Country to solve this solution. This was obvious to Borden because "Britain staggers under the too vast orb of her fate, and so it behooves us her children to decide how we can best assist the Motherland to maintain control of the seas"¹.

That the Canadian people then must share in this burden Borden was adamantly convinced.

We are either of the British Empire or not of it; we are either in the Empire for weal or woe, or we are out of it. The unanimous voice of the people of Canada demands that we shall be in the Empire and of the Empire, and being in the Empire and of the Empire we must take our fair share of the burden of the naval defense of that Empire, and particularly of our sea coasts².

How then must Canada share this burden of British naval defense, Borden had no finished plan on paper or even the beginnings of one but he claimed that "we should act in conjunction with and by the advice of the British Admiralty. They have experts at their command, they have the experience of the past to direct them, and there we do not"³.

In laying down his policy for the utilization of Canada's navy in the cause of Imperial defense Borden pointed out that once England was at war, Canada would be also. Therefore the Canadian fleet would be subject to enemy attack along with the Royal Navy.

He (Laurier) has said that when the British empire is at war, Canada is at war - and he has said

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Ibid. col.3519.
 3. Ibid. col.3518.

that correctly. He is absolutely right in that regard because it would be impossible for the British empire to be involved with a great naval power or with any naval power unless, as a necessary consequence of that war, any naval service, or any fleet, which we might possess would be subject to attack by ships of the enemy. Our coasts and our cities would be exposed to attack; and the suggestion that we, while preserving our connection with the British empire can be at peace with any power then at war with Great Britain, is the idle dream of some man who has not thought upon this subject at all¹.

Borden believed in the old adage that in unity there is strength. Thus he advocated a united naval force within the Empire to secure maximum protection for Canada and the Mother Country.

What I contend for is the principle that in time of war there shall be one united naval force for the whole empire and that naval force shall be available to meet any enemy that may assail the integrity of the empire. Suppose it were declared that the naval forces of Canada should be part of the naval force of the empire in time of war. It is conceivable that there might be a naval war in which Great Britain might not require or demand any assistance whatever from the naval force of this country. But there is something beyond and above all that. If the naval forces of the mother country and all the dominions form part of one great united naval force in time of war what follows? Any enemy assailing the British empire knows that it must face those forces in time of war, that they are available for attack or resistance, for upholding the integrity of the empire and the supremacy of its sea control².

Borden drove his point home by pointing out the uselessness of any other scheme.

It is idle to pretend that defense upon the sea of this Empire is in all respects the same as defense upon the land. The continents are separated, but the sea is one, and I speak not only from the absolute sincerity of my own convictions but from

1. Op.cit. Jan. 12, 1910, col.1739-40.

2. Ibid. April 2, 1910, col.7533.

the well considered opinions of men who know infinitely more about these problems of defense than any man in this House can claim to do, when I say that the security of this Empire cannot be maintained and preserved without a combination of the naval forces of the Empire under one control at least in time of war¹.

This viewpoint is further substantiated by Borden in a manner that leaves no doubt as to his convictions.

We realize as you do, that the supremacy of Britain upon the seas is the very breath of life to the British Empire (...) I have always held the conviction, and hold it today, that the sea defenses of the Empire can best be secured by one Navy. Our ideal has been one King, one Flag, one Empire, one Navy - the latter powerful enough to vindicate the flag and maintain the integrity of the Empire².

Having evolved his premise of a united navy for the entire Empire Borden then went on to state his next salient attitude, viz. unity of command during wartime. Accordingly "our policy aims at unity in the direction and control of the Empire's naval forces in time of war"³.

Borden echoed the words of an eminent British naval authority to substantiate his premise that unity of command was imperative.

What was the suggestion of Lord Tweedmouth, First Lord of the Admiralty, on that occasion? (1907). The suggestion - indeed it was more than a suggestion, it was an absolute declaration - was that, so far as the naval forces are concerned, there must be unity of Control in time of War. It does not require experience, it does not require naval knowledge to understand that in time of war the whole integrity and future of its empire may depend upon that unity of command and control⁴.

1. Borden, Debates, Feb. 27, 1913, col.4266.

2. Quoted in C.A.R., 1912, 51. Speech to the Royal Colonial Institute.

3. Ibid. 1913, 176.

4. Borden, Debates, Feb. 3, 1910, col.2983.

Only by unity of command could a maximum defense of the Empire be maintained. This Borden made clear.

Not only in 1907, but also in 1909 we have the clearest and most specific statements from men who know infinitely more about this than any man in this House, that unity of control and unity of command in time of war are absolutely essential to successful action. There cannot be any questions about that. There are many continents in the world, but only one sea. That sea is a great highway. It is the highway of British commerce. It is the highway of the commerce of Canada because the greater part of our exports are sea borne. It is the highway of the world and especially of the British Empire. That sea is one, and it would be absolutely impossible for the different local units of the empire to co-operate successfully under any circumstances, in time of war, unless there was absolute unity, command and direction¹.

Borden was quick to point out the danger inherent in a divided command when maximum effort can be obtained only by a unified policy emanating from a central command. Thus he stated. "What are you to do? Are you to have one Empire, (...) one combined naval force to defend every peril, or (...) five scattered navies to go down against the attack which may come upon them at any time?"²

Borden felt it necessary that the public should approve of any steps which would lead to an official and permanent policy on naval matters. He thus demanded that

a permanent policy would have to be worked out, and when that permanent policy had been worked out and explained to the people of Canada, to every citizen of this country, then it would be the duty of any government to go to the people of Canada, to receive their mandate and accept and act upon their

-
1. Op.cit. col.2984.
 2. Ibid. Feb. 27, 1913, col.4266.

approval or disapproval of that policy¹ (...) I am as strong as any man in this country in the belief that it is the duty of Canada to participate upon a permanent basis in the defense of this empire and to do our reasonable share in that regard. But I say that to attempt to force a policy of this kind upon the people of this country without giving them an opportunity to say yea or nay with regard to it, would be one of the worst mistakes that could be made by any man who really favoured that policy².

Before such a permanent policy was worked out, Borden felt that Canada should have a definite voice in Imperial policy because such a policy could involve Britain in a War. He stated this because such a war would legally and morally bind Canada to supporting the Mother Country. He made this position quite clear.

When Canada, with the other great Dominions within the empire, embarks upon a policy of permanent co-operation in the naval defense of the empire, it ought from every constitutional standpoint, from every reasonable standpoint as well, to have some voice as to the issues of peace and war within the empire³.

Borden felt a voice in the councils of the Empire was prerequisite to the maintenance of the Empire. He clarified this. "I believe that this Empire cannot be indefinitely maintained under a system which gives to the people of the Overseas Dominions no voice or influence in the higher councils of the Empire"⁴.

He realized too that the solution was a difficult one offering no easy solution. He stated:

-
1. Op.cit. Nov. 24, 1910, col.228.
 2. Ibid. Nov. 21, 1910, col.35.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Quoted in C.A.R. 1913, 176.

No thoughtful man can fail to realize that very complex and difficult questions confront those who believe that we must find a basis of permanent co-operation in naval defense; and that any such basis must afford to the overseas dominions an adequate voice in the moulding and control of foreign policy¹.

Borden was not asking for something unfair or indefinable. He claimed what he felt was merely a normal course as regards British foreign policy. "Our policy aims at a just and reasonable voice and influence by the people of the Overseas Dominions in all matters of Imperial concern"².

He further clarifies this position.

I would like you to remember that those who are or who become responsible for the Empire defense, must, in the very nature of things, have some voice in the policy which shapes the issues of peace and of war. I would like you to understand that Canada does not propose to be an adjunct even of the British Empire. As has been well and eloquently stated, it desires to be a great portion of the greater whole³.

For Borden, an active role in determining the policy of the British Government was a manifestation of Canada's political and constitutional growth. He goes into the historical growth of Canadian autonomy to prove his point.

I have taken the ground and I think it is a just ground, that when we reach the position of assuming a definite and established part in the naval defense of the Empire, then, inasmuch as the question of defense is connected with the question of foreign policy, with the councils of the Empire which determine peace or war, then we as Canadians, desire to have a just voice in those councils. Honourable gentlemen on the other side seem to be alarmed by such a proposal; they say it is a recession, a denial of our autonomy. I venture to submit to the

-
1. Borden, Debates, Dec. 5, 1912, col.693.
 2. Quoted in C.A.R. 1913, 176.
 3. Ibid. 1912, 52.

judgment of every honourable gentleman, that it is not a recession but a continuance of that constitutional development which we have had in this country for the last seventy five years. What did we accomplish first after the troubles of 1837? We got responsible government, responsibility of the executive to the people, the absolute control of Parliament over the revenues of the country. Then we got control of our public lands; they were thereafter managed not in the Mother Country but by the Canadian Parliament and the Canadian Executive. Then we got absolute control of our fiscal policy. Then we advanced to the dignity of making our own commercial treaties. So from the rudiments of self government which prevailed before 1837, we have by degrees, advanced to a period when Canada is a nation within the Empire, having practically complete powers of self government. And is it not a legitimate development of that increase in our power and influence, that we should also claim some voice in the councils of the Empire, which determine peace and war, especially as, according to my conception, Canada, if she remains within the Empire, must be involved in any war in which the Empire is involved?¹

Borden was very optimistic about the future possibility of Canada having a say in Imperial matters. He felt that there was no real obstacle (existing in England) to the implementing of such a change.

It has been declared in the past and even during recent years, that the responsibility for foreign policy could not be shared by Great Britain with the dominions. In my humble opinion, adherence to such a position could have but one and that a most disastrous result. During my recent visit to the British islands, I ventured on many public occasions to propound the principle that the great dominions, sharing in the defense of the Empire upon the high seas, must necessarily be entitled to share also in the responsibility for and in the control of foreign policy. No declaration that I made was greeted more heartily and enthusiastically than this. It is satisfactory to know that today not only His Majesty's ministers, but also the leaders of the opposite political party in Great Britain have explicitly

1. Borden, Debates, May 15, 1913, col.1034-5.

accepted this principle and have affirmed their conviction that the means by which it can be constitutionally accomplished must be sought, discovered and utilized without delay¹.

Borden was thus optimistic about the future in this regard but he bolstered it with the premise that control of naval affairs and foreign policy are inseparable since the future Canadian naval contribution must be involved in any wars in which England would be thus engaged. Thus he asked:

What are you to do? Are you to have one Empire, one foreign policy, one combined naval force to resist every peril or are you to have five foreign policies and five scattered navies to go down against the attack which may come upon them at any time?²

Finally Borden reaches the logical conclusion to his demand for Canadian participation in controlling Britain's foreign policy, hence, wars. He felt that Canada would have something to say, and must have something to say about it.

And Sir Wilfred Laurier, I venture to believe that in future the self governing nations of the empire will have something to say about the wars of the empire. It is not wise to prophesy what the future may bring forth but I would venture to hope that a defence committee or an imperial conference having special jurisdiction over defense matters, composed of men from both parties in Great Britain itself as well as in the self governing nations of the empire, would have some control over the organization of imperial defense, and as an outcome of such a committee or such a conference I would expect that in future Great Britain would engage in no war without knowing beforehand that she would have the support and the sympathy of every one of the great self governing nations of the empire. This would give to these dominions a voice in the control of war, because I thoroughly agree that if we are to take part in the permanent defence of this great empire we must have some control and some voice in such matters³.

1. Op.cit. Dec. 5, 1912, col.686.
2. Ibid. Feb. 27, 1913, col.4266.
3. Ibid. Jan. 12, 1910, col.1743.

In 1910 he revealed his soundest argument towards Canada's participation in the future policy of Great Britain as regards potential wars, viz: Britain's previous precedent of consulting Canada prior to the South African War.

I know that it has been urged, and with some force, that we in Canada cannot properly take a part in the naval defence of the whole Empire unless we are to have some voice as to the wars in which Great Britain may engage. Let me say in the first place that I do not believe Great Britain will in the future engage in any great war - except indeed it may be a war forced upon her without a moment's notice - before consulting the great Dominions of the Empire. I have some warrant for that statement when I recollect that before Great Britain engaged in the South African war, which was, in the end, forced upon her, she came to the great Dominions of the Empire, she came to Canada and she sought advice and counsel¹.

Thus Borden spoke his piece. He offered nothing definite as to how Canada was to have a voice in the foreign policy of Great Britain but his major premise was clearly defined, viz: that Canada "ought, should and will" have a say in British foreign policy because control of the Imperial Navy and foreign policy were necessary corollaries of one another. Only by means of this voice could Canada then undertake some form of permanent naval contribution. Borden's entire case is best summed up by his associate, Mr. Doherty.

Mr. Doherty realized that Canada was bound to support British Wars even if the Dominion had no control over the policy leading to such wars. He claimed that

the overshadowing feature of this measure by which we intend to create a naval force is that it

1. Op.cit. col.1742.

of necessity leads us into the situation that we cannot avoid participation in the wars which may result from the foreign policy of the mother country, and, by that foreign policy we are absolutely bound because the mother country exclusively - and under existing conditions absolutely rightly - has control of foreign relations which pertain not only to herself, but to all her colonies¹.

While this was the case at the time, Doherty made it clear that the control of the navy and Imperial foreign policy was to be vested in one body. This he felt was an inevitable development that had to be recognized. He quoted prominent British figures to back up his contention.

It seems therefore to follow as clearly as can be that the control of a navy force is a function of the power which controls the foreign policy - the policy that governs the conduct of the nation towards other nations - that a navy is called upon to enforce². (...) I am not saying something on my own initiative. You find repeated statements of very distinguished British statesmen recognizing the absolute correlation of participation in naval defence and participation in control of the policy which the naval forces of the empire are called upon to defend³.

In substantiation of his argument Doherty quoted Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman as agreeing that "the cost of naval defense and the responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs hang together"⁴.

Doherty goes on to echo Borden's major premise.

Then we have the declaration of Lord Tweedmouth, in which, speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom, and quoting words which he attributed to the right hon. leader of this government. "If you

-
1. Doherty, Debates, Feb. 24, 1910, col.4137.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid. col.4137.
 4. Quoted in Doherty, Debates, Feb. 24, 1910, col.4138.

want our aid, call us to your councils,"¹ his lordship expressly recognized that that was a perfectly proper requirement, that the two things corresponded absolutely, and expressed the readiness of the United Kingdom, if the dominions asked for it, to call them to their councils².

Thus for Doherty (and Borden)

it would seem to me fairly to follow that the condition precedent to our undertaking to participate in the naval defense of the empire is that we should be given all effective voice, in the governing and determination of the foreign relations of the empire. (...) I am not here to propound any theory or to lay down any plan by which what I consider the condition precedent to our undertaking the policy which is proposed may be carried out. What I desire to do is simply to make clear that the finding of a way by which we may have a voice, and a real voice, in the control of the foreign policy of the empire, is an essential condition precedent to our embarking upon any permanent policy of participating in the maintenance of naval forces, that this is an essential condition precedent, if our autonomy, to which the right hon. gentleman attaches such great importance, and to which I may say he does not attach one whit greater importance than I do, is to be maintained³.

Borden assumed office in 1911. In that year Borden's repeated demands that Canada share with Great Britain the conduct of foreign affairs received an answer. Speaking of the suggestion, Mr. Asquith had this to say in addressing the 1911 Committee of Imperial Defense:

It would impair if not altogether destroy the authority of the Government of the United Kingdom in such grave matters as the conduct of foreign policy, the conclusion of treaties, the declaration and maintenance of peace, or the declaration of war and, indeed, all those relations with foreign Powers, necessarily of the most delicate character, which are now in the hands of the Imperial Government, subject to its responsibility

-
1. Op.cit. col.4137.
 2. Doherty, Debates, Feb. 24, 1910, col.4137.
 3. Ibid.

to the Imperial Parliament. That authority cannot be shared, and the co-existence side by side with the Cabinet of the United Kingdom of this proposed body - it does not matter by what name you call it for the moment - clothed with the functions and the jurisdiction which Sir Joseph Ward proposed to invest it with, would, in our judgment, be absolutely fatal to our present system of responsible government¹.

Dewey sums up Borden's success in his quest for a share in British diplomacy.

In view of Mr. Asquith's ultimatum to the 1911 Conference, and the modus vivendi agreed upon at that session, what success did the New Premier meet with in pressing his claims for Dominion participation in Imperial foreign policy? Briefly, he was unable to record any positive achievement, save in the matter of Dominion representation upon the Committee of Imperial Defence².

IV

NAVAL MATTERS WITHIN THE EMPIRE

The question of a Canadian Navy, as separate from the Imperial Navy (Royal Navy) had arisen during the Colonial Conference of 1902. On this occasion the Laurier government had flatly refused to fall in with any Imperial defence scheme. When Sir Wilfred Laurier attended the Imperial Conference of 1907 he again refused to commit Canada to any such scheme. However, the Admiralty informed him that financial contributions to a Common Imperial fleet were the most effective type of aid the Dominion could render. They accepted the idea of local, autonomous Dominion fleets

1. Quoted in Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, I, 286.
2. Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, I, 294.

but pointed out that such a fleet to be effective would have to submit, in wartime, to control by the Admiralty regarding strategy and deposition.

The question of Canada's naval contribution being a reality reached a climax in 1909. In that year the full magnitude of the German naval expansion program was realized for the first time. In Canada, Sir George Foster, the Ontario Conservative member, broached the matter in the form of a resolution which he introduced on March 29, 1909.

That in the opinion of this House, in view of her great and varied resources, of her geographical position and national environments, and of the spirit of self-help and self-respect which alone benefits a strong and growing people, Canada should no longer delay in assuming her proper share of the responsibility and financial burden incident to the suitable protection of her exposed coastline and sea ports¹.

It is of interest to develop Foster's views further since they have a bearing on the viewpoint of Sir Robert Borden.

According to Foster there were two possible methods, whereby the aim, voiced in the above resolution, could be secured. "The first is the policy of a fixed annual contribution in money to the British Government or the British Admiralty"². Foster proceeded to throw out this scheme for a number of reasons.

Firstly such a scheme (if based on the British tax system whereby each citizen paid "\$3.60 per head") if

1. Foster, Debates, Mar. 29, 1909, col.3484.
2. Ibid. col.3493.

"translated in equal proportions to the Canadian taxpayer would mean an amount of money which would be appalling"¹.

He goes on.

Another objection raised is that it smacks too much of tribute, that we are a free people and we do not want to be paying a contribution to the old country for this or for any other purpose. I do not take much stock in that objection. (...) It is not demanded of us; there is no tribute unless there is force, and unless there is a specific demand which brings the tribute. A fixed sum may be a most willing gift of the most liberty enjoying legislature in the world².

Another objection was "that it impinges on our autonomy"³. This he dismisses because "it does not seem that a free contribution interferes in the least with our autonomy with our own free and legislative liberty or in fact with any other kind of liberty which we possess"⁴.

As far as the contribution aiding "unjustifiable wars" he felt it unlikely that Britain would be involved in such wars in the future if her previous record was any indication⁵.

But he brought forth some major objections which perhaps had the greatest appeal to his fellow Canadians.

The first and greatest objection which I have to a fixed money contribution is that it bears the aspect of hiring somebody else to do what we ourselves ought to do; as though a man, the father of a family, in lusty health and strength should pay his neighbour something per month for looking after the welfare and safety of his home instead of doing that

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Ibid. col.3493-4.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

himself. That seems to me, when you work it out, to be a basic objection to this form of aid¹.

He further stated the futility of such a policy, by indicating that it would lead to nothing tangible for the money spent.

After ten or twelve, or twenty, or thirty years, you will have paid out an immense amount of money. You will have been protected in the meantime; but in Canada itself there will be no roots struck, there will be no residue left, there will be no preparation of the soil, or beginning of the growth of the product of defence. Yet some time or another, no one can doubt that with resources and with a population constantly increasing, we must and will have in this country a naval force of our own for our coast and home defence².

He finally appeals to nationalism in his rejection of the principle of "contributions".

I want to see something grafted on the soil of Canada's nationhood, which takes root and grows and develops until it incites the spirit of defence in this country, leads to a participation in the defence, leads to that quick interest in it, its glories, its duties and its accomplished work, which is after all the one great thing that compensates a people for great expenditures either on land or on sea in the way of defence and of the maintenance of the rights of the country. (...) Then again, I think this method ignores the necessities and the aspirations and the prospects of a great people such as the Canadian people are destined to become. We must have beginnings; these must at first be small; but sometime or other, as I have said, our country will have its naval force for the defence of this country if for nothing else³.

As to the alternative to financial contribution, Foster outlined a second policy. This "is the assuming by ourselves of the defence of our ports and coasts, in

-
1. Op.cit. col.3495.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

constant and free co-operation with the imperial forces of the Mother Country"¹.

He acknowledged that Canada had not even the nucleus of a navy, that such a scheme was expensive but a start had to be made.

We are absolutely bare of the skill, the experience, the training and the machinery necessary to put one single war vessel on a proper footing; but - and it is but the beginning of a circle - the first Canadian owned vessel, built and equipped in Britain, and sent out to defend our coasts would become the nucleus and the training ground of Canadian stokers, Canadian sailors, and Canadian officers, and by and by perhaps of a Canadian admiral on the Canadian coast. How much time would be taken in completing that circle none of us can say, but if we begin the tracing of it and follow it fairly and faithfully, the time must come when we get a complete circle and have an imperial adjunct to the British navy for the defence of Canada and the defence of the empire, in which Canada has some of her body, her bones, her blood, and her mental power and her national pride².

Thus was ably stated the case for a distinctive Canadian Navy as opposed to the substitute "contributions" scheme. This was George Foster's views but where did his leader Borden stand on this issue?

In the discussions that followed Borden made it clear that he approved of the utilization of Canada's resources in any scheme of aiding the Imperial Naval defences.

As far as I am concerned, while the system of annual contributions might be best, and no doubt would be best from the purely strategical standpoint, I firmly believe that no such system could be adopted, but that eventually and permanently the basis upon which Canada must contribute to the defence of the

1. Op.cit. col.3496.

2. Ibid.

Empire will be by employing our own material, our own men, our own resources and the skill of our own people¹.

Again, he was in favour of a Canadian Navy as separate from an overall Imperial Naval force. He made this clear in speaking on Laurier's amendment to the Foster resolution of March 29, 1909.

Insofar as my right honourable friend the Prime Minister today outlined the lines of naval defence of this country, I am entirely at one with him. I am entirely of the opinion, in the first place, that the proper line upon which we should proceed in that regard is the line of having a Canadian naval force of our own. I entirely believe in that. I am at one with him in this respect also that I think an expenditure of money designed for that purpose ought in the main at least to be under the control of our own Parliament and that by making an appropriation of that kind and attending to the defence of our own coasts, by co-operation and co-ordination with the Imperial naval forces, we could be rendering a real service in the defence of the Empire and we would be doing our duty not only to Canada but to the Empire as a whole².

It should be noted that in the same amendment Borden didn't discard completely the idea of emergency contributions. He merely felt that such a scheme was not the most practical as far as future naval activities were concerned. Thus the final resolution, in this aspect, read:

The House is of opinion that under the present constitutional relations between the Mother Country and the self-governing Dominions, the payment of regular and periodical contributions to the imperial treasury for naval and military purposes would not, so far as Canada is concerned, be the most satisfactory solution to the question of defence³.

1. Borden, Debates, Feb. 3, 1910, col.2982.
2. Ibid. March 29, 1909, col. 3517-8.
3. Ibid. col.3564.

Nevertheless this latter aspect of Borden's amendment provided a loophole for such an emergency contribution by virtue of the fact that Borden did not discard this method completely.

Canada's willingness to aid in any Imperial scheme necessary for the Empire's preservation was bolstered by another portion of the resolutions finally accepted by both parties.

The House expresses its firm conviction that whenever the need arises the Canadian people will be found ready and willing to make any sacrifice that is required to give to the imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in every movement for the maintenance of the integrity and honour of the empire¹.

Finally on January 12, 1910, in discussing Laurier's Naval bill, Borden states the case for an emergency contribution if the need ever arose (but not as a permanent policy).

So far as the resolution of March 1909 is concerned, it not only is consistent with an emergency contribution, but, so far as I understand it, it even authorizes an emergency contribution in time of peril. In what way would our autonomy be affected by a contribution of that kind? Have we not given subsidies to cable companies, to railway companies and to steamship companies? Have we not sent contributions to San Francisco and Italy in times of great disaster? There is no disturbance of our autonomy by what I would call an emergency of contribution, and indeed, if we take the example of Great Britain herself, we find that more than one hundred years ago, when she was engaged in a struggle for her very existence, she was in the habit of subsidizing great continental nations who were her allies².

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Ibid. Jan. 12, 1910, col.1748.

Laurier's Naval Service bill¹ was introduced on January 12, 1910. In essence it proposed a permanent naval force, a reserve force and a volunteer force. The conduct of these forces were to be placed under a naval officer (director) and a naval board, all under the wing of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. The bill made no provisions for compulsory service, adopted a leisurely plan of development (which negated Borden's "speedy formation policy" expressed in the resolution of 1909); and made no provision for any emergency contributions to the Imperial Navy.

Borden attacked the bill as a narrow interpretation of the resolution of 1909 which he felt, did not preclude or rule out, an emergency contribution².

But Laurier was striving for a distinctive Canadian navy as a basis for future policy while Borden, while essentially of the same viewpoint, thought of a Canadian policy in a wider, "Empire conscious" sense. Dewey sums it up clearly.

While the Liberals thought in terms of peace, pooh-poohed the idea of an emergency, and apostrophised self-government, the Conservatives chose to emphasize entirely different considerations. They agreed that Canada was a nation of the Empire, but whereas the Liberals stressed "nation" the Conservatives never lost sight of "Empire", and regarded Canadian development merely as qualification for the

-
1. See "An Act respecting the Naval Service of Canada", in Statutes of Canada, Acts of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 9-10, Ed.VII, Ottawa, King's Printer 1911, I. 379-388.
 2. Borden, Debates, Jan. 12, 1910, col.1748.

assumption of added Imperial responsibilities. (...) They accepted Canada's local autonomy as a matter of course. There was no difference of opinion between the parties on that point and no one questioned it. A far more pertinent consideration was the safety of the Empire, and the fact that Canada's destiny was bound up therein. They had no patience with the complacent view of the Liberals regarding the international situation and Canada's supposed lack of concern in it. In contrast, they professed to think in terms of an imminent conflagration. Under such circumstances, to be a part of the Empire carried an entirely different implication from that which the Government supporters deduced; of what avail, then would be the vaunted reservation of discretion as to participation?¹

This criticism by Dewey expressed the underlying Liberal spirit in presenting the bill and the Conservative criticism in challenging it.

But the two party positions were best illustrated over the contentious Clause 23.

In the case of an emergency the Governor in Council may place at the disposal of His Majesty for general service in the Royal navy, the naval service or any part thereof, any ships or vessels of the naval service, and the officers and seamen serving in such ships or vessels, or any officers and seamen serving in such ships or vessels, or any officers or seamen belonging to the naval service².

For Laurier this clause merely evinced Canada's discretionary participation in Britain's wars. "If the British Empire is to remain strong (...) it will not be by compelling the daughter nations to revolve as satellites around the mother country but by allowing every daughter

-
1. Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, I, 266-7.
 2. See "An Act respecting the Naval Service of Canada", Statutes of Canada, Acts of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 9-10, Ed.VII, Ottawa, King's Printer, I, 383.

nation to develop itself to the fullest extent possible so that it may add strength to the whole"¹.

To Laurier, such a viewpoint was necessary if Canada was to call herself a nation; because:

We are under the suzerainty of the King of England. We are his loyal subjects. We bow the knee to him; but the King of England has no more rights over us than are allowed him by our own Canadian parliament. If this is not a nation, what then constitutes a nation? And if there is a nation under the sun that can say more than this, where is it to be found?²

Borden was quick to attack the policy of the government as shown in Clause 23.

I say without the slightest hesitation that in the most important respect of all, the control of the naval force of the Empire in time of war, the Bill of the Government absolutely departs from the suggestions of the Admiralty and therefore absolutely departs from the resolution unanimously agreed to in this House in 1909. What was the suggestion of Lord Tweedsmouth, first Lord of the Admiralty, on that occasion? The suggestion - indeed it was more than a suggestion, it was an absolute declaration - was that so far as the naval forces are concerned, there must be unity of control in time of war. It does not require experience, it does not require naval knowledge, to understand that in time of war the whole integrity and future of this Empire may depend upon that unity of command and control³.

Furthermore, Borden claimed Laurier was in a position "untenable from a constitutional point of view and unworkable from a practical standpoint. It is also dangerous and revolutionary, involving as it does an enchoate declaration of Canada's separation from the Empire"⁴.

-
1. Laurier, Debates, Nov. 15, 1909, col.47.
 2. Quoted in The Globe, Toronto, Jan. 6, 1910, p.1, col.1.
 3. Borden, Debates, Feb. 3, 1910, col.2983.
 4. Quoted in C.A.R., 1909, 177.

Borden went on to complete his attack on the implications inherent in this clause of the Naval Service bill.

The plain and direct meaning is that the Governor in Council may refrain from exercising the discretion which is there provided for. If the Government should so refrain, what will be the result? Are we to be face to face with the condition which the honourable gentleman says is demanded by our autonomy, that Great Britain being at war, we shall declare that we are not at war and that our fleet shall not take any part in it? If the clause does not mean that, I would like to know what it does mean? So far as I can understand the English language, it means just what I have said. I have just this to add, that when Great Britain being at war, the Governor in Council shall declare our fleet shall take no part in it - and they may do that simply by inaction, by standing still, by making no Order in Council - I say that when that occasion comes then such inaction or declaration will amount virtually to a declaration of independence¹.

Borden held other divergent views which bear close examination. He was obviously a convert to Foster's notion that the Empire was threatened by a rising (German) naval menace. He stated

do not forget that we are confronted with an emergency which may rend this Empire asunder before the proposed service is worthy of the name. In the face of such a situation immediate, vigorous, earnest action is necessary. We have no Dreadnought ready; we have no fleet unit at hand. But we have resources and I trust the patriotism to provide a fleet unit or at least a Dreadnought without one moment's unnecessary delay².

His support of immediate action in face of the rising menace of Continental navies, prompted him to further consideration of the cash gift to the Imperial Naval program.

-
1. Borden, Debates, Feb. 3, 1910, col.2985.
 2. Ibid. Jan. 12, 1910, col.1761.

It has been suggested that instead of the organization of a Canadian naval force, there should be a system of annual contributions from this country to the Mother Country, and I am free to admit that from the strategical point of view I would be inclined to agree with the view of the Admiralty that this would be the best way for the great self-governing Dominions of the Empire to make their contributions¹.

However, on other grounds, he states objections to this.

But Sir, from a constitutional and political standpoint, I am opposed to it, for many reasons. In the first place I do not believe that it would endure. In the second place it would be a source of friction. It would be a bone of partisan contention. It would be subject to criticism as to the character and the amount of the contribution in both Parliaments. It would not be permanent or continuous. It would be conducive to the severing of the present connection between Canada and the Empire².

Nevertheless, Borden did commit himself to the advisability of outright payments in face of an emergency. In 1909 he agreed to a resolution which made such a course possible but in 1910 he became very definite. He claimed then, that as an alternative to building a Canadian navy "we can place the equivalent in cash at the disposal of the Admiralty to be used for naval defence under such conditions as we may prescribe"³.

On February 3, 1910 Borden still preferred the idea of a distinctive Canadian navy on the grounds that Canada, to make any permanent contribution, would ultimately have to depend on Canadian resources.

-
1. Op.cit. col.1764.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid. col.1761.

I firmly believe that no such system could be adopted, but that eventually and permanently the basis upon which Canada must contribute to the defence of the Empire will be by employing our own material, our own men, our own resources, and the skill of our own people¹.

At this stage a note of caution crept into Borden's outlook. He felt that no policy, permanent or temporary should be formulated which did not receive public consent, preferably by a full mandate at the polls. Thus he spoke directly on this point.

I would invite my right honourable friend today to respond again to the popular will, and the will of this country today is that these different proposals ought to be submitted to the people and the people ought to be permitted to pass upon them before any permanent policy of this kind is engaged in².

Borden was keenly aware of getting public approval of any steps which would become an official and permanent policy on naval matters. He demanded that

a permanent policy would have to be worked out, and when that permanent policy had been worked out and explained to the people of Canada, to every citizen of this country, then it would be the duty of any government to go to the people of Canada, to receive their mandate and accept and act upon their approval or disapproval of that policy³. (...) I am as strong as any man in this country in the belief that it is the duty of Canada to participate upon a permanent basis in the defense of this empire and to do our reasonable share in that regard. But I say that to attempt to force a policy of this kind upon the people of this country without giving them an opportunity to say yea or nay with regard to it, would be one of the worst mistakes that could be made by any man who really favoured that policy⁴.

1. Op.cit. Feb. 3, 1910, col.2982.

2. Ibid. col.2989.

3. Ibid. Nov. 24, 1910, col.228.

4. Ibid. Nov. 21, 1910, col.35.

In December he spoke out in a speech that defined his position to that date, and intimated what his official policy would be if he and the Conservative Party assumed office as the party in power.

It may be fairly asked what we would do if we were in power today with regard to a great question of this kind. It seems to me that our plain course and duty would be this. The Government of this country are able to ascertain and to know, if they take the proper action for that purpose, whether the conditions which face the Empire at this time in respect of naval defense are grave. If we were in power we would endeavour to find that out, to get a plain, unvarnished answer to that question and if the answer to that question based on the assurance of the Government of the Mother Country and the report of the naval experts of the Admiralty were such - and I think it would be such - as to demand instant and effective action by this country, then I would appeal to Parliament for immediate and effective aid, and if Parliament did not give immediate and effective aid I would appeal from Parliament to the people of the country¹.

Borden held a very important reservation regarding Canadian participation in Imperial naval defence. Any participation in British naval wars was dependent on Canada sharing in the British policy leading to such wars. Borden makes his position very lucid on this point.

When Canada, with the other great Dominions within the empire, embarks upon a policy of permanent co-operation in the naval defense of the empire, it ought from every constitutional standpoint, from every reasonable standpoint as well, to have some voice as to the issues of peace and wars within the empire².

But earlier he suggested that some scheme allowing such a voice could possibly be worked out.

1. Borden, Debates, Dec. 1, 1910, col.560-1.

2. Ibid. Nov. 21, col.35.

I venture to believe that in future the self-governing nations of the empire will have something to say about the wars of the empire. It is not wise to prophesy what the future may bring forth but I would venture to hope that a defense committee or an Imperial conference having special jurisdiction over defense matters, composed of men from both parties in Great Britain itself as well as in the self-governing nations of the empire, would have some control over the organization of imperial defense, and as an outcome of such a committee or such a conference I would expect that in future Great Britain would engage in no war without knowing beforehand that she would have the support and sympathy of everyone of the great self-governing nations of the empire. This would give these dominions a voice in the control of war, because I thoroughly agree that if we are to take part in the permanent defence of this great empire we must have some control and some voice in such matters¹.

Despite the Conservative opposition to the Naval Service Act the bill passed its third reading on April 20, 1910 and became law in May of the same year. By this time the reciprocity issue had the nation in its grip and the Conservatives threw their full weight against the Liberal Government using the reciprocity issue and the Naval Service Act as the chief focal point of their attack. During the campaign preceding the election Borden emitted a sweeping condemnation of the Laurier position on naval affairs.

They propose at great expense to construct a so-called navy which will be absolutely useless as a fighting force. Upon the testimony the leading members of the British Cabinet expressed, in their public utterances, we believe that the Empire was confronted by a grave emergency and we urged immediate and effective aid. The question of Canada's permanent co-operation in Imperial naval defence involves far reaching consideration. The Government's proposals were clearly a political makeshift and not a serious attempt to deal with a difficult question. Responsibility for Empire defence clearly involves some voice

1. Op.cit. Jan. 12, 1910, col.1743.

in Empire policy. Canada's permanent and effective co-operation in naval defence can only be accomplished by proposals which take account of this consideration, and any such proposals should be submitted to the people for their approval¹.

Such a type of speech had its share in the victory of the Conservative Party at the polls in 1911. With this overwhelming defeat of the Liberals the way was clear for Borden to formulate and apply his own naval policy. On assuming office he cancelled the tender which had been accepted for the building of the Laurier naval force. However, while he was fully convinced of the gravity of the naval disparity between the Continental powers and Great Britain, he was loath to initiate an official program without an intimate discussion with Admiralty officials in London. Accordingly he left for the British Isles late in June of 1912, arriving in London early in July. Prior to leaving he sought the advice of the Ontario leader of the Conservative Party, Sir James Whitney.

I would like to have from you as soon as convenient any suggestions which you might be good enough to give me as to our course upon the Naval question. We expect to leave for England about the end of this month. Two questions will arise, first as to the necessity or expediency of an effective contribution for the temporary purpose of meeting conditions which undoubtedly confront the Mother Country at the present time, secondly the far larger and even more important question of co-operation on a permanent basis².

-
1. Quoted in The Mail and Empire, Toronto, Aug. 16, 1911, p.1, col.6.
 2. Borden to Whitney, June 1, 1912, Borden Papers, OC 656. (In microfilm copy of Borden Papers in University of Toronto Library. The references, taken from this microfilm copy used in Chapter I, are not on numbered sheets).

It is obvious from this document that Borden was going to "see for himself" the actual conditions as unfolded by the Admiralty. It is evident too that he wanted some moral support from such a prominent political personage as Sir James Whitney. It is interesting to note that Borden was going to consider a temporary as well as a permanent plan of naval aid to bolster the naval defences of the British Empire.

Whitney's reply offered just that form of concreteness necessary to give the Prime Minister a working basis for future discussions in London.

I am in favour of placing at the disposal of the Imperial authorities a sum of money sufficient to build two battleships or armoured cruisers of the Dreadnought type to be known as Canadian battleships but to be absolutely under the control and management of the Admiralty subject to any conditions that may be deemed reasonable¹.

In his Memoirs, the Prime Minister indicated that apart from seeking such advice, he did not formulate any opinion at the Cabinet level. "So far as I remember" he states "there was no advance discussion on policy, as that was postponed until after my colleagues had been made acquainted with the results of our visits"².

Proceedings opened in London with Borden attending a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence, presided over

-
1. Memorandum inclosed in Whitney to Borden, June 14, 1912, Borden Papers, OC 654 (In microfilm copy of Borden Papers, University of Toronto Library).
 2. Borden, Memoirs, I, 355.

by Asquith the British Prime Minister with Sir Edward Grey summing up British foreign policy for the attending dignitaries. Sir Edward spoke of the necessity of maintaining friendly relations with France and Russia (an obvious position arising out of the Triple Entente, 1907) and maintaining also the security given to the Empire by British naval supremacy. He also pointed out that Britain was anxious to maintain the balance of power, which balance could be threatened by German activities in Europe¹. At the same meeting Mr. Churchill spoke on naval matters. "The main factor in the naval situation is (...) the growth and development of the German Navy"². Mr. Churchill then went on to make it clear that the policy inherent in German naval rearmament boded ill for the fleet of Great Britain.

The whole character of the German fleet shows that it is designed for aggressiveness and offensive action of the largest possible character in the North Sea or the North Atlantic action, according to the Memorandum accompanying their first Bill, against the strongest naval Power, at some moment when that Power will not be able, owing to some duty it may have to discharge to its colonies or to some other part of the Empire, to keep all its forces concentrated to meet the blow. The structure of the German battleships shows clearly that they are intended for attack and fleet action. They are not a cruiser fleet designed to protect colonies and commerce all over the world. They have been preparing for years, and are continuing to prepare, on an even larger scale a fleet which, from its structure and character, can be proved by naval experts to have the central and supreme object of drawing out a line of battle for a great trial of strength in the North Sea or in the Ocean (...). The

1. Committee of Imperial Defence, Minutes of Meetings attended by Ministers of the Dominion of Canada, 1912, 6, Borden Papers, OC 643, (In microfilm copy of Borden Papers in University of Toronto Library.)

2. Ibid. 6.

spirit and purpose of the inception and of the prolonged development of the German Navy is such as to lead only to one conclusion, and that is that it is intended for a great trial of strength with the navy of the greatest naval Power¹.

Thus Borden received confirmation of his own sur-misal, viz; that a threat to British naval supremacy had arisen, and was growing greater daily. Borden later sought written confirmation from Churchill, who in his position as First Lord of the Admiralty, was the logical one from whom such a directive should be issued. Borden commented on his discussion with Churchill.

On July 16th, I had a conference with Mr. Churchill and our conversation was very frank and intimate. Mr. Churchill was fair and reasonable and was entirely disposed to give us assurance in writing as to the peril which seemed everywhere to be apprehended in Great Britain and as to the necessity for strong co-operation in naval defence by the Dominion. He spoke of coming to Canada with the Prime Minister².

The Canadian Prime Minister was thus receiving friendly co-operation from the Admiralty, the latter obviously only too glad to confirm his similar views. Also he was promised concrete evidence to present to his colleagues on arrival home.

At the meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence which Borden attended on his arrival in England early in July, and during which Churchill spoke of the rising German menace, the latter encouraged any form of Dominion contribution to Imperial naval defence. From Churchill's own words

1. Op.cit. 13.

2. Borden, Memoirs, I, 359.

it was seen that he spoke of an immediate contribution as a temporary measure, rather than a long range plan as a permanent policy.

It comes to this, that really we ought to lay down now three more ships over and above the four we are building. Of course, there is a great advantage in laying new ships, because you are able to have the best that naval science can give up to the moment, and there is no doubt that we should be able to spare a rather large number of ships for the Mediterranean in consideration of the three extra which we laid down now. But it is a difficult thing for us to lay down three new ships now. Financially it is inconvenient, but that can be got over. Beyond that it is a difficult thing for us to do it, because here are our numbers -four, five, four, four, four, which we have collated, and which we have made correspond to the German construction. If we come forward now all of a sudden and add three new ships, that may have the effect of stimulating the naval competition once more, and they would ask us what new factor had occurred which justified or which required this increase of building on our part. If we could say that the new fact was that Canada had decided to take part in the defence of the British Empire, that would be an answer which would involve no invidious comparisons as to the number of Austrian or German vessels available at any particular moment. It would be an answer absolutely inoffensive to any of the Great Powers of Europe, and no answer could possibly contribute more effectively to the prestige and security of the British Empire. The need, I say, is a serious one, and it is an immediate need. I hope during the visit of the Canadian Ministers to this country that we shall have long consultation upon the details of a permanent naval policy, but it has not been to a permanent naval policy that I have directed the remarks which I have offered to the Committee this morning. I do not think that a permanent naval policy ought to be decided in a hurry. If it is to be a permanent line of policy, it will require very long and careful consideration. There are many matters in connection with it which ought not to be hurried in any way, and which ought to be considered with great care. But the other need is urgent, and if it is the intention of Canada to render

assistance to the naval forces of the British Empire, now is the time when that aid would be most welcome and most timely¹.

Canada was assigned a curious role in Imperial naval expansion by Churchill. According to him a Canadian naval contribution provided a means of bolstering the Imperial naval defence scheme but in turn would not provide a reason or excuse for an equivalent expansion on the part of rival nations. At least it would not allow such a move to be interpreted by say, Germany, as a signal for a speeding up of an already zooming naval race. Now while Churchill had no guarantee that Germany would interpret the move as such, he felt that Britain could utilize Dominion aid and feel free to do so knowing she was honourably adhering to her pledges to the Continental Powers on naval parity and agreements². Such an interpretive viewpoint by Churchill was a pleasing note since the balance of power was deteriorating in face of the tremendous naval rearmament indulged in by the larger European Powers.

It is noteworthy that at no point in these discussions did Borden commit himself to any policy either immediate or permanent. But he was continually reassured by the Admiralty of the closest co-operation concerning any aid scheme that the Canadian Government might decide upon.

-
1. Committee of Imperial Defence, Minutes of Meetings attended by Ministers of the Dominion of Canada, 1912, 13. (In microfilm copy of Borden Papers, in University of Toronto Library).
 2. Ibid.

Again, Churchill had made it clear that such aid as they might give would be necessary immediately if it was to be effective. As late as August Borden made it clear to Churchill that whatever Canadian aid was forthcoming would be dependent on the co-operation of the Admiralty. In his Memoirs Borden outlined this matter.

I had a long interview with Churchill with respect to the method and extent of our co-operation in naval defence; and I told him that everything depended upon the cogency of the statement which would be put forward as to the emergency. He promised to give the subject his closest personal attention. The discussion was renewed on the following day (August 8th) with Mr. Asquith to whom I communicated the substance of my conversation with Mr. Churchill. Mr. Asquith observed that Mr. Churchill was extremely capable and would be forceful in the preparation of such a statement as we desired¹.

And so Borden was satisfied that he had done all possible to facilitate some form of naval aid on his return to Canada. Hence his request for written support, which eventually arrived in the form of Memoranda from Churchill.

As regards to obtaining a "voice" in Imperial foreign policy Borden was anything but successful. At the Meeting of Imperial Defence Committee in 1911, when Sir Joseph Ward had suggested Dominion participation in the conduct of defence and foreign affairs, Mr. Asquith had bluntly refused on that occasion to countenance any such suggestion. Asquith replied the following.

It would impair if not altogether destroy the authority of the Government of the United Kingdom in

1. Borden, Memoirs, I, 364.

such grave matters as the conduct of foreign policy, the conclusion of treaties, the declaration and maintenance of peace, or the declaration of war and, indeed all those relations with foreign Powers, necessarily of the most delicate character, which are now in the hands of the Imperial Government, subject to its responsibility to the Imperial Parliament. That authority cannot be shared, and the co-existence side by side with the Cabinet of the United Kingdom of this proposed body - it does not matter by what name you call it for the moment - clothed with the functions and the jurisdiction which Sir Joseph Ward proposed to invest it with, would, in our judgment, be absolutely fatal to our present system of responsible government¹.

Obviously such an attitude was far from an ideal one in Borden's reasoning. But how far did he advance, in getting concessions, beyond Asquith's firm stand? He began with the principles accepted at the Imperial Committee meetings in 1911. These consisted of the following (as well as others not pertaining to this point):

That one or more representatives appointed by respective governments should be invited to attend meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence when questions of naval and military defence affecting the overseas dominions are under consideration.

The proposal that a defence committee should be established in each dominion is accepted in principle. The constitution of these defence committees is a matter for each dominion to decide².

However, Borden was not satisfied with such an arrangement because while it admitted Canada to such discussions it did not give any guarantee that Canada's views would be accepted at such meetings by Great Britain. Thus it did not satisfy Borden's demand for a voice in Imperial foreign policy.

1. Quoted in Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, I, 286.
2. Borden, Debates, Jan. 17, 1912, col.1652.

G. N. Tucker in his article "The Naval Policy of Sir Robert Borden" affords an insight into the attitudes of Borden and Asquith on this question of Canadian representation on such councils.

Asquith's suggestion now was that either the High Commissioners should attend meetings whenever questions concerning Dominions were discussed, or that Dominion representative of ministerial rank should come to London from time to time in order to be present at such meetings.

Borden replied that these suggestions were good enough in themselves, but that they did not go far enough. He pointed out that Canada was growing in population and in its conception of what a national spirit demands. In the very near future, it would be necessary that the Dominions should have a direct and immediate say in foreign policy¹.

Thus it is seen that Asquith had retreated from his 1911 position to the extent of welcoming Dominion representatives to discuss matters touching on the Dominions themselves. Borden was heartened by this change shown by the British Prime Minister, a change shown in a debate in the British House of Commons on July 22nd, 1912. Borden records this event vividly in his Memoirs.

On July 22nd, I attended the House of Commons and listened to a debate which is historical. It interested me particularly because of the Prime Minister's virtual withdrawal from his position at the Imperial Conference in 1911, when he had declared, in reply to Sir Joseph Ward, that with respect to foreign policy, the conclusion of treaties, the declaration of war, indeed all relations with foreign powers, the authority of the Imperial Government could not be shared, and must be exercised by that Government, subject only to its responsibility to

1. G. N. Tucker, "The Naval Policy of Sir Robert Borden, 1912-14", C.H.R., XXVIII, no.1, Mar. 1947, pp.1-30.

the Imperial Parliament. His withdrawal from that decision was wholehearted, and was expressed in the following words:¹

Side by side with this growing participation in the active burdens of the Empire on the part of our Dominions, there rests with us undoubtedly the duty of making such response as we can to their obviously reasonable appeal that they should be entitled to be heard in the determination of the policy and the direction of Imperial affairs².

Borden's reaction as to Canada's representation on future meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence affords meat for thought. He acquiesced in it wholeheartedly, not as a solution to the problem of Canada having a voice in Imperial defence policy and the decisions leading to it, but rather as something that was a step forward to the day that Canada would have that voice. In short he felt it was a prelude to that day when Canada would have full equality in such matters with Great Britain. On this topic of future relations with Great Britain in the field of sharing diplomatic duties, Borden stated that

the representation of Canada upon this Committee does not perhaps on the surface seem likely to carry into effect what will probably have to be considered in the near future. As we are speaking here in confidence I venture to speak quite frankly. At the present time we have in the Dominion of Canada about 8 millions of people; we have a boundary line between Canada and the United States of nearly 4,000 miles; and the people on each side of the line are very similar in their habits, their ideals, and their mode of government, civic, municipal and otherwise. On the one side of the line the people have a direct and immediate voice in the government of their country in every respect, including all matters of foreign policy; on the other side of the line that is not the case. While we do not know that that

1. Borden, Memoirs, I, 361.

2. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 361.

particular difference has impressed itself very strongly upon the imagination of the Canadian people up to the present, it will undoubtedly begin to do so in the very early future, especially as the country advances in wealth and population and resources, and more especially as it advances in its conception of what a national spirit demands. So that I think it will be necessary in the very near future to give a little study and consideration as to the larger outlook to which I have called attention. No one is more seriously impressed with the difficulty of working out anything of the kind than I am. What I suggest at the moment is that, if this proposal is carried out as a temporary measure, we must not lose sight of the importance of studying and considering the larger questions to which I have alluded. I need not say that it is obviously impossible that the present relations in respect of such matters can continue in respect to Canada after she will have a population of 20 millions or 25 millions of people. It may take some years - it will take some years - before this state shall have been acquired; but in the meantime the spirit of which I have alluded is one that I think will demand consideration not only by our own Government but by the Imperial authorities as well. So far as constituting a Defence Committee is concerned, I personally see no reason why that should not be done, and I see that a very great advantage might result from it¹.

Such a statement indicates the obvious failure of Borden to get a voice for Canada in the foreign policy and resultant defence schemes of the Empire. Perhaps Dewey echoes this failure most clearly.

In view of Mr. Asquith's ultimatum to the 1911 Conference and the modus vivendi agreed upon at that session, what success did the new Premier meet with in pressing his claim for Dominion participation in Imperial foreign policy? Briefly, he was unable to record any positive achievement, save in the matter of Dominion representation upon the Committee of Imperial Defence².

1. Committee of Imperial Defence, Minutes of the 119th Meeting, Aug. 1, 1912, 3, Borden Papers OC 643. (In microfilm copy of Borden Papers in University of Toronto Library).
2. Quoted in Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, I, 294.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

Back in Canada, Borden received via the Governor-General, a belated confirmation of the fact that the seeming advance in Canadian nationhood did not constitute a voice in Imperial affairs. It came in a despatch to the Governor-General, and was sent by Harcourt, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Subject to consultation with his colleagues in Canada, Mr. Borden provisionally accepted the resolutions as passed, and stated that he saw no difficulty in one of his ministers, either with or without portfolio, spending some months of every year in London in order to carry out this intention. Mr. Asquith and I had, subsequently, several private conversations with him, at which he expressed the desire that the Canadian and other Dominion ministers who might be in London as members of the Committee of Imperial Defence, should receive in confidence, knowledge of the policy and the proceedings of the Imperial Government in foreign and other affairs. We pointed out to him that the Committee of Imperial Defence is purely an advisory body, and is not and cannot under any circumstances become a body deciding on policy, which is and must remain the sole prerogative of the Cabinet, subject to the support of the House of Commons¹.

Such a despatch was a bitter blow to the statement Borden made on his return from England, a statement to the effect that membership in the Imperial Defence Committee constituted an advance in Canada's rise to nationhood. Is there not also implied in his words the faint suggestion that this move was the road to a full "voice" in Imperial matters?

I am assured by His Majesty's Government that pending a final solution of the question of voice or influence, they would welcome the presence in London of a Canadian Minister during the whole or a portion of each year. Such minister would be regularly summoned to all meetings of the Committee of Imperial

1. Borden, Debates, Jan. 17, 1913, col.1653.

Defence, and would be regarded as one of its permanent members. No important step in foreign policy would be undertaken without consultation with such a representative of Canada. This seems a very marked advance, both from our standpoint and from that of the United Kingdom. It would give to us an opportunity of consultation and therefore an influence which hitherto we had not possessed. The conclusions and declarations of Great Britain in respect to foreign relations could not fail to be strengthened by the knowledge that such consultation and co-operation with the overseas Dominions had become an accomplished fact¹.

Borden waited until late in September before initiating any definite move towards drafting the Naval Aid bill. This was necessitated by the fact that Churchill's Memoranda, one secret, one publishable, didn't arrive until the end of the month.

On October 14th, Borden presented to Council a draft of the Naval Aid bill. One of the results of such action was the resignation of the Minister of Public works, Mr. Monk, who wrote the following.

My Dear Premier:

I regret to find that I cannot concur in the decision arrived at by the Cabinet yesterday to place on behalf of Canada, an emergency contribution of \$35,000,000 at the disposal of the British Government for naval purposes, with the sanction of Parliament about to assemble, but without giving the Canadian people an opportunity of expressing its approval of this important step before it is taken.

Such a concurrence would be at variance with my pledges and the act proposed is of sufficient gravity to justify my insistence; it goes beyond the scope of the Constitutional Act of 1867.

Holding this view, as a member of your Cabinet, I feel it my duty to place my resignation in your hands.

1. Op.cit. Dec. 5, 1917, col.692-3

Permit me to add that my decision has been reached with regret, on account of my agreeable relations at all times with yourself¹.

That the Quebec Members were not unanimous in their support of the proposed Bill is recorded in the Prime Minister's Memoirs.

Shortly after the opening of Parliament (November 21st), I learned that some of the Quebec members were restless with regard to the naval question and would probably bolt. Thus, on Wednesday, November 27th, I had a meeting of the French members and explained to them that we proposed to repeat the Laurier Navy Bill. Several of them (Boulay, Barrette, Bellemare, Achim and Guilbault) agreed that the proposals were wise but declared that they were bound by promises to vote against them. Paquet, Lavallee, Gauthier, Rainville, Blondin and Sevigny promised to support us².

Further opposition came from Mr. Mondon (Yamaska) who moved the following amendment.

That this House is ready and willing to adopt at any time, efficient measures for the defence of Canada, an autonomous colony under the British Crown; but that this House is nevertheless of opinion that the Canadian parliament has no right to impose to the general defence of the Empire, as long as under the present status of constitutional relations between Canada and the United Empire of Great Britain and Ireland and the Government of His Majesty and Ireland, the people of the United Empire alone, will reserve for itself, the exclusive management and control of Imperial and international questions³.

This amendment was defeated by a majority of 179.

On December 5th, Borden introduced the Naval Aid bill for its first reading. In essence the Bill proposed to

-
1. Quoted in Borden: Memoirs, I, 400.
 2. Borden, Memoirs, I, 403.
 3. Mondon, Debates, Dec. 3, 1912, col.570-1.

provide the King with \$35,000,000 for the construction of three dreadnoughts, to be built in Great Britain; these would operate as an integral part of the Navy but would be returned to Canada as a basis for a permanent Canadian navy. In his introduction to the Bill, Borden drew upon all his resources to defend it and facilitate its passage. He began by pointing out the necessity of maintaining British naval supremacy as a basis.

In this constitutional development, we are necessarily confronted with the problem of combining co-operation with autonomy. It seems most essential that there should be such co-operation in defence and in trade as will give to the whole Empire an effective organization in these matters of vital concern. On the other hand, each dominion must preserve in all important aspects the autonomous government which it now possesses. Responsibility for the Empire's defence upon the high seas, in which is to be found the only effective guarantee of its existence, and which has hitherto been assumed by the United Kingdom, has necessarily carried with it responsibility for and control of foreign policy. With the enormous increase of naval power which has been undertaken by all great nations in recent years, this tremendous responsibility has cast an almost impossible burden upon the British Islands, which for nearly a thousand years have exercised so profound an influence upon the world's history. That burden is so great that the day has come when either the existence of this Empire will be imperiled or the young and mighty must join with the motherland to make secure the common safety and the common heritage of all. When Great Britain no longer assumes sole responsibility for defence upon the high seas, she can no longer undertake to assume sole responsibility for and sole control of foreign policy which is closely, vitally, and constantly associated with that defence in which the dominions participate¹.

The Prime Minister went on to dispose of one of his earlier objections to undertaking any permanent naval

1. Borden, Debates, Dec. 5, 1912, col.676-7.

contribution, viz. that of seeking public approval before any such move be undertaken. He did this by pointing out that he felt the time had arrived to help England, without delay, and he explained this new position by referring to his discussions with the Admiralty, discussions which had taken place the previous fall and summer.

The present Government assumed office on the 10th of October, 1911 and met Parliament on the 17th day of November following. It is hardly necessary to point out that there was no opportunity until after the close of the session to visit Great Britain or to consult the Admiralty in any effective ways. Shortly after the session closed, I went to England accompanied by some of my colleagues, and for several weeks we had the opportunity from time to time of conferring with the British Government and of consulting with the technical and expert advisers of the Admiralty respecting the whole question of naval defences and especially the conditions which confront the Empire at present and in the early future. I desire to express my warm appreciation of the manner in which we were received by His Majesty's Government who took us most fully into their confidence on the great questions of foreign policy and of defence, and who accorded to us all relevant information at their disposal. A portion of this necessarily is of a very confidential character which cannot be made public; but an important part will be communicated to the House in a document which I shall lay on the table this afternoon¹.

Borden went on to read the publishable Memorandum sent by Churchill. This document pointed out the fact that the German Navy had outdistanced Britain's in recent years. Also driven home was the fact that the Royal Navy was forced to concentrate on home waters to the neglect of the trade routes and outposts of the Empire. Thus these published facts, coupled with Borden's pressing for an immediate

1. Op.cit. col.678.

passage of the Bill, dispelled any notions he ever held of appealing to the public. It should be pointed out that he had referred to a public mandate only as a result of Parliament failing to render "immediate and effective aid".

Borden went on to speak of the sacredness of the cause of nations.

In this twentieth century of Christianity, in this age which boasts of its civilization, the increasing tendency of the nations to arm themselves against each other is not only regrettable, but depressing and alarming. May the day soon approach when international differences will be settled by appeal to a tribunal established by international authority and so constituted that its decrees will unfailingly command respect and obedience. But while war is still the supreme arbitrator between the nations, we to whose care this vast heritage has been committed must never forget that we are the trustees of its security¹.

He proceeded to deny any notion that the Naval Aid bill was necessarily setting a precedent for future action.

"In presenting our proposals, it will be borne in mind that we are not undertaking or beginning a system of regular and periodical contributions"². Why then such a move as this?

"Upon the information which I have disclosed to the House, the situation is in my opinion sufficiently grave to demand immediate action."³.

Borden pointed out that he had asked the Admiralty to suggest the form that "temporary and immediate aid can best be given at this juncture"⁴. He quotes the answer.

1. Op.cit. col.684.
2. Ibid. col.687.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

We have no hesitation in answering after a prolonged consideration of all the circumstances that it is desirable that such aid should include the provision of a certain number of the largest and strongest ships of war which science can build or money supply¹.

The Prime Minister went on to enumerate further the more important aspects of the Bill itself.

These ships will be at the disposal of His Majesty the King for the common defence of the Empire. They will be maintained and controlled as part of the Royal Navy: and we have the assurance that if at any time in the future it should be the will of the Canadian people to establish a Canadian unit of the Royal Navy, these vessels can be recalled by the Canadian Government to form part of that unit, in which case, of course, they would be maintained by Canada and not by Great Britain. In that event, there would necessarily be reasonable notice of such recall; and, indeed, Canada would not desire or suggest the sudden withdrawal of so powerful a contingent from any important theatre in which the naval forces of the Empire might be exposed to severe and sudden attack. In the meantime, I am assured that special arrangements will be made to give Canadians the opportunity of serving as officers on these ships².

One item remained for Borden to clear up. He had previously voiced the opinion that no naval aid could be given Britain until a "voice" was secured for Canada in the British foreign policy which led to Britain's involvement in foreign wars. He had succeeded in getting a Canadian representative into the Committee on Imperial Defence. While the "voice" had not been granted, Borden still felt optimistic about gaining that voice which he felt was a basis for all future commitments on naval aid. He lets this optimism buoy up his enthusiastic presentation of the Bill.

-
1. Quoted in Borden, Debates, Dec. 15, 1912, col.687.
 2. Borden, Debates, Dec. 5, col.688.

During my recent visit to the British islands, I ventured on many public occasions to propound the principle that the great dominions, sharing in the defence of the Empire upon the high seas, must necessarily be entitled to share also in the responsibility for and in the control of foreign policy. No declaration that I made was greeted more heartily and enthusiastically than this. It is satisfactory to know that today not only His Majesty's ministers but also the leaders of the opposite political party in Great Britain have explicitly accepted this principle and have affirmed their conviction that the means by which it can be constitutionally accomplished must be sought, discovered and utilized without delay¹.

Referring to Canada's future membership in the Committee of Imperial Defence he had this to say:

No important step in foreign policy would be undertaken without consultation with such a representative of Canada. This seems a very marked advance, both from our standpoint and from that of the United Kingdom. It would give to us an opportunity of consultation, and therefore an influence which herto we have not possessed².

While this indicated that for him, Canada had made an advance along the road to a full voice in Imperial Policy, he is vague as to the amount of "voice" afforded Canada.

The conclusions and declarations of Great Britain in respect to foreign relations could not fail to be strengthened by the knowledge that such consultation and co-operation with the overseas dominions had become an accomplished fact³.

Finally in the same speech he admits the limitations to his victory in the long quest for a full voice in Imperial foreign affairs.

No thoughtful man can fail to realize that very complex and difficult questions confront those who believe that we must find a basis of permanent

-
1. Op.cit. col.677.
 2. Ibid. col.692-3.
 3. Ibid. col.693.

co-operation in naval defence, and that any such basis must afford to the overseas dominions an adequate voice in the moulding and control of foreign policy. It would have been idle to expect, and indeed we did not expect, to reach in the few weeks at our disposal during the past summer a final solution of that problem, which is not less interesting than difficult, which touches most closely the future destiny of the Empire and which is fraught with even graver significance for the British islands than for Canada. But I conceive that its solution is not impossible; and, however difficult the task may be, it is not the part of wisdom or of statesmanship to evade it. And so we invite the statesmen of Great Britain to study with us this, the real problem of Imperial existence¹.

Thus Borden took the sting out of an obvious failure to achieve his much sought after share in Imperial foreign affairs, by holding forth the promise of an increasingly greater share in such responsibility.

He finally summed up his basic outlook on the necessity of the Bill by appealing to the patriotic instincts of the House.

The next ten or twenty years will be pregnant with great results for this Empire, and it is of infinite importance that questions of purely domestic concern, however urgent, shall not prevent any of us from rising "to the height of this great argument". But today, while the clouds are heavy and we hear the booming of the distant thunder, and see the lightning flashes above the horizon, we cannot and we will not wait and deliberate until any impending storm shall have burst upon us in fury and with disaster. Almost unaided, the motherland not for herself alone, but for us as well, is sustaining the burden of a vital Imperial duty, and confronting an overmastering necessity of national existence. Bringing the best assistance that we may in the urgency of the moment, we come thus to her aid, in token of our determination to protect and ensure the safety and integrity of this Empire and of our resolve to defend on sea as well as on land our flag, our honour, and our heritage².

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Ibid.

And so the Bill was launched. The debate was long, arduous and bitterly fought. The Liberals used all the means at their disposal to obstruct the Bill, as was natural considering the quick demise of the Naval Service Act at the hands of the Borden Government. Echoes of this Bill were heard when Laurier's amendment for a two-coast navy was defeated.

During the course of the Naval Aid bill numerous amendments were introduced by the Liberals, but all were defeated. On April 23 the closure resolutions introduced by the Government to forestall the defeat of the Bill, were carried. Closure was put into effect on May 9. On May 15 the Bill passed its third reading with a thirty-three vote majority.

During the month of April, Sir George Ross (Liberal Leader in the Senate) informed Senator Lougheed (Conservative Leader in the Senate) that a compromise might be effected on the naval question. In a letter to Lougheed dated April 29, 1913, Ross enumerated his objections to the Naval Aid bill in its existing form:

(1) It invites Canadians to lean upon the Imperial Government for defence instead of providing for their own defence. This is not the way to make a strong nation and is contrary to all the processes of development which have characterized Canada since Confederation.

(2) It establishes a cleavage in the public mind on a question on which there should be the utmost unanimity. I do not simply mean the political cleavage which in a question of this kind is bad enough and should be avoided if possible, but I mean that sentimental cleavage which exalts British protection as against Canadian self-reliance, the outcome of which will be that a Canadian spirit will

grow up to assert its entire independence of Imperial support and thus weaken Imperial connection.

(3) A cleavage as between a contribution and a Canadian navy may arouse an anti-navy sentiment in regard to both policies which might work infinite mischief in the development of national character¹.

Ross went on to suggest a delay in the present naval Bill and introduce in the next session, a measure to help the Royal Navy and one to establish a definite Canadian Navy. Borden was agreeable to these suggestions if Laurier would assent. In his Memoirs Borden records the reaction of the opposition.

In discussing the various proposals made by Sir George, I explicitly explained to Lougheed that while we were prepared to discuss the subject it was essential that Sir George should make sure that any proposal which he put forward would receive the sanction of Sir Wilfred Laurier. Eventually, I learned that Sir Wilfred refused to entertain any of the proposals offered as a compromise by Sir George. Sir George had been very confident that he would be able to induce members of his party in the Senate to approve the Bill if amended in accordance with his suggestions. However, at a conference of Liberal Senators his views were not endorsed, and the Liberal Senators, under the influence of Sir Wilfred Laurier, expressed their approval in the course pursued by the Opposition in the Commons and determined to reject the Bill².

On May 30th the Naval Aid bill was rejected by the Senate which sent it back to the Commons, stating: "This House is not justified in giving assent to this Bill until it is submitted to the judgment of the country"³. Thus "Sir Wilfred insisted upon the rejection of the Bill, giving to

-
1. Quoted in Borden; Memoirs, I, 418.
 2. Borden, Memoirs, I, 419-20.
 3. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 421.

his friends in the Senate the choice between that course and his resignation"¹. In his Memoirs Borden stressed Laurier's inflexible opposition to the Bill as the reason why repeated attempts to reach a compromise satisfactory to the Senate, were doomed to failure before their inception².

Ross threw an interesting sidelight on to the failure of the Naval Aid bill. Writing to Lougheed he stated the following.

Your trouble last year was that you kept the idea of a contribution and a permanent navy miles apart. You should now hitch them together. Do not drive tandem any longer. Do not be afraid to merge the idea of a contribution in the idea of a permanent navy, even although you speak of it as a contribution³.

As an anti climax to the failure of the Bill, Borden was asked on June 6, the day of the prorogation of the House, what his plans were in light of the failure of the Naval Aid bill.

His question gave me the opportunity which I desired of making an announcement that eventually we expected to take over and pay for the three ships which Great Britain proposed to lay down in substitution for those which Canada would have provided under our Bill⁴.

And there Naval matters rested until the outbreak of war in September 1914.

-
1. Borden, Memoirs, I, 421.
 2. Ibid. 425.
 3. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 425.
 4. Borden, Memoirs, I, 422.

CHAPTER TWOPOLITICAL INFLUENCES ON THE PASSAGE OF THE
MILITARY SERVICE ACT AND THE FORMATION
OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT.

I

1914: THE BORDEN GOVERNMENT GIRDS ITSELF FOR WAR.

In view of the explosive war which broke out in 1914 the German paper Hamburger Nachrichten sounded an ominous truth, on June 5, 1913.

Whatever may be decided upon later, the actual decision of the Canadian Senate means at any rate a heavy moral and material loss for the defence of the Empire, for Mr. Borden's promise had been foolishly counted on. His offer made an enormous impression on the whole world¹.

Despite this loss to the defence of the Empire, a loss even the Germans were aware of, there was nothing that could be done about it by the Borden Government and the Canadian Parliament was forced to turn to domestic items neglected during the long debate on naval matters. Parliament had prorogued in June, 1913, and opened again in January, 1914. Immediately the Commons became concerned with such sundry domesticity as railways, Western representation, aliens, and the failure of the Farmer's Bank.

Laurier defended the action of the Senate (taken under his direction) in the previous session rejecting the Naval Aid bill.

1. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 430.

The Bill which was brought in last session was not even a measure of emergency, although it was so called. It was simply a measure of expediency involving a policy of contribution, a policy which had been denounced by the very men themselves who introduced the Bill, a policy which was not justified by anything which then existed. They introduced it upon the shallow pretence of emergency. Emergency? Who speaks today of emergency? Twelve months have elapsed since my right honourable friend, the Prime Minister, introduced his measure. Twelve months and more have passed since that time when he saw the German peril. He saw Germany almost ready to jump at the throat of Great Britain. He saw clouds on the horizon; he saw these clouds rent by lightning; he heard the murmurs and rumbling of the distant thunder. But my right honourable friend today may live in peace. The atmosphere is pure, the sky is clear The light has been let in on that question, and we know how much the country and the Empire and the civilized world has been deceived upon the question of so-called emergency¹.

The world in general and certainly Canada in particular, was lulled into a state of relative calm regarding international affairs. Borden himself felt war inevitable, but probably indefinitely in the future². Thus the lull before the proverbial storm was rudely and finally shattered by the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince at Sarajevo, Bosnia, on June 28, 1914. Events moved so quickly that Borden interrupted his holidays, convinced war was pending. London informed Borden that the situation was serious, but there existed "a faint hope of peace"³.

Borden then sent the following telegram in the name of the Governor General (who was touring Western Canada).

My advisers while expressing their earnest hope that peaceful solution of existing international difficulties may be achieved and their strong

-
1. Op.cit. 428-9.
 2. Borden, Memoirs, I, 451.
 3. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, I, 452.

desire to co-operate in every possible way for that purpose wish me to convey to His Majesty's Government the firm assurance that if unhappily war should ensue the Canadian people will be united in a common resolve to put forth every effort and to make every sacrifice necessary to ensure the integrity and maintain the honour of our Empire¹.

The Prime Minister while in England in 1912 had become acquainted with the plans of the Imperial Defence Committee, plans which would enable the members to proceed rapidly on a wartime footing. Consequently the Imperial authorities in the summer of 1914 communicated constantly with Ottawa and this enabled Borden's Government (in council) to embark on some precautionary measures which, though without legal validity, at the time, were accepted by the country at large, to be ratified later by Parliament. These measures established censorship, declared banknotes legal tender, (to avoid gold hoarding), authorized excess issue of Dominion notes, empowered proper officers to detain enemy ships, and stop the export of material needed for war purposes.

Again, the Canadian navy was alerted, guns obtained for west coast defence, German and Austrian reservists, resident in Canada, forbidden to leave (for enlistment in respective armies), and one million bags of flour (98 pounds apiece) sent to England.

The First Canadian Division was mobilized and the Canadian Expeditionary Force was created by Order-in-Council on August 10. Parliament was summoned by Order-in-Council to convene on August 18.

1. Op.cit.

The session opened cheerfully enough due to an absence of party strife. Sir Wilfred Laurier promised full support as leader of the opposition and pointed with pride to the sacred cause of the Allies.

If in what has been done or in what remains to be done there may be anything which in our judgment should not be done or should be differently done, we raise no question, we take no exceptions, we offer no criticism, and we shall offer no criticism so long as there is danger at the front

It is our duty to let Great Britain know, and to let the friends and foes of Great Britain know, that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart, and that all Canadians stand behind the Mother Country, conscious and proud that she has engaged in this war, not from any selfish motive, for any purpose of aggrandizement, but to maintain untarnished the honour of her name, to fulfil her obligations to her allies, to maintain her treaty obligations, and to save civilization from the unbridled lust of conquest and domination

It is an additional source of pride to us that England did not seek this war. It is a matter of history - one of the noblest pages of the history of England - that she never drew the sword until every means had been exhausted to secure and keep an honourable peace¹.

Laurier went on to point with pride to the opportunity afforded French Canadians to serve a double cause, France and England.

If my words can be heard beyond the walls of this House in the province from which I come, among the men whose blood flows in my veins, I should like them to remember that, in taking their place today in the ranks of the Canadian Army to fight for the cause of the Allied nations, a double honour rests upon them. The very cause for which they are called upon to fight is to them doubly sacred².

1. Op.cit. 459-60.

2. Ibid. Jordan, *op.cit.*, p. 1, - 2.

By October 3, the official Canadian Expeditionary Force had sailed from Gaspé. Recruiting had a marked success with the appeal for a planned force of 20,000 bringing in over 30,000 men¹.

While the Government was satisfied with recruiting, some government members, including the bulk of the Cabinet, favored an election on the basis of "Stand Behind the Government." The Hon. Robert Rogers promoted the scheme but it failed to materialize. It was discarded due to opposition by Conservative public opinion and those who opposed the machine element of the Government party and its obvious attempt at election for party purposes. In a letter to Frank Oliver, dated October 20, 1914, Laurier stated that the planned dissolution "elicited very strong protests from the community, so strong indeed that the government hastily cancelled their determination"².

Public confidence in the Government during the remainder of 1914 was strongly placed due to the auspicious beginning of the young nation on a war footing. There was little or no criticism of the Government handling of affairs by the Opposition and certainly no demand for an election.

Recruiting continued favorably. The First Division, already embarked, consisted of 25,000 men. The continued high rate of enlistments enabled the Government to announce, by the end of the year, that over and above a force of 8,000

1. Borden, Memoirs, I, 464-5.

2. Quoted in Skelton, Laurier, II, 440.

for home defence, there was to be a continuous force of 30,000 in training. The immediate aim was two divisions of 45,000 men total. Sir Charles Lucas gives his impressions of these volunteers of the year 1914.

In these first days of the war the stream of recruits came more especially from Winnipeg and Western Canada, and the large majority of the first Expeditionary Force were not Canadian born. It was in the course of nature. The first call appealed with peculiar force to those who had not long since come out from the Old Country, to settle or sojourn in the opening West. But they were the first fruits only: the national effort was still almost in embryo¹.

The Prime Minister referred to this aspect of the overall enlistment picture of 1914 by mentioning that "it may be that at first the Maritime Provinces and the Province of Quebec were a little slower than the other Provinces of Canada"².

Borden however, should have pointed out the obvious reasons for such a state of affairs. The bulk of the British born had settled in Ontario and the West, not in the Maritimes and Quebec, the latter with many French citizens and both areas with a highly ruralized economy. The most energetic war effort had emanated in Ontario in the initial phase of the war with the Eastern and extreme Western wings of the country getting organized at a slightly later date.

French Canadian ardor for the war was very fervid in 1914. Yet, as the year ended, ominous portents of things to come were much in evidence. The Government failed to adopt

-
1. Lucas, Empire at War, II, 13.
 2. Borden, Debates, Jan, 17, 1916, col.25.

a logical recruiting scheme in regards to French Canadians. With the despatch of the First Contingent, the Second was being formed at Valcartier. Despite enlistments in French Canadian Militia units, or into a general pool of men, many of the French, too many, were assigned ultimately to English speaking units. Furthermore, the Government had allowed only one French Canadian Company in the First Contingent. At enlistment centres and training depots, French instructors were lacking and the general feeling grew that potential French enlistees were being discouraged by Anglo-officers at Valcartier. Obviously, in 1914 the Government had not been prepared to assimilate the large body of French volunteers that applied for enlistment. This indicated a very decided lack of organization on the part of Colonel Sam Hughes and the Militia Department.

Persistent demands for separate French units were repeatedly ignored. Captain Arthur Mignault offered \$50,000. to help found and equip a French Regiment¹. Matters came to a head when Laurier wrote to Borden demanding recognition of a separate French unit, pointing out that Britain had always realized the value of recruiting on an ethnic basis. He stated that there "is every reason to believe that if the formation of a French Canadian unit were authorized, there would be a generous response"².

1. Mignault to Borden, Sept. 25, 1914, Borden Papers, OC 209, no.21272.

2. Laurier to Borden, Sept. 23, 1914, Borden Papers, OC 209, no.21269.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

Under such pressure, the Government capitulated and announced on September 30, the formation of a French Battalion, the Royal 22nd, at Montreal. It was raised and fully enrolled in a few weeks! Such patriotism was of the very highest level and could have been and should have been utilized fully. Regretfully the Government's failure to do so was a prime factor in the necessity, later on, to enforce enlistments by conscription in order to meet the number of soldiers the Government decided to raise.

In the broad political scene, warfare had practically ceased completely. The Opposition was co-operating and the agitation for a wartime election had shrivelled before public opinion. One group, the Quebec Nationalists, partly instrumental in obtaining Borden's election victory in 1911, was in 1914 represented by Henri Bourassa, Oliver Asselin, Armand Lavergne, and other lesser political figures. In view of the influential role this group was to play later, particularly in its opposition to conscription, it is interesting to see its viewpoint on the war effort in the first few months of the War.

Through the medium of Le Devoir, (Aug. 7, 1914) the chief spokesman for the Nationalists, Bourassa, had pledged himself and his followers to an all out support of the war effort and stressed volubly the necessity of co-operation with the Allies. He stated, "it is natural for any Canadian to wish ardently for the triumph of the Anglo-French arms"¹.

1. Quoted in Armstrong, Crisis of Quebec, 77.

He demanded early in September, that party strife should cease in the interests of co-operation with the Allied cause. He denied that Canada was constitutionally or morally interested in intervening in the war but indicated economically, socially, and ethnically Canada should support Anglo-French arms. On September 8, 1914 he declared it Canada's national duty "to contribute, within the bounds of her strength and by the means which are proper to herself, to the triumph, and especially to the endurance of the combined efforts of France and England"¹.

He later added that "I have not written and will not write one line, one word to condemn the sending of Canadian troops to Europe"². However in the same statement he clarified approximately how far he would go in support of Canada's contribution to the War.

But to render this contribution effective, Canada must begin by facing her real position resolutely, by taking an exact account of what can and what cannot be done, and ensure her own domestic security, before beginning or following up an effort which she will perhaps not be able to sustain to the end³.

It is to be noted that in September 1914, Bourassa and his followers were in full support of the Government's program for the War. In fact by the end of 1914 such leading Nationalists as Pelletier, Blondin and Nantel were in the Borden Cabinet.

1. Op.cit. 34.

2. Quoted in Skelton, Laurier, II, 435.

3. Ibid.

Considering the great harmony existing between the Government and the Opposition in 1914 it was regretful that the Conservatives had not grasped the full potentiality of a united, coalition Government. Such an opportunity for coalition did not present itself again. The year 1915 was to strike the first blow against the Borden Government and force it into the bitter tortuous road that led to conscription and Union Government in 1917.

II

1915: INTERNAL DISSENSION: ITS EFFECT ON RECRUITING

The year 1915, which opened so optimistically for a young Country strongly united in wartime was to see that unity rudely shattered by the sad discord of national disunity, a condition that had a drastic effect on recruiting.

In assessing the reasons for the radical slowing up of recruiting during the later months of 1915 it should be noted that while Quebec recruiting lagged, perhaps more so than in other parts of Canada, the remaining Provinces also set no startling records in the rush of recruits to sign up. Unfortunately, the French opposition to recruiting was confined to the Eastern half of Canada and Quebec in particular, a fact which created the mistaken notion that only the French were inclined not to enlist. Once the wave of British-born enlistments was over, recruiting among the native born slowed down to an average pace. The 1914-15 figures showed Western Canada and Ontario enlistments to be higher than

Quebec's because the British born were largely centres west of Quebec. Again, Ontario enlistments were expected to be high considering the obvious British background and connection of the average citizen of that Province. The large foreign element out West, while not enlisting in any great numbers, provided no active opposition to recruiting, while on the other hand, the active and vociferous opposition of certain Quebec Nationalists centred an undue public attention on Quebec which gave the unfortunate impression that Quebec alone opposed recruiting and was the sole Province not squarely behind the War effort.

The obvious reason for the Government's resorting to the use of conscription in 1917 lay in the cold fact that voluntary enlistments failed to supply the required number of recruits which the Government was set on getting by 1917. This was the large number of 500,000 men. As early as 1916 Borden himself had admitted that recruiting had been "slow at first"¹ in Quebec. The passage of conscription in 1917 was an acknowledgment that recruiting had ceased to supply enough men to meet the half million quota. While most parts of Canada lagged behind in 1917 on the enlistment quotas, Quebec was obviously falling behind even before the year 1917 dawned. What caused Quebec to turn a deaf ear to the Government's plea for a steady supply of volunteers? An insight into this problem can be gained only by examining the enlistment situation at the end of 1915.

1. Borden, Debates, Jan. 17, 1916, col.25.

While this aspect can be approached from more than one direction, one factor must be considered in studying any official figures issued by the Government, viz: that recruits were required to state country of birth, not racial or linguistic background when being processed by recruiting officers. This alone would make any final evaluation of racial enlistment statistics impossible.

In March of 1917, there ensued a hot dispute over the number of French Canadians enlisting in the Canadian Armed Forces up to the beginning of 1916. The squabble was touched off by a report made by the prominent Conservative Senator, General Mason, in March 1916¹. The General based his findings on two sources, the census figures of 1911 and the figure supplied by the Minister of Militia². Relying on the 1911 census figures, Mason estimated that Canadian born males numbered 1,112,000 of which 667,000 were English speaking. Considering the number of males between eighteen and forty-five who were eligible for enlistment, as compared to those in age group actually enlisting, Mason stated that 61% of the total recruits were British born, 33% were Canadian born and 6% foreign born. Of the Canadian born enlistments, constituting 33% of the total, Mason stated that 28.5% (85,000) of the total enlistments were English speaking and 4.5% (12,000) of the total French speaking. It meant that French Canadian

1. Mason, Senate, Debates, May 4, 1916, col.406.

2. Ibid. The total enlistments to March 31, 1916 in Canada were 295,000.

males in the group between eighteen and forty-five, who made up two-fifths or 40% of the total population of that age group, had supplied only 4.5% of the recruits. General Mason realizing the storm to be unleashed, added in his report that the native born of both races were not doing their part.

Rodolph Lemieux, speaking in the House of Commons, had pointed out that thirteen battalions of French Canadians had been enlisted since the beginning of the War¹. He insisted that the number of French Canadian enlistees, up to the beginning, was 17,500, of the total enlisted in the Canadian services².

Lemieux's figures make it obvious that the French enlistments lagged behind those of the other native born Canadians.

Many reasons have been advanced for such a state of affairs. Most obvious was the fact that the Government continued stupid recruiting blunders in Quebec, blunders that had begun with the initial recruiting in 1914.

One fantastic error was the appointment of a Protestant Minister as Chief Recruiting Officer for the Province of Quebec. In private life, he was the Rector of the Methodist Cathedral in Montreal. Added to this was the fact that the Officer Commanding Montreal Military District, could not speak French! As usual, French Canadians were assigned to English speaking units. French Battalions were broken up to

1. Lemieux, Debates, May 1, 1916, col.3281.
2. Ibid. col.3284.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

reinforce other groups on arrival overseas. Other French Canadians were not allowed to transfer to French speaking units. Higher commands were denied French Canadian Officers of proven merit such as General Lessard, highest ranking officer of the peacetime Militia, Colonel Pelletier, gallant veteran of the South African War, as well as the highly respected General Landry. There was a general coolness by the Government towards the formation of a French Canadian Brigade. Early in 1915, Hughes stated that the Government was "considering" the formation of three new French Battalions. Hughes vaguely referred to between three and six thousand French Canadians in the First Contingent¹. Such vagueness gave rise to all types of exaggerations but did nothing to clarify conflicting reports on the number of French Canadian volunteers. Hughes was a well known Orangeman and a bigot. His refusal of commands to the French, plus his apparent disinclination to form French Canadian units, laid him open to the charge of anti French-Canadianism. This was widely believed and whatever truth lay in the charge, his actions supported it incontestably.

But the gradual cooling off of Quebec to the general war effort had its roots in many factors.

There was no question that French-speaking Canadians had enlisted in much smaller proportions than English-speaking Canadians. That this should have been so in some measure was inevitable. Quebec was relatively isolated from Old World interests.

1. Hughes, *Débates*, Mar., 26, 1915, col.1549.

There was among French Canadians a real if usually passive loyalty to the British Crown; there could not be anything of the personal interests of the newcomer from the British Isles, nor of the racial sympathy of the men of British descent and British traditions¹.

It should be observed, too, that Quebec had severed its connections with France by a century and a half, thus weakening the argument that it was bound by any intimate ties with that country. Again, the frankly anti-clerical and anti-catholic laws of the French nation were unlikely to provoke any love from the French Canadians. Skelton summed up the French Canadian as "a Canadian only, perhaps not always an all-Canada man, but certainly none-but-Canada"².

On the other hand many felt that French Canadians owed a great deal of love and gratitude to England. But it was England's war, and Canada's only in a secondary sense. French Canadians as a bloc or entity bore no great latent or even dormant antipathy to Great Britain. But their failure to respond to recruiting lay partly in the very nature of the economic and social structure of the Province of Quebec itself. In a letter to M.K. Cowan, K.C., Laurier touched upon this aspect of the recruiting debacle in a concise manner.

I come now to what you say about recruiting and the slackness of Quebec in that respect. On this point, the last word has not been said and the last bit of information has not been received. There are some factors to be taken into account in the comparison of recruiting between Quebec and Ontario.

Recruiting has been chiefly confined all over Canada to urban population, very little in rural

1. Skelton, Laurier, II, 457.

2. Ibid. 458.

population. When we deduct from the figures in Ontario the British-born, the urban population, and compare only the figures in rural districts, the difference will not be very great, though I admit that the preponderance is in favour of Ontario.

Before I go further let me remind you that Ontario is dotted with towns and cities from 5,000 to 500,000. In Quebec we have only one large city, Montreal, then a secondary city, Quebec, with not even 100,000, and the next three cities, Ste. Hyacinthe, Sherbrooke and Three Rivers, do not count each a population of 20,000. Apart from this, we have nothing but villages and a purely rural population¹.

Quebec had the majority of young families in the nation due to the early marriages in that Province. As a natural consequence, there were more men of military age in Quebec who were married, and married with families, than in other provinces throughout the Dominion.

With this background in 1915, it could be seen that at best Quebec had only a passive interest in Britain's war on the Continent.

1915 saw the emergence of a serious racial conflict involving the infamous Regulation 17. This provided much ill-will between the races as well as becoming the pivot point in the growing anti-War campaign conducted through 1915 by Bourassa and the Quebec Nationalists.

Regulation 17 attracted wide attention with the result that French Canadians, in Quebec as well as elsewhere, keenly resented the manner in which the French speaking people of Ontario were affected by this new policy on the part of the Ontario Government. The Regulation itself is worth repeating.

1. Quoted in Skelton, *Laurier*, II, 459-60.

Where necessary in the case of French speaking pupils, French may be used as the language of instruction and communication; but such use of French shall not be continued beyond Form I, excepting that, on the approval of the Chief Inspector, it may also be used as the language of instruction and communication in the case of pupils beyond Form I, who are unable to speak and understand the English language¹.

This Regulation was hotly opposed by French school boards, teachers and parents in Ontario. But in Quebec it became a focal point, rallying all those French who regarded this move as aimed at restricting the free expression and development of the French tongue. Opposition came from many quarters.

Mgr. Bruchesi, Archbishop of Montreal spoke out strongly against such action. "Liberté de la langue maternelle, liberté de l'école confessionnelle: telles sont les conclusions implicitement contenues dans le principe fondamental de notre constitution"².

Cardinal Begin himself spoke of the "noble duty of the French and Catholic Province of Quebec to come to the aid of those who suffer and of those who fight (...) until justice is done"³.

Opposition came from French members in the Dominion Parliament as well as Sir Lomer Gouin, the Liberal Prime Minister of Quebec. The Canadian Senate saw condemnation of the Regulation 17 by French Senator Dandurand⁴.

1. Quoted in Hopkins, Canada at War, 286.

2. Mgr. Bruchesi, "Problèmes des Races", Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, IX, series 3, 1915, section 1, 10.

3. Quoted in Armstrong, Crisis of Quebec, 98.

4. Dandurand, Senate, Debates, 1915, cols. 62, 114.

Bourassa condemned the methods of Ontario as "Prussian"¹. He referred to "Russian Boches and Ontario Boches"². In December Bourassa told a Montreal audience that "there are 200,000 French Canadians today living under worse oppression in Ontario than the people of Alsace-Lorraine under the iron heel of Prussia"³.

At this point it should be observed that while the French Canadian hierarchy vehemently attacked Regulation 17, they nevertheless fully supported the war effort and recruiting endeavors of the Borden Government. A Pastoral letter issued in 1914 declared the following:

England is engaged in this war, and who does not see that the destiny of every part of the Empire is bound up with the fate of her armies? She counts very rightly on our co-operation and this co-operation, we are happy to say, is being generously offered to her both in men and in money. It will be the honour and glory of Canada, which is so intimately united with two of the leading belligerent Powers, to have done her share, by fervent supplications for the restoration of peace in the world, and by generous contributions, to have assisted in allaying the evils which afflict mankind⁴.

The Nationalists in Quebec grouped about Bourassa, Oliver Asselin and others, while in agreement with the Church leaders on the injustice of Regulation 17, differed radically with these ecclesiastical leaders on one point. Unlike the higher clergy, the Nationalists identified the unjust enactment of Ontario with that of Britain herself. Hatred for

1. Quoted in Armstrong, Crisis of Quebec, 98.

2. Quoted in Hopkins, Canada at War, 286.

3. Quoted in Armstrong, Crisis of Quebec, 98.

4. Quoted in Hopkins, Canada at War, 281.

British Ontario became readily identified with dislike for Great Britain. In attacking Britain, the Nationalists attacked the war effort in general. While Regulation 17 afforded Bourassa with ammunition against the War effort, it was one aspect, in truly a very powerful one, of Bourassa's general campaign to restrict the war effort of his province and race. This could be traced to his inherent dislike of Canada's participation in British wars, evidenced strongly during the South African War. 1915 saw the publication of his sweeping condemnation of the notion that Canada was obligated to support Great Britain in Imperial Wars. In the volume Que devons-nous à l'Angleterre?, he attacked British Imperialism by pointing out its incipient dangers to Canada. He attacked the previously established creed that Imperial foreign policy could not be shared between Great Britain and her dependencies¹. He went on further to point out that no matter what sacrifices Canada underwent for Great Britain, Canada would never be compensated in any way². Bourassa went even further and hinted at the probability of conscription being the lot of Canada as a "reward" for its British connection. Such a vein of attack was bound to strike a responsive chord in the hearts of a people disillusioned over the lack of justice towards their compatriots in Ontario.

Le jour où le régime de la conscription,
partielle ou totale, sera établi en Angleterre,
les maîtres de l'Empire n'auront aucune peine à

-
1. H. Bourassa, Que devons-nous à L'Angleterre?, N.p. Montreal, 1915, 229.
 2. Ibid.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

l'introduire au Canada. L'opération sera d'autant plus facile que le mécanisme légal existe déjà. Il n'y aura pas même besoin d'une loi nouvelle ni de l'autorisation du parlement¹.

Bourassa was quick to point out that the Militia Act itself contained sufficient sweep in its intent to provide overseas troops by way of conscripting them merely by implementing the Act by Order-in-Council². No Act of Parliament was necessary, he claimed. He cited the statements by Post Master General Casgrain to the effect that "la première ligne de défense du Canada est à la frontière des Flandres. L'Allemagne ne fait la guerre que pour s'emparer du Canada"³.

As early as February Bourassa belittled the Canadian War effort by pointing out that Canada was neglecting domestic problems and aspects by virtue of the Government's all out drive to send men and money to Britain. He added that Quebec had contributed a larger proportion of native soldiers than "loyal" Ontario⁴. La Presse (Apr. 16, 1915) championed the war effort of Quebec and directed French Canadians to ignore the calumnies of the "jingoes" of Ontario who were trying to belittle Quebec's war effort because of the basic bigotry of Ontario towards Quebec⁵. The rural press tended to support Bourassa's isolationist position while the

1. Op.cit. 256.

2. See "An Act respecting the Militia and Defence of Canada", in Statutes of Canada, Acts of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 4 ED. VII, Ottawa, Kings Printer, 1905, I, 163-87.

3. H. Bourassa, Que devons-nous à L'Angleterre?, N.p., Montreal, 1915, 256.

4. Quoted in Armstrong, Crisis in Quebec, 96.

5. Ibid. 108.

English language press in the big cities tended to maintain a centre position, supporting a full war effort, praising Quebec's efforts and tacitly attempting to ignore or play down the unfortunate racial rift that was developing.

The Borden Government could see one bright star on this darkening horizon. This was the Hierarchy's unqualified support of the Government's war efforts. This support inevitably brought about a clash between the extreme Nationalists and the church leaders in Quebec. While this was embarrassing for such men as Mgr. Bruchési and Cardinal Begin, it gave Borden the reassurance that whatever unpleasanties lay ahead, he could depend on the Church leaders following scrupulously their duties to support the state. As late as Dec. 6, 1916 after talking with Archbishop Bruchesi, Borden remarked him "to be very friendly and (he) denounced Bourassa"¹.

L'Action Catholique editorially (Oct. 8, 1914) struck a direct blow at Nationalism before the full force of Bourassa's views became known.

To prevent the circulation of a thesis which we consider false, in itself and dangerous in its consequences - the thesis that Canada has no moral or constitutional obligation, or pressing interest in the War, that we have no other obligations to England than we have to Belgium or France - we have had to teach what we believe to be in conformity with natural and Christian duty. The thesis which we defend may be thus expressed: As part of the British Empire, it is our moral duty to aid our legitimate Sovereign and metropolitan centre in this War, because they are in danger. This moral obligation to

1. Borden, Memoirs, 613-4.

aid England in just measure is united with the obligation to defend Canadian interests which are involved in this conflict. The legitimate Government of Canada decided that our aid to England should consist of men and money, and no other authority in Canada is competent to judge with full knowledge. Its decision is not, in any sense,¹ a violation of our natural or constitutional rights¹.

Oliver Asselin in several pamphlets defending the right of the Nationalists to determine the extent of Canada's participation in the War openly attacked the position taken by the Hierarchy in general and L'Action Catholique in particular.

C'est au nom des exigences de la morale naturelle que les évêques permettent à l'Action Catholique de prêcher l'impérialisme militaire, de condamner "le principe révolutionnaire des nationalités" (sic), de salir et poignarder, les seuls défenseurs infatigables et toujours désintéressés de l'enseignement français au Canada².

He went on to point out the fact that the War itself was hardly a sacred cause when it was evident that the enemy nations included "Christian Germany" and "Catholic Austria"³. The general thesis of the Asselin attack was to question the validity of the Hierarchy on political matters. It was obvious that the Nationalists refused to accept clerical guidance on the matter of supporting Britain's war effort.

In October, Bourassa unleashed his most violent attack on England, interpreting her historical contributions to society as mere extensions of imperialism, and the lusting

-
1. Quoted in Hopkins, Canada at War, 282.
 2. O. Asselin, Les Evêques et La Propagande de L'Action Catholique, Montreal, N.p., 1915, 58.
 3. Ibid. 59.

after gold and prestige. He indicated that British military success was over half civilized natives, not civilized peoples¹.

At this point it should be obvious that the campaign of the Nationalists must be seen in proper perspective. For the Borden Government there was no immediate effect. Recruits still poured in across Canada, so well in fact that Borden by the end of 1915 called for a total force of 500,000 men. But Bourassa's campaign was to have its full effect in the years 1916 and 1917. It took an interesting twist. From an anti-war position Bourassa led his followers into an anti-conscription campaign not realizing that his incessant harping on the war effort was largely responsible for the rapid falling-off of French enlistments in 1916, a condition in itself that played into Borden's hands, thus bolstering his argument for conscription. Bourassa became trapped in an unenviable position, a position of isolationism for his followers. Hopkins evaluates Bourassa's role clearly.

The position and influence of Mr. Bourassa in Quebec could be, and sometimes was, over-estimated in these years. Its importance did not lie in Parliamentary representation, though a number of Conservative members of the Commons had been elected as Nationalists in 1911; nor in Provincial Legislative representation, because there was none. It lay in the persistent and clever advocacy of a cause - the non-participation of Canada in Imperial Wars or Empire Government or Imperial responsibility; in a steady and consistent presentment of French Canadians as the only true Canadians and as the continuous victims of either British rapacity, or Orange persecution, or Manitoba injustice, or Orange wickedness; in bitter and unscrupulous

1. Hopkins, *Canada at War*, 286.

denunciation of Great Britain and the British people and soldiers in the War with the reiteration of every possible misconception as to Allied policy and action. The mouthpiece of Mr. Bourassa in this connection (...) was not a great or even brilliant journal but it was a clever one, it was influential in voicing opinions which some local politicians held, but dared not, or could not, put so clearly, it reached an audience not so much large as it was select and influential - political leaders or would-be politicians, rising young lawyers and speakers, priests in the cities and cures in the parishes, students of Laval and professors in the Colleges¹.

J. C. Hopkins was a spokesman for the interests of Ontario but was not regarded as an extremist in his attitude towards Quebec or the Nationalist element.

A good comparison in viewpoints is thus afforded between Hopkins and Sir Wilfred Laurier. In March of 1916, Laurier wrote to a friend in Toronto, M. K. Cowan, K.C., and stated at that instance that "the great factor against recruiting has been the Nationalist movement"². In December of 1916 in a letter to General Louis Botha, Laurier summed up his views clearly on the problem of Bourassa. He agreed in essence with Hopkins in the role and aims of Bourassa and the Nationalists.

Bourassa is a man of great ability, but his ability is negative and destructive. He will never accomplish anything constructive or of benefit to any cause which he may espouse. He was at one time a close friend of mine, but we separated. His aim was to isolate the French population from the rest of the community and make them a separate body, to move exclusively together either against one or the other of the political parties³.

1. Op.cit. 287.

2. Quoted in Skelton, Laurier, II, 460.

3. Ibid. 465.

Laurier pointed out that the combined efforts of Conservatives and Nationalists put him out of office in 1911. On that occasion according to Laurier, the "Tories (...)" accused me of not being British enough" while Bourassa "carried on active campaign against me amongst my French fellow-countrymen, on the ground I was too British"¹.

One weakness in Bourassa's position lay in the number of Nationalists who held seats in the Cabinet of Sir Robert Borden. While these Nationalists supported the Government early in the War, some were to fall by the wayside while only a few were to support Borden in the bitter period of 1917. The contradiction of Nationalists pro and con on the Borden war policies, considering their anti-Laurier attitude in 1911, was bound to create a sense of bewilderment on the part of Quebec citizens. Significantly enough, the French tended to support the Bourassa wing rather than the Cabinet bloc of Nationalists.

As 1915 ended, Borden was confident that his Conservative - Nationalist tie up was sufficient to keep up his strength in Quebec. So confident was he, that he called for half a million men. But the little Nationalist support Borden commanded in 1915 on the Cabinet level, was to diminish and all but disappear as the Borden Government drifted towards conscription.

1. Op.cit.

III

1916: VOLUNTEER RECRUITING SLOWS: DEMANDS
FOR CONSCRIPTION ARISE.

Despite the fact that Borden was confident he could raise 500,000 men for overseas duty, and having given public utterance to such a belief in January, 1916, the Prime Minister was deeply worried over the effect the bilingual controversy might have on national unity and recruiting in turn. His Memoirs indicate his attempt to keep the bilingual problem out of the House of Commons, chiefly on the grounds that it was a provincial matter.

Early in February of this year much excitement began to develop respecting the action of the Ontario Government with regard to the use of the French language in the schools of that Province; and there were fierce protests which seemed to have some force. As the matter was entirely of provincial concern, I felt strongly that discussion in the House of Commons would be not only futile but exasperating and even dangerous¹.

He records interviews between the Governor General and himself, and the Governor General and Bishop Mathieu of Regina on the subject². This recorded evidence indicated that the Government was being kept informed on the progress of Quebec's reaction to the continuing war effort.

On February 24, Borden met a delegation protesting the activity of the Ontario Government and promised he would relay their protest to the Ontario Government (in the form

1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 573.
2. Ibid.

of a protest to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council of Ontario)¹.

On April 22nd, Borden received a letter signed by Casgrain, Blondin and Patenaude, three Nationalist Ministers, asking that a request be made to the King-in-Council "to inquire into and advise as to the status of the French Language in Canada"².

Casgrain also sent an accompanying letter indicating that the three Ministers named would not attend Council until they learned Borden's decision in the matter³.

The proposals of the three Ministers demanded that the Canadian Government request the King to refer to a special committee of the Imperial Council inquiries to determine the "present status" and the future status of the French language in Canada. The request distinguished between this "special" committee as opposed to the legal body, the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council. The letter suggested the investigation to be based on the natural law, custom and practice observed in Canada, legislative enactments and the general policy of the Empire⁴.

Borden dismissed the request by pointing out that the present status of the French tongue in Canada was a matter of law; the policy on the future status was the concern of amendments. Borden declined to interfere and gave his reasons.

1. Op.cit.

2. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 574.

3. Borden, Memoirs, II, 574.

4. Ibid. 581.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

It is a question that concerns Canada and the Provinces of Canada alone, and therefore should be determined within this country. All steps whether provincial or federal designed to lead to a solution should be taken by those constitutionally responsible to our people. For this Government or any Government to solicit advice from the Imperial Privy Council on a matter of policy within Canada, not affecting the Empire as a whole, would be in my judgment a departure of grave and far reaching import from proper constitutional procedure....The purpose of bringing about a more complete and cordial union of the two great races in the country is indeed to be commended and commands my entire sympathy. I cannot, however, believe that either of those races can hope to attain that end by an abridgment of our self-governing powers or by an abdication of our constitutional responsibilities.

In the above observations my colleagues agree. I am compelled therefore with much regret to advise you that the course you urge cannot be taken¹.

Only the personal appeal of the Prime Minister himself restrained the three French Nationalist Ministers from resigning though Patenaude indicated his desire to resign at the first suitable opportunity. The hopelessness of the French cause was indicated by Borden's personal talks and correspondence with G. Howard Ferguson in Ontario who informed the Prime Minister "that both parties in Ontario had absolutely the same policy on this question, and that his Government would not live for an hour if he undertook to modify that policy"².

The next point of interest in this development lay in a proposed motion to be introduced into the House by Mr. Lapointe. Regarding this motion Borden told Laurier (in a private visit on May 8) that "it could do no good and might do

1. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 588.

2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 588.

much harm. He, Laurier, said was alarmed at conditions in Quebec and that he must have some sheet anchor with which to fight Nationalists...."¹

Despite the Prime Minister's reluctance a motion was introduced by Mr. Lapointe on May 9, 1916. Mr. Lapointe moved the following motion.

That this House especially at this time of universal sacrifice and anxiety, when all energies should be concentrated on the winning of the War, would, while fully recognizing the principle of provincial rights and the necessity of every child being given a thorough English education, respectfully suggest to the Legislative Assembly (of Ontario) the wisdom of making it clear that the privilege of the children of French parentage of being taught in their mother tongue be not interfered with².

Laurier gave a magnificent speech on behalf of the motion itself but his efforts were doomed to failure because of the reluctance of the Government to interfere in the orbit of the Province of Ontario. The Government speakers felt it would only make matters worse for the Federal Parliament to intervene.

The final rejection of this motion by the House afforded an interesting insight for Borden into the lack of solidarity which suddenly made its appearance in the ranks of the Liberal Party in Canada.

The Liberals from Ontario denied that the application of Regulation 17 in Ontario represented fanaticism and intolerance. However they supported the motion as a gesture of

1. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 588-9.

2. Lapointe, Debates, May 9, 1916, col.3618.

conciliation. Eleven Western Liberals opposed the resolution, as did one Ontario Liberal. Five Quebec Conservatives voted for the resolution.

Obviously then, the Ontario Liberals voted for it, as will be seen, on altruistic grounds, not through any dislike of the motion. The Western Liberals as a bloc were opposed to the motion. But while the results of the motion vote indicated a division in Liberal ranks, it almost spelt the end of Laurier as party leader. This aspect bears a closer examination.

During the debate the Liberal members met in caucus by provinces. Quebec and the Maritimes were for the motion, the Western members opposing; Ontario would vote for it if Laurier so desired. He refused and offered his resignation to George Graham.

The effect was electric. The Ontario members assembled and decided to support the motion. Laurier agreed to stay¹. This was the first instance of a division in Liberal ranks since the War began. While the division indicated that the Liberals were not completely unified, it went further. It was a gauge of the direction such a split would run if the issue was based on a racial and/or linguistic problem. Ontario was hesitant, swinging behind Laurier for expediency. The West deserted almost in mass. Ironically, it was almost a true mirror of the Liberal disunity in 1917.

1. Skelton, Laurier, II, 484-5. Skelton gives a dramatic account of this little known aspect of Laurier's career.

The paramount issue, from the Prime Minister's point of view, during the year 1916 was recruiting, and recruiting was fatefully linked with Quebec. On January 1, the Prime Minister issued a call for half a million men. He was fully confident he could raise that many men.

On the 22nd day of October, (1914) His Majesty the King sent out an appeal. It was not specially directed to the Overseas Dominions; it was more particularly directed to the people of the British Islands. We thought it appropriate that appeal should be recognized by the people and by the Government of Canada; and so, on the 30th day of October 1914, the authorized force was increased to 250,000 men; and then, on the 1st day of January of this year, the announcement was made that the authorized force of this country would be increased to 500,000 men. But it did seem to me in view of all the developments which have taken place during the nine months since Parliament prorogued, it was fitting that at the opening of the new year we should announce to the Empire and to all the world that we were not only prepared but willing to do something more (...). The Prime Minister (of Great Britain) observes that the developments in the various theatres of war during the past year unmistakably indicate the necessity of further vigorous and united effort on the part of all His Majesty's Dominions to bring to a victorious and honourable conclusion the present conflict which unquestionably involves the power, integrity and welfare of the Empire, and even constitutes a menace to its existencel.

The Canadian Prime Minister on this occasion went on to point out that the "great issues thus involved in the War has elicited from the manhood of the Dominion a widespread and splendid response since the outbreak of hostilities"². He was "convinced that this impressive response will be continued to the further appeal which is now proposed"³.

-
1. Borden, Debates, January 17, 1916, col.25.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

To Borden the call for half a million men seemed quite in order since it appeared to him the logical number at which to aim if Canada was to do all she could for the Empire. But much to his chagrin the expected volunteers were not forthcoming. The flow was satisfactory enough during the early months of 1916, but by the Fall of 1917 even Borden himself had to admit that the voluntary system of recruiting was not getting the desired or to him necessary results, viz. the half a million quota. "Urgent and serious considerations, such as the slowing down of recruiting (...) invoked our constant attention and effort during the late summer and early autumn of this year"¹.

But what had Borden done to spur recruiting during the year 1916?

He entertained a plan proposed by Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook) to send to Quebec priests from France, to spur recruiting in that province.

Attached is a list of names of five French priests whom the French Government is returning to Canada, in the hope that their sermons and addresses will serve a useful propaganda in securing French Canadian recruits, and generally further the cause of the Allies, among the Roman Catholic Clergy and laity in Canada (...) the help of those priests will be most helpful to the Archbishop of Montreal, whose clergy² and flock follows the lead of Bourassa and others².

The reply to this suggestion came, in the form of a telegram from the Governor General to the Colonial Secretary,

-
1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 609.
 2. Aitken to Borden, Dec. 1, 1916, Borden Papers, OC 310, no.33750-1.

putting more confidence in two veteran army officers than in French priests, to aid the recruiting cause.

Confidentially my advisers are strongly of opinion that it would be of greatest advantage if two invalided officers of French Army who have served with distinction at the front would visit the Province of Quebec and address recruiting meetings¹.

The men eventually chosen were two cavalry officers identified by the Colonial Secretary as "both good Catholics"². However the two officers chosen arrived in 1917 after conscription had been announced.

Late in 1916 Borden commented in his Memoirs in extensive fashion on the reasons for the lack of recruits in Quebec³. He dwelt in the insularity of the French Canadian mind, confined by the parish, the family and the province. Borden admitted that overseas service did not appeal to the French Canadians and in fact to go on to foreign wars "seemed undesirable and desperate"⁴. Borden advanced the theory that many French Canadians felt Britain was invincible "and regarded the co-operation of Canada as useless and futile as well as burdensome"⁵. That Borden was cognizant too of the lack of sympathy held by the Quebec of 1916 for the France being battered by the German war effort was evinced by the

-
1. Governor General to Secretary of State for Colonies, Dec. 4, 1916, Borden Papers, OC 310, no.33753.
 2. Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor General of Canada, March 8, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 310, no.33765.
 3. Borden, Memoirs, II, 612.
 4. Ibid. 613.
 5. Ibid.

statement that "the clergy had been alienated from their natural sympathy by confiscation of religious houses and property and by the growth of atheistic outlook and tendencies in France"¹. Borden even asserted the belief that the "Quebec peasant was sometimes told that the sufferings of the French people were just retribution for the unholy spoliation and humiliation of the church in France"².

From these reflections it is obvious that Borden was fully aware of the French reticence about enlisting in foreign wars and apparent also that the Prime Minister attached no blame to the French Canadians for their outlook. Significantly however, he brings the cause of this predicament home to the door of his own Government in his rather belated analysis of the part played by the erratic General Hughes, in his role as Minister of Militia.

Then, General Hughes' maladroit methods reached their highest point in his arrangements for recruiting among French Canadians. He placed an English Protestant in charge of recruiting propaganda, and from time to time emphasized the foolishness of this action by more mischievous activities. He imagined that he was extremely popular in the Province of Quebec, but this was only one of many delusions from which I found him suffering on many occasions. The details of his activities in Quebec escaped me at the time and it can easily be understood that they were brought to my attention only after their unfortunate results had been made manifest³.

Borden's attempt to saddle Hughes with the entire blame for the latter's blunders seems inexcusable when it is

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

remembered that Hughes' activities were public knowledge as early as 1915. Since Borden alone had the power to dismiss General Hughes from his post, the Prime Minister must therefore share the responsibility for the General's mistakes.

The Prime Minister did irretrievable damage to the morale of Quebec by allowing the much hated Hughes to retain his post for such a long period, despite the fact he admired the energetic ability of the Minister of Militia, particularly as shown in the first months of the War. The Prime Minister's own words that the actions of Hughes were made known to him "only after their unfortunate results had been made manifest" reflects one of the major fiascos, indeed tragedies, of the Borden wartime administration. Quebec did not have the interest in the war that was found in Ontario. The political, social and racial background of Quebec militated against an interest as high as that of Ontario. But the bilingual problem, and the recruiting mismanagement, made evident to Borden that Quebec had lost interest in answering the cry for 500,000 men. The mistakes of the Borden Government as regards Quebec were completely indefensible, a deep insult to the noblest of all Canadians. General Lucas had indicated that French Canadians in Quebec Province, made up 30% of the total enlistment potential in Canada. It was obvious that without the French Canadian enlistees, the goal of half a million men could not be reached. It was equally obvious to Borden by the end of 1916, that the voluntary system was no longer adequate to supply his vast quota of 500,000 men. He was thus given his

salient argument for conscription, viz: the inadequacy of the volunteer system as a means of supplying his own desired quota of men.

Apart from his considerations of the Quebec recruiting picture, which he seemed at loss to improve, Borden took a most effective step late in 1916 to improve the entire Canadian military set up at home and overseas. He dismissed Hughes as Minister of Militia, replacing him with Sir Edward Kemp. A new post was created, that of Ministry of Overseas Forces, this position being filled by the reliable Sir George Perley. "Both these ministers fulfilled my expectations and discharged with complete efficiency the duties incident to their respective positions, and further they worked in perfect harmony"¹.

The rapid falling off in the enlistment rate during 1916 had prompted the Government to set up a Director of Recruiting for each Military District, in order to supervise and co-ordinate all recruiting efforts in the areas concerned. For example, the Canadian National Service League, a volunteer group, could now work in closer harmony with the Government agencies. A Director General of Recruiting was also appointed. All recruiting was then brought under the direct control of the local military authorities (with the Director General and Directors to be constituted members of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces). The Government did not feel this was enough.

1. Borden, *Memoirs*, II, 571.

Borden in his Memoirs pointed out that "it became increasingly apparent that measures must be taken to co-ordinate industrial activities and so to utilize our manpower that more recruits might be available for active service overseas"¹.

Accordingly Borden established a National Service Board whose purpose "was to identify and keep within Canada those who could give better service at home and to identify and induce to service in the field those who could and ought to serve"².

This was followed up by a distribution of a card survey which was subscribed to the extent of slightly over 80%.

When National Service was created, the Military got a closer control of recruiting but were to co-ordinate activities with the National Service Organization, all under the Prime Minister, no longer under the Minister of Militia.

In this new set up the recruiting of labor was no longer aimed merely at enlistments but was designed to allocate each man to his most functionary position in the general war effort.

Borden placed much faith in the National Service scheme for as he told one audience in Brandon, Manitoba, "the success of the task we have in hand" was dependent on each citizen being willing "to place himself at the disposal of the Board of National Service when called upon" to serve in

1. Op.cit. 609.

2. Ibid.

industry and the public service or "to join his comrades in arms"¹.

It should be noted that the Prime Minister stressed the idea of "willingness" since the scheme itself did not embody any form of compulsion on the part of the signee to enlist in the armed forces.

The lack of recruits by December, 1916 prompted the Prime Minister to accompany R. B. Bennett, Director-General of the National Service Board, on a trip across Canada "for the purpose of stimulating recruiting. It seemed desirable that we should go first to the Province of Quebec in which recruiting had been less satisfactory than in some other provinces"².

What were the results of the recruiting efforts put forth by the Government in 1916?

By the end of 1916 approximately 393,000 men had enlisted, with 120,000 overseas by January 1916 and another 165,000 overseas by January 1917, for a definite total of 280,000 overseas by the end of 1916. This did not include a few miscellaneous groups like lumbermen, railway construction battalions and a labour battalion. Thus when Borden gave the figures on enlistments early in January, 1917, over 430,000 had enlisted for service with 300,000 overseas.

The enlistment rate in 1916 saw 88,000 enlisted in the first three months while the last seven months netted

1. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 615.

2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 612.

only 58,000.

While the total number of enlistments ran to 430,000 by January 1917, of this 77,000 were casualties leaving a total available force of only 360,000. In view of the proposed standard of 500,000 men to be maintained, it is obvious that Canada's enlistment rate fell far short of the goal set by Borden¹.

Overseas demands left Borden with a knotty problem. He could continue to maintain his overseas army fairly adequately with his present flow or else launch a new 5th Division and then run the risk of breaking it up to reinforce the existing four divisions.

On November 10, 1916 Perley wrote to Borden.

Some seventeen thousand reinforcements are now urgently required in France and I think it is our first duty to keep our present Divisions up to strength (...) my view is that four are all we can keep up to full strength in creditable manner, and find members Acting Council have same opinion².

On December 2, 1916 Perley sent the following message.

At present no Battalions can go forward as units. If later we find it possible to send Fifth Division to France consideration will be given to your suggestion, provided you feel sure enough French Canadians will afterwards be forthcoming (to) furnish sufficient officers and reinforcements for two battalions. Meantime considerable French Canadian reserves are continually needed for Twenty-second Battalion and it may be necessary (to) use one hundred and sixty-third for that purpose³.

1. The figures referred to here are from Lucas, Empire at War, II, 31-2.
2. Perley to Borden, Nov. 10, 1916, Borden Papers, OC 332, no.39103.
3. Perley to Borden, Dec. 2, 1916, Borden Papers, OC 332, no.39109.

A short time later Perley stated "I should regret exceedingly send so many to France we cannot keep them always provided with reinforcements"¹.

Kemp, by now Minister of Militia, added a similar note two days later when he communicated with Borden.

I have formed the opinion after viewing the statistics in respect to recruiting which have been prepared, and after making estimates as to enlistments in the future, and having in view the possible occurrence of losses sudden and heavier than anticipated, it would be risky proceeding to place a 5th Division in the field, where we could not maintain it for a period longer than a year.

If troopships (with escorts) can be made available, I think we could safely promise to send from Canada reinforcements amounting to 45,000 men (exclusive of forestry and railway construction personnel) during the first nine months of 1917².

It was in May, 1917 that Borden finally admitted the complete breakdown of the volunteer method of enlistment.

"It is apparent to me that the volunteer system will not yield substantial results"³.

When then, did the germ of conscription enter Borden's mind? During 1914 and down to 1916 the Prime Minister had emphatically declared that there would be no conscription in Canada.

My right honourable friend (Laurier) has alluded to conscription to the idea in this country or elsewhere that there may be conscription in Canada. In speaking in the first two or three months of this war I made it clear to the people of Canada that we did not propose any conscription, I repeat that announcement today with emphasis⁴.

1. Perley to Borden, Dec. 19, 1916, Borden Papers, OC 332, no.39110.
2. Kemp to Borden, Dec. 22, 1916, Borden Papers, OC 332, no.39112.
3. Borden, Debates, May 18, 1917, col.1541.
4. Ibid. Jan. 17, 1916, col.25.

The same sentiment was indicated in the discussion centering on statements allegedly made in Chicago by Dr. Roche, Minister of the Interior. Certain rumours had prevailed as to the status of Americans if conscription was introduced in Canada. Dr. Roche stated that "conscription never will be adopted in the Dominion"¹. He mentioned further that "while the government has the power to enforce conscription, such action is not considered either advisable or necessary"².

Dr. Roche's statements, which are quoted here, were written originally as a directive to Canadian Immigration authorities in order to allay a growing American fear that conscription, if passed, might affect Americans residing in Canada.

Laurier lent credence to this persistent rumour of conscription by pointing out that thousands of Americans who left farms in Iowa and Nebraska were going home. "They are all fleeing from threatened conscription"³. Laurier pointed out that the offer of 500,000 men touched off the rumour, adding that "we must repel at once the impression which has been sought to be created that this offer is a preliminary step to conscription"⁴.

Mr. J. Ethier, M.P. of South Mountain hinted that the figure of 500,000 was impossible to attain because this number was over a third of all males between nineteen and forty

1. Dr. Roche, Debates, Feb. 15, 1916, col.829.

2. Ibid. col.831.

3. Laurier, Debates, Jan. 7, 1916, col.17.

4. Ibid.

years of age. He reasoned that it could only be obtained by conscription.

It is stated that military service will never be compulsory in Canada. But in view of the desire expressed by the Prime Minister and his War Minister to reach 500,000 men, we are really coming, by a back doorway, to compulsory service¹.

While Borden himself denied that conscription was being considered, others in the House of Commons were not so hesitant to support it.

Mr. Cockshutt, Conservative M.P. for Brantford, Ontario, spoke boldly on the topic.

The right hon. leader of the Opposition expressed the horror with which he views the possibility of conscription. It is to be hoped that we will not require conscription in the Dominion of Canada. Probably in the present state of public opinion no government could live that attempted to put conscription in force in this country at the present time. But while we may not be ready at the moment to adopt it ourselves, we should be very slow to condemn it in others, because it is conscription that has saved the day and that has put us as near victory as we are. If you condemn conscription, you condemn the policy of France, of Italy, of Russia and of Serbia as well as Germany (...). I do believe that it will be necessary to take some other means before we get the five hundred thousand men we are asking for....now I hope that conscription is not necessary in Canada. I hope that it will not be necessary in Canada. But I make this statement. I do not know whether I am the only man who will make it in this House or not: if I have to choose between going in for conscription or the loss of this war, I am going to be a conscriptionist².

The Hon. Frank Oliver, of Edmonton added that since Canada entered the war on the volunteer system it was better to end it on that principle but pointed out that due to

1. Mr. Ethier, Debates, Feb. 29, 1916, col.272.

2. Cockshutt, Debates, Jan. 18, 1916, col.59.

to world conditions any nation not employing conscription was at a disadvantage¹. Mr. O. Turgeon, M.P. from New Brunswick agreed with Frank Oliver that conscription if necessary had to be employed but held out for the required number of men being raised by what he termed "proper measures"².

Borden was well aware of a growing demand, outside of Parliament, for some scheme of compulsory service. He cites this in his Memoirs.

During the year (1916) numerous representations from various sources urged the necessity of Conscription. Compulsory military service had been adopted in Great Britain, and this began to arouse in Canada the belief that it should be adopted here. This view the Government was unable to accept at the time³.

This then was the official viewpoint of the Borden Government throughout the year 1916. It was the official view during the war up to this point. An added proof of this lay in the fact that Borden advised against a proposal by R. B. Bennett that a question on conscription be included in the National Service Registration card being sent to each man in Canada⁴. This was on October 30. On December 26 in an interview with Canadian labor delegates Borden agreed to incorporate in a letter the statement that the proposals of National Service were not connected with conscription⁵.
"Following the interview with Labor leaders I issued a

-
1. Oliver, Debates, Jan. 19, 1916, col.104.
 2. Turgeon, Debates, Jan. 21, 1916, col.180.
 3. Borden, Memoirs, II, 606.
 4. Ibid. 611.
 5. Ibid. 616.

statement to the effect that voluntary national service was urged in order that conscription might be unnecessary"¹.

It should be noticed that Borden now employed a different approach to conscription. Hitherto he denied it was to be invoked. In his public statement on the voluntary national service scheme he indicated that such a scheme "was urged in order that conscription might be unnecessary". He went a step further in talking to the Labor leaders

"I hope conscription may not be necessary, but if it should prove the only effective method to preserve the existence of the State and of the institutions and liberties which we enjoy, I should consider it necessary and I should not hesitate to act accordingly"².

This period, late 1916, saw a mounting wave of public support for some sort of compulsory scheme but apparently the Government was not yet seriously considering it for, as Mr. Cockshutt remarked in the House early in January, "no government could live that attempted to put conscription in force at the present time"³.

In official circles it is interesting to note, that while conscription demands were being considered, there was no corresponding demand for or discussion of, a coalition government.

An entry into the Borden Diary dated November 26, 1916 makes first mention of this topic. "Have frequently considered Coalition Government during past two years and

1. Op.cit.

2. Quoted in Borden, *Memoirs*, II, 617.

3. Cockshutt, *Debates*, Jan. 18, 1916, col.59.

and thought carefully of it today. There are many considerations for and many against"¹.

On December 11, 1916, Meighen discussed the matter further with the Prime Minister. Apparently apart from these private chats which were not made known at the time, nothing more was said about it until the incident of Mr. J.A. Flav-elle.

This individual felt more strongly on this topic than any of his colleagues, so much in fact that he decided to give public utterance to his feelings. In a coded message he poured forth his feelings to his chief.

At the outbreak of the War I was strongly against the inclusion of Liberals in the Government here. I felt so deeply incensed at their conduct on the naval proposals that I could not tolerate the idea that they should be permitted a share in Government. I feel as deeply as ever concerning their action upon the Navy Bill, but the grave character of present conditions, the serious nature of the French Canadian attitude, and the magnitude of our obligations have caused me to believe that a Coalition Government should be formed now, and that by tacit agreement we should be pledged to continue the principle of Coalition until such time after the War as may be necessary to enable the Coalition Government to carry out, with other members of the Empire, the conferences which will be held to determine the characters of our future common Empire relations and obligations. I am of the opinion that if a general election on party lines be held shortly it will mean setting the heather on fire, English versus French, with long years of bitterness to follow. I am of the opinion if the Liberal Party is returned to power, with or without Laurier for leader, they will owe their election to the French Canadian who refused to fight, and to German and Austrian voters who will undoubtedly vote against the Government. I am of the opinion that when a Government thus elected undertook to determine in conference the future relations of

1. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 611.

this country to the Empire, we would have civil strife. I consider either of these contingencies would be calamitous, and I believe safety lies in a Coalition Government as above indicated¹.

Borden was most disturbed over this turn of events and pointed out that Sir Joseph Flavelle "was not always wise in his public utterances; and sometimes spoke when silence would have been golden"².

Sir Thomas White hinted that "it would be ruination of the Conservative Party if the scheme were adopted"³.

On December 14 Borden wrote Flavelle requesting the latter restrain from his intended talk. He told Flavelle that there could be no object in making such a statement "except for the purpose of influencing public opinion"⁴. He added that Flavelle's position would tend to give the statement an air of unusual significance and importance. Flavelle made his talk in modified terms but as Borden records "his address really had no perceptible effect on public opinion and I had forgotten the whole episode, when, in the following June, I approached the question of Union Government"⁵.

Thus ended the year 1916. Borden was not seriously considering a coalition government. Nor did he see in it a means of solving the problem of lack of recruits. Officially conscription was taboo but Borden no longer denied it was being considered. The recruiting results left him little

1. Op.cit. 617-8.

2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 618.

3. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 618.

4. Ibid. 619.

5. Borden, Memoirs, II, 619.

choice but to suggest conscription as a solution to the problem of getting reinforcements if he was to maintain the 500,000 goal he had set. The very fact that he publicly spoke of conscription as a possibility was not only an indication of a change in the Prime Minister's thinking but also reflected the eventual course the Government was prepared to take if recruiting results did not improve to suit it.

IV

1917: CONSCRIPTION AND UNION GOVERNMENT

1. Volunteer Recruiting Fails to Meet the Government Goal of 500,000 Men: Borden Resorts to Conscription: Results.

In order to see the recruitment picture in 1917, it is necessary to keep in mind that the Borden Government in 1916 set the goal of 500,000 men as the desired number of soldiers to represent Canada's wartime army overseas¹. In January 1917 the number of enlisted in Canadian war services of one type or another came to 430,000 with 393,000 in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and of these 280,000 were overseas. Enlistments in special corps (e.g. Forestry) made up the rest of the 430,000 personnel². By January the wastage by casualties came to 70,000.

On the basis of statistics used in the Mason Report on enlistments, as well as returns from the National Service

1. Borden, Debates, Jan. 17, 1916, col.25.

2. Lucas, Empire at War, II, 31-2.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

Registration, Borden felt quite confident that the objective of half a million men was a realistic one¹.

If the recruiting could be speeded up then such a goal was indeed realistic since it would put Canada on a par with the enlistment figures of other Dominions at this time. A leading Liberal, the Hon. N. W. Rowell felt that to equal the record of Australia Canada should have overseas by the end of January 1917, 500,000 men, to compare with South Africa 400,000 men, and to match New Zealand, 450,000. Actually, Canada had 280,000 men overseas by the end of January, 1917. In proportion to population, according to Rowell, Britain had three times as many men in the armed forces as did Canada while France had four times as many².

While Borden's quota of half a million men, set in January 1916, appeared over-optimistic, unrealistic or even a dangerous policy, in view of its potential drain upon the home front, the National Service Registration late in 1916 indicated according to Borden, a potential well over the 100,000 men he sought early in 1916. Of course only time would tell just how many actual enlistees could be gathered by one method or another considering the wastage due to sickness, desertion, and medical unfitness. The Prime Minister pointed out his realization of the necessity of also maintaining the home front.

-
1. The merits of this viewpoint will be discussed in Chapter Four.
 2. Rowell to Laurier, July 11, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.3, no.1776-9.

I realize that 500,000 men is a large force for us to undertake in Canada; and I realize further that the National strength of Canada must be maintained, and that in proceeding with our effort to increase our forces in Canada we must have regard to the agricultural and industrial interests of this country. Canada in all the elements of the national life must be kept strong and we shall have regard to these considerations¹.

From the period of January 1917 to the introduction of conscription in June 1917, the results from the recruiting efforts were not only poor but indicated a rapid decline. By May 31, 1917, the total enlistments numbered 418,102 according to the Minister of Militia, Sir Edward Kemp². This was far short of producing the designated goal of 500,000 set previously by Borden. From January to July, when the Military Service bill was introduced, enlistments in Canada decreased, while wastage, from casualties or discharge of men in Canada or England for various reasons, increased. On a monthly basis, the enlistments and wastage for the early months of 1917 ran as follows: January enlistments 9,194; wastage 4,396; February, 6,809 and 21,955; March, 6,640 and 6,161; April, 5,330 and 10,984; May, 6,407 and 13,457; June, 6,348 and 7,931³.

Canadian efforts to recruit Americans on American soil resulted in a few thousand Americans enlisting for service in the Canadian forces. Borden gave the figure for

-
1. Borden, Debates, Jan. 17, 1916, col.25.
 2. Kemp, Debates, July 6, 1917, col.3098.
 3. Hopkins, Canada at War, 84.

total American citizenry in the Canadian forces to be 9,000 on May 18, 1917¹.

One last effort was made by the Minister of Militia to obtain volunteer enlistment. This was the attempt launched in March, 1917 to recruit a Home Defense force to defend Canada, thus freeing the enlisted volunteers for overseas duty. Such a plan was inaugurated by Sir Edward Kemp on March 16, 1917, by Order in Council. The plan called for a force of 50,000 but proved a failure. This was stated by Sir Edward Kemp himself². He admitted the figure of 50,000 aimed at by the plan was to allow the existing 50,000 volunteers in training to go overseas at a period when daylight was shortest to avoid the German submarine menace. Kemp felt that men would volunteer for home service adding "it was thought desirable to institute this campaign as a last new effort in voluntary recruiting"³. But such a plan was a failure for as Kemp summed it up "it was found that the young men did not enlist in the home defence force except in a very limited number indeed"⁴.

Kemp further noted that an all-out campaign to recruit soldiers in Quebec, a drive headed by Colonel Blondin, former Postmaster General, and Major-General Lessard, netted exactly ninety-two recruits. This figure was also given on June 25, 1917 in the Commons. He further stated that up to

-
1. Borden, Debates, May 18, 1917, col.1540.
 2. Kemp, Debates, June 25, 1917, col.2628.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

April 30, 1917, 7,892 French Canadians had gone overseas from Quebec. Another 5,904 had enlisted across Canada giving a total of 14,100 French Canadians enlisted up to that date¹.

Commenting on the Quebec recruiting situation Kemp stressed that the reason recruiting was so successful outside Quebec was due to the fact that in every walk of life "all put his shoulder to the wheel and recruiting received such an impetus, nothing could stop it"². He pointed out that if similar conditions didn't exist in Quebec, then their success in recruiting wouldn't be as successful as in other parts. He added that such conditions "did not" exist in Quebec. He denied that the Methodist Minister, Rev. Major Williams, was appointed for the purpose of recruiting among French Canadians in Montreal. "An attempt was made to get certain clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec to co-operate in recruiting, but these effects did not meet with success"³.

Kemp's reference to the lack of co-operation by Catholic clergy smacked of a belated and unsuccessful attempt to cover up the inexcusable blunder involved in appointing Major Williams to his post.

In May of 1917 when Borden first broached publicly the matter of selective conscription the enlistment figures by Provinces stood as follows: Ontario, 173,078; Quebec, 45,277; Maritime Provinces, 38,200; Manitoba and Saskatchewan,

-
1. Op.cit. col.2627.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

79,779; Alberta, 35,477; British Columbia, 40,267; Yukon, 2,327. This total stood at 414,402 on May 15.

In proportion to population Quebec had contributed 32 per cent of her quota of the desired half million; the Maritime Provinces, 58 per cent, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 112 per cent; Alberta, 102 per cent; and British Columbia, 137 per cent¹.

"Military experts early in the year figured that Canada needed at once 70,000 men to keep four divisions in the field, and for five divisions which had been planned 84,000 men were required"².

A prominent Liberal, Frank Oliver, was most concerned with the flagging recruiting rate. He pointed out that the call for half a million men "has not been met"³. He emphasized that the total enlistment figures given by the Government were voided by the fact that all figures had to be examined in the light of the wastage. Such wastage meant that the "effectives" numbered the total enlistees minus the rejects, wounded, and deserters. He pointed out "National Service is the only logical service; National Service, I say, that will call up the manhood of the nation for military service"⁴.

Mr. Cockshutt, Brantford, (Ont.) stated that the "matter of recruiting should cause us all a good deal of

1. Canada in the Great War, (Various editors), United Publishers of Canada Limited, Toronto, 1917, 89-90.

2. Ibid. 90.

3. Oliver, Debates, Jan. 23, 1917, col.69.

4. Ibid.

thought at the present time"¹. He went on to point out that the "figures are that there are certain parts of the Dominion of Canada that, under the voluntary system, are not doing their duty"².

The prominent leader of the Liberal Opposition in the Ontario Assembly, Mr. Rowell, in a letter on April 14 to Sir William Hurst, also commented on the futility of the voluntary system of recruiting. Rowell claimed to have gone to recruiting in the past few months, not in hopes any practical results would come from these meetings but because there appeared to be no other method provided for the recruiting of troops. He felt obliged to attend at the request of the Military authorities "but I frankly say that I am quite in accord with your view that time and energy can better be expanded in other directions, and the Government will have to adopt some other method of securing recruits"³.

Two days prior to Borden's announcement of an impending conscription bill, A. J. Willison, Editor of The Toronto Daily News, came to a similar conclusion. Writing to Borden, he commented that "I think you must authorize a form of conscription, or frankly tell the country that Great Britain requires us to concentrate on the production of food and munitions"⁴.

1. Cockshutt, Debates, Jan. 24, 1917, col.101.

2. Ibid. col.102.

3. Rowell to Hurst, Apr. 14, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.4, no.1529.

4. Willison to Borden, May 16, 1917, Willison Papers, f.32, no.2499-07,

Other prominent men in Parliament offered reasons for the recruiting debacle facing Canada.

Sir Sam Hughes blamed the recruiting methods for the response and alluded to the Militia Act and its enforcement of recruiting as a solution¹.

On February 6, 1917, Mr. W. M. German (Welland) pointed out that "recruiting is practically at a standstill"². He blamed a surplus of officers idling in London as setting a poor example to potential recruits.

But regardless of such suggestions as to the cause of the poor showing at the recruiting depots, the realization was growing among politicians on both sides of the House, that the cold figures on enlistments indicated that under the voluntary system, the half million goal set by Borden was merely a goal on paper.

Borden went to England early in 1917. He covers this point in his Memoirs.

While in attendance in London upon the Imperial War Cabinet and the Imperial War Conference in the winter of 1917, I had kept closely in touch with conditions and, greatly to my disappointment, I was obliged to conclude that any further effort for voluntary enlistment would provide meagre and wholly inadequate results. Upon my return quick decision was necessary....³

Borden returned in May. Four days after his arrival in Canada he told Parliament that compulsory service was necessary.

-
1. Hughes, Debates, Jan. 24, 1917, col.102.
 2. German, Debates, Feb. 6, 1917, col.560.
 3. Borden, Memoirs, II, 697-8.

We have four Canadian divisions at the front. For the immediate future there are sufficient reinforcements. But four divisions cannot be maintained without thorough provision for future requirement. If these reinforcements are not supplied, what will be the consequences? The consequences will be that the four divisions will dwindle down to three, the three will dwindle to two, and Canada's efforts, so splendid in this war up to the present, will not be maintained as we desire it to be maintained¹.

Borden commented on Canada's great contribution of men up to that point but renewed his demand for a "greater effort." He scored the voluntary system of enlistment as inadequate.

Hitherto, we have depended upon voluntary enlistment. I myself stated to Parliament that nothing but voluntary enlistment was proposed by the Government. But I return to Canada impressed at once with the extreme gravity of the situation, and with a sense of responsibility for our further effort at the most critical period of the war. It is apparent to me that the voluntary system will not yield further substantial results. The Government have made every effort within its power, so far as I can judge. If any effective effort to stimulate voluntary recruiting still remains to be made I should like to know what it is. The people have co-operated with the Government in the most splendid manner along the line of voluntary enlistment. Men and women alike have interested themselves in filling up the ranks of regiments that were organized. Everything possible has been done, it seems to me, in the way of voluntary enlistment².

Borden further reiterated his point by pointing the dangers for Canada inherent in a German victory. Then he came to the point in blunt fashion.

Therefore, it is my duty to announce to the House that early proposals will be made on the part of the Government to provide, by compulsory Military enlistment on a selective basis, such reinforcements as may be necessary to maintain the Canadian army today in the field as one of the finest fighting

1. Borden, Debates, May 18, 1917, col.1541.
2. Ibid.

units of the Empire. The number of men required will not be less than 50,000 and will probably be 100,000¹.

Thus was sealed the fate of the voluntary system in Canada. Probably the man who summed up its swan song was J. M. Godfrey, President of the Canadian National Service League who as early as January 4, 1917 had the following to say. "Everyone engaged in active recruiting for any length of time becomes a conscriptionist. He soon sees that the voluntary system is ineffective, unfair, unequal, undemocratic, wasteful and not really British"².

Borden had announced in August, 1914 and January, 1915 that his Government had no intention of introducing compulsory service. In December, 1916 he denied the National Service Cards would be used to promote conscription. But on July 13, 1917, he wrote the Mayor of Montreal: "These statements were absolutely and literally true when they were made. No one could then estimate or even imagine the magnitude of the efforts necessary to win the War and thus to preserve our National existence"³.

On June 11, Borden was ready with the much awaited conscription measure and accordingly it was introduced into the House as The Military Service Act, 1917⁴. The individuals subject to call-up included all male British subjects between 20 and 45 years of age. These were originally

1. Op.cit. col.1542.

2. Quoted in Hopkins, Canada at War, 84.

3. Ibid. 86.

4. Borden, Debates, June 11, 1917, col.2184-6.

placed in ten classes; later rearranged into six classes.

Class 1. Those who have attained the age of 20 years and were born not earlier than the year 1883 and not unmarried, or as widowers but have no children.

Class 2. Those who have attained the age of 20 years and were born not earlier than the year 1883 and are unmarried, or are widowers who have a child or children.

Class 3. Those who were born in the years 1876 to 1882, both inclusive, and are unmarried, or are widowers who have no child.

Class 4. Those who were born in the years 1876 to 1882, both inclusive, and who are married, or are widowers who have a child or children.

Class 5. Those who were born in the years 1872 to 1875, both inclusive, and are unmarried, or are widowers who have no child.

Class 6. Those who were born in the years 1872 to 1875, both inclusive and are married, or are widowers who have a child or children¹.

These groups were to be called up by proclamation of the Governor-in-Council. When called they became soldiers under Military law. Penalties were subscribed for those not reporting. Certain classes were exempted by virtue of status (e.g. clergy, Mennonites and Doukhobors living in settlement) and exemption tribunals were set up to hear appeals from the Act.

Such a law was both systematic and thorough. The basic reason given by Borden for such a drastic move was the failure of the volunteer system. He went further while introducing the Bill and pointed the consequence of failing to get further recruits. He cited the fact that during April and May "we enlisted 11,790 men and during these same months our casualties amounted to 75,492"². He added that "during

1. Quoted in Hopkins, Canada at War, 90.

2. Borden, Debates, June 11, 1917, col.2186.

the next seven months we need reinforcements to the number of at least 70,000 in order to keep four divisions in the field, and to keep five divisions in the field we need 84,000."

Again "reinforcements must be obtained or the four divisions will dwindle." He played upon the fact that to deny reinforcements for the men overseas was "to desert and humiliate them." He then stressed how the returned soldiers would feel on returning home "with fierce resentment" and "conscious that they have been deserted and betrayed." He slammed this point home. "I am not so much concerned for the day when this Bill becomes law, as for the day when these men return if it is rejected"¹.

Borden explained why the existing Militia Act was not called upon to send men overseas. It was to be retained for enlistment purposes, reserves, officer training, etc., but Borden felt it contained one serious defect. It called for men by ballot, not by selective draft.

The Militia Act provides that the selection shall be by ballot and in no other way. The Government is convinced that such a method of selection would be unwise, and even disastrous under present conditions and having regard to the number of men required².

Borden made it clear that the Militia Act (1868) itself provided for compulsory overseas service³. He quoted

1. Op.cit. col.2187.

2. Ibid. col.2188.

3. This matter was thoroughly explained by Mr. Currie, M.P. for North Simcoe on May 21. See Currie, Debates, May 21, 1917, col.1586.

at length several sections to substantiate his contention¹. He further substantiated his contention that subsequent amendments (1904) changed the form but not the intention of the Act, by citing prominent legal authorities². His purpose in explaining these aspects of the Militia Act was to stress the fact that the Military Service bill was introducing nothing new in Canadian law. Compulsory military service was inherent in the Statutes since 1868. "We propose not to change or enlarge the compulsory principle, but merely to provide that selection shall not be made by ballot, that is, by blind chance"³.

In view of the elaborate scheme for raising men, involved in The Military Service Act, 1917, it is interesting to observe just how many men were forthcoming from the Act itself. Laurier had predicted that conscription would not have the results its advocates painted.

"How many men will conscription bring in?" he wrote to Aylesworth. "Just a few slackers, exactly the same as in England. How many men has conscription brought to the ranks in England? An infinitesimal number, so small in fact that the actual figures have never been given to the public"⁴.

At the time he wrote this, Laurier's views would be regarded as mere "opposition" talk. Yet Laurier was closer,

1. Borden, Debates, June 11, 1917, col.2188.

2. Ibid. col.2194.

3. Ibid. col.2188.

4. Laurier to Aylesworth, May 15, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195527a-b-c.

far closer in his prediction, than he ever realized.

The Military Service Act, 1917 did not supply the troops Borden desired, in fact it did no better than the volunteer system had done. Despite the grim warnings of Borden of the failure to reinforce the men at the front, the Act, which became law on August 29, 1917, did not effect a call up of men until October 13, 1917. These were not required to report until January, 1918. The time lapse between passage and operation of the Act was over four months. What of the actual figures of men finally enrolled in uniform?¹

In the first class to be called up, consisting of 404,000 unmarried men from twenty to thirty-four who registered by the end of 1917, 380,000 claimed exemption. Out of the 125,000 and 117,000 registered from Ontario and Quebec respectively, 118,000 claimed exemption from Ontario and 115,000 from Quebec. Nearly all exemptions allowed by local tribunals in Quebec, were appealed by the military authorities, while some 90,000 exemptions in Ontario were allowed by the military authorities. By the end of March, 1918, 364,000 out of 372,000 cases of exemption had been decided. In Quebec 108,000 exemptions were finally approved, with 104,000 finally allowed in Ontario.

Of the 71,000 men Borden maintained were essential by December 31, 1917, the number ordered to turn up for duty

1. The figures used here are taken from Skelton, Laurier, II, 546.

came to 31,000 of which 5,000 defaulted, netting a total of less than 26,000.

"When the end came in November, 1918, some 83,000 men had been enrolled under the act, or had reported voluntarily after its enactment; of these, 7,000 were on compassionate leave and 15,000 on farm leave, so that the actual yield was 61,000 men, of whom few ever saw France. Of these, Ontario yielded more than Quebec. The slacker remained a slacker still, some 24,000 defaulters escaping apprehension. The Act, even with the cancelling of exemption, did not yield as many men a month as the voluntary system, and even if allowance were made for the cumulative exhaustion of the supply of men, and the greater proportion available for infantry duty, it was clear that the test of experience had gone against the measure. It yielded no margin of reinforcements to balance the stirring of passion and the cleavage of race and province it provoked¹.

The official figures on the number of soldiers on parade as a result of The Military Service Act, 1917, as released by such official sources as the Department of National Defence sets the number at 83,355 men². The actual number expected was cut down by deserters, defaulters, discharges, and exemptions. Despite the number of men he proposed to gather in by the Act, Borden was forced to swallow the bitter pill of having netted only 83,000 men in actual fact when November 11, 1918 ended the War. The Military Service Act failed to produce the goal set by Sir Robert Borden.

The Gazette, Montreal, a staunch supporter of Borden, admitted in March, 1918, that "the government appears to have established a system which if it gets the men at all,

1. Op.cit. 549-50.

2. A. M. Willms, "Conscription: A Brief for the Defence," C.H.R., XXXVII, no.4, Dec. 1956, 349-50).

will get them so slowly that whatever military advantage depends upon expeditious reinforcement will be lost"¹. The Globe commented upon "the widespread feeling of disappointment" regarding the effectiveness of The Military Service Act, 1917².

The Mayor of Toronto, Thomas Church, a leading Toronto Tory, summed up the failure of the Act very obviously "The Military Service Act will cost the country millions and is getting very little results. If the government had spent one-quarter of the money in voluntary recruiting, they would have got more men"³.

2. The Liberal Party and the Failure of Coalition in June 1917.

During 1917 three items stood out clearly amid the political agenda of that era. The first, the attempted Coalition pushed by Borden but rejected by the Liberal party, was the prelude to the stormy second item, viz. the Military Service bill and its subsequent passage. The third item of prominence was the formation in October 1917 of the Union Government. The election of 1917 saw the culmination of the strategy, bitterness, and political desertion inherent in the three above mentioned activities.

In order to assess the full significance of the offer of coalition made officially in early June, 1917, it is

-
1. Quoted in Skelton, Laurier, II, 547.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

necessary to analyse the status of the Liberal Party prior to the offer of coalition. Only then can any light be shed on the motivation behind the Borden offer.

The Liberals in 1917 were the official Opposition of a Conservative Government elected in 1911, an election based on the census of 1901. The Liberal Party offered no serious opposition to any Borden measure affecting the War. As the Opposition party it was not associated with any of the shortcomings of the Borden Government. While it indulged frequently in embarrassing questions concerning Government policy it was unable to offer any serious opposition to the Government even if it had desired. The smallness of the Liberal minority precluded any threat to Conservative domination of the House of Commons.

Officially, Laurier was the chief figure in the party as well as the official Opposition head. His support ranged across Canada but due to the Conservative-Nationalist alliance in 1911 his influence in Quebec was limited.

The failure of the voluntary system of recruiting as a means of raising the 500,000 men was becoming painfully evident during the early months of 1917. During this period Borden was overseas on matters concerning the Imperial Conference. The life of Parliament, extended one year in 1916 was due to terminate on October 7, 1917. The poor record of the Borden Government, coupled with the fact that another extension of Parliament would be bitterly assailed by the Liberals as well as many sections of the public, all lent

credence to the general belief that an election was due in 1917.

While the Liberals stood solidly as a party up until the fateful announcement of conscription by Borden in May, 1917, correspondence proved that the split which occurred on the conscription issue showed beginnings early in 1917, to be intensified over the issue of coalition. Coalition and Union Government or National Government received no attention in Parliament until January, 1917. Then, Mr. W. F. MacLean gave a lukewarm support of coalition¹. As will be shown the movement for coalition and later Union Government occurred outside Parliament.

As early as January 20, Mr. Rowell, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Opposition, communicated with Laurier, and assessed the position of the Liberal Party. Referring to the possibility of a general election he stressed the fact that it would be based on racial differences and appeals. "As you know, the Conservatives will endeavour to unite Ontario against Quebec, and what I really fear is that sectional and racial feeling may be stirred up from which it will take years to recover." Rowell went on to observe that a "truly National Government (...) would best preserve our unity and advance Canada's highest interests." He felt such a government would defer an election at least a year, pointing out that an election then would be based on "less dangerous issues." Rowell stated that if Borden asked Laurier to form

1. W. F. MacLean, Debates, Jan. 25, 1917, col. 131.

a coalition he hoped Laurier would see his way "clear to join him." Rowell ended his plea for Laurier's co-operation with the Prime Minister by emphasizing such a move would be in keeping with Laurier's great role as a unifier of the races in Canada. Rowell felt that the only way to reduce national friction was to get a government composed of the best leaders of both races¹.

Laurier's reply succinctly summed up his position on coalition. He indicated that while "the government has been constantly losing ground (...) a good many of those dissatisfied, and perhaps, all, do not want to entrust the direction of affairs to a leader of French origin." Laurier defined national government as "a coalition under another name." He then went on to chide Rowell for his desire of a national government. "The very fact that you and so many of our friends in Toronto are looking to a coalition government is abundant proof that my usefulness is gone." Laurier then added, in a touch of bitterness: "Of this I do not complain, especially after what has happened to Asquith less than a month ago."

Laurier felt Rowell should not have much faith in national government after the example of the downfall of Asquith.

But a most significant point was dwelt upon by Laurier in this reply to Rowell, when he wrote "I am sure you

1. Rowell to Laurier, Jan. 20, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, ^{Federal Politics v. 1,} no.1676-7.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

would not expect me to join blindly, without first knowing what would be the programs of the next administration." Laurier explained he couldn't join unless "I knew at once where the new government would stand" on "many questions, now looming up"¹.

Rowell in his reply of January 25 was quick to agree with Laurier. "I certainly should not expect you to join in a coalition or national government without knowing the programme. In fact I should expect that you would help make the programme." Rowell went on to explain that his conception of such a national government would have Laurier appointing half of the members. "I am not thinking of a coalition in which the old element would continue dominant and controlling."

Rowell then pointed out that a true coalition government could depend neither on Quebec or Ontario, the one to the exclusion of the other. For him, the war could not be prosecuted successfully along party lines. "In other words, in view of all our past history and present conditions, the only way that Ontario and Quebec can be united in whole-hearted and combined effort is by a government which contains the leaders from both provinces." Rowell scorned Laurier's suggestion that the latter's usefulness was over. National government was predicated upon "your continuing to render the state large and invaluable services (...) perhaps the most valuable you have ever rendered." Rowell referred to "your

1. Laurier to Rowell, Jan. 23, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, no.1678-9. Federal Politics v.1, ^

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

largest contribution to the great work to which you have dedicated your life, namely that of bringing about a better understanding and closer co-operation between the races."

While Rowell agreed that Laurier should not enter a government without first knowing its policy, he felt Laurier should come out for a coalition if offered the chance by Borden, and agree to an extension of parliament, but only if "all interests" were represented. Any sort of "party" government was out of the question. This according to Rowell, would give the nation "the strongest possible government" and thus avoid an election. He warned of the consequence of an election which would be fought on partisan grounds. An election would result in two alternatives. If the Borden Government were returned, Quebec would be bitter. But "if the government is defeated and you come into power with a pretty nearly solid Quebec opposed to you, you know what the feeling and the attitude of the majority in this province would be."

Rowell added a final warning note that "there appears to be a very strong feeling in the west in favor of a national government"¹.

Such correspondence as exhibited here not only gives an intimate insight into the Laurier position on a national government but lays bare the thinking of the principal Liberal figure in Ontario, Rowell, who was later to enter the Union Government as President of the Privy Council.

1. Rowell to Laurier, Jan. 25, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.706, no.1946-50.

Mr. Rowell was to be the chief instigator in the swing of Ontario Liberals to support conscription and Union Government.

Another prominent Liberal, J. W. Dafoe, of the Manitoba Free Press, writing to Sir Clifford Sifton, indicated that if an election were called, then Laurier would pledge himself to form a National Government if Borden was defeated, a government to include up to two members of the outgoing Borden Government¹.

Laurier clarified this matter in a letter to Dafoe in April 1917, by stating "I would much prefer not to have to take the responsibility of office before the end of the conflict. But can that be avoided?" He went on to add that he approached the matter of being wartime Premier "not from the point of view only of the success of an election, but the success of the war, and I am more and more coming to the opinion that an election is now the only course open"².

Clifford Sifton, one of the later mentors of Union Government, writing to Dafoe as early as May, 1916 had voiced the opinion in reference to Laurier that "the quicker he gets out of leadership the better for the country...."³

Such remarks and exchange of correspondence set up an early link between Sifton and Dafoe, both to play active roles in the breakup of the Liberal Party in the months to come.

1. Dafoe to C. Sifton, Feb. 12, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.
2. Laurier to Dafoe, April 10, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.
3. Sifton to Dafoe, May 11, 1916, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

On May 15, A. K. Maclean, a prominent Liberal member of the Federal House of Commons from Halifax, sent an interesting letter to Mr. Rowell. In it he indicated that an election was not desired. "If there is any change in the Government I think it had better be a coalition (...) than by a so-called National Government (...) which I always understood to mean (...) Government of persons inexperienced in public affairs"¹.

Rowell, in reply to A. K. Maclean, blamed the Nationalist combination with the Government as the actual reason why the Government had made no real effort to recruit in Quebec. He called for radical measures to spur recruiting but felt that since party government had failed up to date the answer was "coalition, national government, or whatever you like." Once again Rowell spoke against an election and desired Laurier to call for a government representing the best men of both parties, and to do this when Borden was to ask for an extension of the life of Parliament. He reiterated his firm reliance on Sir Wilfred to speak for the Liberals in such matters².

While such correspondence between these prominent Liberals indicated that the Liberal Party was not completely unified on coalition, it also indicated that there was no serious breakup in the party prior to the matter of the

-
1. A. K. Maclean to Rowell, May 15, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics v.5, no.1695-8.
 2. Rowell to A. K. Maclean, May 18, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.5, no.1699-02.

Military Service bill. This is quite evident in further correspondence sent by Rowell to A. K. Maclean concerning Borden's proposed conscription measure. "As I view the matter, there is only one course open to the Liberals and that is to support the principal of the government's proposals." Rowell reasoned that if the Liberals opposed Conscription the public would feel that a Liberal victory would provide no more vigorous prosecution of the war than had been afforded by the existing Government¹.

However in a letter written two days later, Rowell took the initial step which eventually led him and his Ontario Liberal followers into the Conservative camp. In reviewing the problem he felt it was a choice of "compulsion or failing to support the men at the front." He then stated the reason for his position.

While the government, I believe, is responsible for the present situation, I do not believe that is any answer to the country or to the cause of liberty for which our men are fighting. No matter how great the shortcomings of the government, we must stand by the men at the front, for certainly they are not responsible for any of the government's shortcomings².

Rowell indicated his regret that Laurier was not invited to co-operate before conscription was proposed but felt that this had no bearing now. "The question which is uppermost in winning the war, and one of the steps necessary to

-
1. Rowell to A. K. Maclean, May 19, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics v.5, no.1703-4.
 2. Rowell to Rudolph Lemieux, May 21, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics v.5, no.1705-7.

win the war is to secure additional reinforcements¹.

In another letter sent to the same correspondent, Rowell admitted that the Borden Government in announcing conscription might be actuated by political motives in order to extend parliament and have a handy election cry. Still, he himself was fully bent on supporting any proposed conscription bill². Two days later he wrote to Laurier urging the Militia Act be invoked. This indicated that Rowell, a prominent advocate of conscription, and a Liberal, had no particular scheme of compulsory service in mind as long as more troops were forthcoming³.

Further evidence of the role Rowell was to play in lining up Liberals on the side of the Government lies in the fact that as early as April 14, 1917 Rowell was in communication with Sir William Hurst on the matter of conscription. Hurst was the Conservative Premier of Ontario and to him Rowell wrote that "the Government will have to adopt some other method of securing recruits"⁴ rather than by the voluntary methods. Such an active role, as played by Rowell towards support of coalition and conscription, was thus evinced long before these projects engulfed the Liberal Party.

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Rowell to Lemieux, May 26, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.5, no.1709-11.
 3. Rowell to Laurier, May 29, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.5, no.1712-4.
 4. Rowell to Hurst, Apr. 14, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.4, no.1529.

Another Liberal, Sir John Willison, one of the key figures in the formation of the Union Government, was in communication in May with Borden on the matter of conscription and coalition. On the latter topic he suggested that Borden invite in one or two Western politicians who would not be party politicians. He suggested the name of C. A. Dunning, a Liberal member of the Provincial Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Dunning later was appointed a member of the Canada Food Board, by Borden, after the Union Government was set up.

But on conscription Willison wrote that "I think you must authorize a form of conscription"¹.

Willison was to prove a powerful voice in the drive for conscription and Union Government, a voice that spoke through the columns of The Toronto Daily News, long a staunch supporter of the Liberal Party.

An indication of the rapidness of the breakup of the Liberal Party was exemplified by the case of Frank Calder, the prominent Liberal member who joined the Union Government as Minister of Colonization. This individual wrote to Laurier in January that he should expose Borden to the public, explain Quebec's position and appeal to the public to understand this position and thus "heal the breach" of the races². Yet in a few months Calder had helped further this breach and

-
1. Willison to Borden, May 16, 1917, Willison Papers, f.32, no.2499-07.
 2. Calder to Laurier, Jan. 29, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.75, no.194676-9.

become an active member of the very government he had earlier condemned.

The matter of "appealing to the public" was a problem which bedevilled the Liberal leader during the early months of 1917. Until conscription became a dividing issue, to be fought on party and racial lines, Laurier knew that regardless of the issue, any forthcoming wartime election would be based on racial prejudice and a clouding of the real issues.

Isaac Campbell, barrister of Winnipeg, reminded Laurier of the adverse effects a wartime election could have on him. "In the English Provinces you will be associated with what rightly or wrongly is alleged to be the failure of the French Canadians to enlist." He further warned of the anti-Laurier viewpoint of the Quebec "Pacifist or Nationalist element"¹.

Mr. Dafoe, of the Manitoba Free Press, echoed a similar viewpoint. "It is easy enough to predict the kind of campaign the Government will wage if there is an election during wartime. It will be made up of the crudest appeals to all kinds of primitive prejudices...."²

Another correspondent wrote to Laurier suggesting that Sam Hughes and Robt. Rogers decided to lay the groundwork

-
1. Isaac Campbell to Laurier, Apr. 17, 1917, Laurier Papers, no.195293-05.
 2. Dafoe to Laurier, Apr. 26, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195352-4.

for a general election by using the wartime conditions "to raise the race cry in Canada with the express object of returning their party to power." In line with this reasoning, according to the writer, English speaking recruiting officers went to Quebec "which, of course, had the effect of being resented by the French-Canadians and properly so"¹.

Another observer pointed out to Laurier that the "Tory plan of campaign" was to cover up their own shortcomings at the next election by making it an anti-French fight².

Laurier himself was aware of the numerous pitfalls that lay before his party. Fully cognizant of the growing trend to conscription Laurier unburdened himself to the eminent Ontario legalist, Sir Charles Aylesworth, in a long letter just prior to Borden's official announcement of the coming of some form of compulsory service. In this letter, the Liberal leader commented on the growing disruption of his own party.

According to Laurier, Ontario was swayed to "a feverish heat" by every man striving for popularity by shouting for more soldiers. He scored the inroads of Toryism in Ontario, stating it to be once more the "old small province of Upper Canada, and again governed from London." While London governed previously through the Family Compact, Laurier claimed "Canada is now governed by a Junta, sitting at

1. E. M. Woods to Laurier, Feb. 27, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.706, no.194923-5.

2. McGibbon to Laurier, May 11, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195546-50.

London, known as the 'Round Table' with ramifications in Toronto, Winnipeg, in Victoria with Tories and Grits receiving their ideas from London" and "insidiously forcing them on their respective parties." Laurier felt this put the Tories in their element, true to their ancestral tradition and instincts of their nature "but for the Grits, oh! for the old spirit of sturdy Liberalism which still prevailed in my youth. Truly I have lived too long!"

Laurier went on to point out that "I would have long ago opened battle upon this new organization of Toryism, which like the serpent sheds its skin, but ever remains the same reptile, but for my origin." Laurier then explained this statement: "The only answer would have been my origin, and this alone would have substituted prejudice to argument."

Referring specifically to the Ontario Liberals Laurier explained in the same letter "now when the government is going to introduce a policy which is at variance with all the traditions of Liberalism, what will the Liberals of Ontario do?" He immediately answered this in words ringed with fateful overtones. "As to the rank and file, I do not know; as to the leaders, they have already received and accepted the dictation of the "Round Table"." Laurier compared conscription in England to the Toryism of Northcliffe and Carson "winning a point and nothing else." He scorned the essence of Toryism, English or Canadian, as being "its undying spirit of domination." Then he ended his note to Aylesworth by pointing out that in 1896 he won the election, a triumph for

the principles of true Liberalism because the Quebec Liberals "remained true." But "in 1917 (...) I will win if the Liberals of Ontario remain true"¹.

Aylesworth in his reply predicted the exact course the Borden Government was to follow. He wrote that "if they have to go to the Country during the present year my belief is they will first declare for compulsory service, in some shape." He then struck another most accurate prediction. "I look upon Blondin's present recruiting campaign in Quebec as intended to form the excuse for such a course by the Government if they decide upon it." Aylesworth observed that the Government would indicate this recruiting campaign as the "last supreme effort on their part to get men by voluntary enlistment (...) its failure convinced them compulsion was absolutely necessary (...) they would appeal to loyalty of all Canadians to return them to power at a general election." Aylesworth concluded this part of his letter on an ominous tone. "I must say that upon such an appeal I am very much afraid they might win"².

The day after Aylesworth's reply was written, Borden announced in Commons his proposal to introduce compulsory service. The only Liberal comment favorable to this announcement came from the Hon. John Pugsley of New Brunswick.

-
1. Laurier to Aylesworth, May 15, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.19527a-b-c.
 2. Aylesworth to Laurier, May 17, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195579-81.

Mr. Pugsley supported the Borden plan but called for selective conscription which would be free from party consideration and party patronage. But he went a step further and indicated that he felt the Canadian people would demand conscription of men and of "accumulated wealth in this country as well"¹. However, Mr. Pugsley was later dead set against coalition.

Between the period of Borden's first announcement of conscription on May 18, and the introduction of the Military Service bill, Canadian Politics were centred about the offer of coalition made to Laurier by Borden. According to his Memoirs, Borden felt the advocates of coalition failed to realize the "immense difficulties that confronted a party leader undertaking to achieve such a consummation." Borden also felt it would come about when "conditions made it practically inevitable." He welcomed it as a way out of the constant demands of war and party strife. He noted that in discussions with his colleagues he "encountered strong, even vehement, divergence of opinion. From their discordant views I gained little assistance in reaching a conclusion"².

On May 24, Borden had a final discussion in Council. His colleagues could reach no agreement on coalition. Finally the Prime Minister informed them "that the duty of division rested with me, and that I would subsequently make them acquainted with my conclusion"³.

-
1. Pugsley, Debates, May 18, 1917, col.1555.
 2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 720.
 3. Ibid. 721.

Obviously the time when "conditions made it practically inevitable" had finally arrived. Borden left his Council meeting and called upon Sir Wilfred Laurier. Next day, May 25, the two met privately at 11 o'clock at Borden's house in Ottawa.

At this meeting Borden dwelt on the need for more troops to support the overseas forces. Borden stated that in regard to supplying reinforcements for the troops who had gone overseas "upon the pledge that they would be supported, I told him that in my opinion the situation could only be resolved with credit to Canada by a coalition." Borden proposed coalition with each party taking half the cabinet positions (excepting that of Prime Minister). "Sir Wilfred expressed grave doubts as to his acceptance and he evinced regret and concern that the proposal had been introduced." Laurier spoke of Quebec's reluctance to accept conscription by the existing Parliament unless there was a referendum or a general election. Laurier preferred an election "and expressed his opinion that the Government undoubtedly would be returned." Laurier concluded the interview by expressing the feeling "that under the authority of a new Parliament Quebec would obey the law, and not otherwise"¹.

The Prime Minister did not stop at this stage. He immediately consulted other men, high in Liberal ranks.

On May 26, "Sir Clifford Sifton called upon me and discussed the possibility of establishing a Coalition

1. Op.cit. 721.

Government. He believed that Laurier would support conscription, but in this I did not agree with him"¹.

Borden records an interview on May 27 with Mr. Carvell, the highly respected Laurier Lientenant in the Commons. Carvell "was much concerned about the attitude of Quebec, and agreed that the strongest possible Government should be formed"².

On May 28, Borden met with Lord Shaughnessy. "We (...) discussed the project of coalition in its various aspects. Eventually he accepted my view and promised to urge upon Sir Wilfred to co-operate"³.

Until Laurier's final rejection of the proposal for coalition the Liberal leaders were torn by strife upon this contentious topic. "I heard rumours of active quarrels among the Liberals (...) It was reported that Mr. Pardee, Mr. Graham and Mr. Carvell supported it (coalition), while Mr. Pugsley, Mr. Lemieux, Mr. Oliver, Mr. E. M. Macdonald and Mr. Murphy were opposed"⁴. It is interesting to note that of the five leading Liberals opposed to coalition, all but Mr. Pugsley remained loyal to Laurier to the end and voted against the Military Service bill.

On May 29, the two leaders met again. According to Borden, Laurier "told me that his supporters were divided in

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid. 722.
 4. Ibid. 723.

opinion and he still adhered to his view that conscription should not be enforced until after a general election"¹.

Borden then offered a new approach. Since Laurier considered the provisions of the bill reasonable if the principle of conscription was accepted, Borden proposed a coalition government and the passage of the bill with the proviso that it be proclaimed by Governor-in-Council after an election. Then Parliament was to be dissolved and an appeal to the public made. The bill was to be proclaimed and enforced if the coalition Government was defeated then "we shall have done our best and the responsibility will rest on others"².

Laurier wrote the proposals down and promised to consider them with his advisers. One last consultation occurred between the two leaders, on June 4, and on this occasion the Conservative personnel of the proposed coalition was discussed. Borden promised "to make the Conservative wing of the Cabinet acceptable to him"³.

Then on June 6 Laurier finally informed the Prime Minister "that he could not become a member of the proposed coalition as he was opposed to conscription"⁴.

As soon as Laurier reached his decision to reject joining in coalition, "Sir Wilfred and I agreed we should exchange letters which would describe the course and issue of negotiations"⁵. This was done so that "there might be no

1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 722.

2. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 722.

3. Borden, Memoirs, II, 723.

4. Ibid. 724.

5. Ibid.

question as to the character and issue of our negotiations...

Accordingly this was carried out.

In Laurier's letter he sums up his official reasons for refusing the offer of coalition. He led off by referring to the meeting of May 25.

"I told you (...) if my co-operation was desired, I regretted that I had not been invited before you had announced the policy of Compulsory Service, as I dreaded very serious difficulties if a conscription law was passed by the present Parliament. You rejoined that you had thought it preferable to invite me after the policy had been enunciated rather than before. (...)

"On Wednesday the 6th June, the final conference took place, at which I announced that I had not seen my way clear to join you at the same time if conscription was the only basis, to which you replied in the affirmative."

"At this and previous interviews, I always stated to you that whenever conscription was adopted, after a consultation of the people, I would certainly urge in every possible way obedience to the law"².

Borden, in his reply, summed up the basic position of Laurier in succinct fashion.

"I agree that it was the policy of compulsory military service which in your judgment made it impossible for you to join a coalition Government. I was convinced compulsory service was necessary and must be included in the policy of the proposed coalition. You on the other hand decided that you could not accept such a policy and that you could not join a Government which adopted it"³.

Only at one point during the negotiations did it appear that Borden held out hope of Laurier joining. In a letter sent to Sir George Perley on June 4, 1917, Borden, while commenting on dissension within Liberal ranks, made

1. Op.cit.

2. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 724-5.

3. Ibid. 726.

reference to "Laurier, Graham, Pardee and Carvell standing strongly for coalition...."¹

Yet in his Memoirs, while dealing with this topic he clarifies this earlier reference by omitting Laurier as a supporter of coalition. "It was reported that Mr. Pardee, Mr. Graham and Mr. Carvell supported it...."² Thus Borden's original inference that Laurier was planning to join in coalition is seen in the light of his Memoirs to be merely based upon rumour.

Sir George Foster felt that Laurier would come into coalition "if Gouin and Murray would back him up"³. Laurier was in constant communication with these two men. In his letter to Perley dated June 4, Borden claimed Laurier "thinks it indispensable that Gouin should either enter coalition Government or support it"⁴. Murray on the other hand supported coalition but not if it was dependent upon a referendum or an election. He advised Laurier to seek a way out of the problem of an election⁵. Murray later received an invitation to join the Union Government but did not accept. Gouin also refused to join.

Nevertheless, Laurier himself, as Leader of the Opposition, on June 6, officially declined the offer of coalition.

-
1. Borden to Perley, June 4, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 362, no.40307.
 2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 723.
 3. Diary, June 5, 1917, Foster Papers, v.55.
 4. Borden to Perley, June 4, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 362, no.40310.
 5. Murray to Laurier, June 2, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.195914-20.

The essential point involved in the negotiations was that if Laurier accepted coalition he was also, de facto, agreeing to conscription. Laurier could not agree to conscription. Therefore he could not logically join coalition since he could not agree to conscription. To Premier Murray of Nova Scotia Laurier wrote "if conscription were eliminated (...) I might perhaps overcome my difficulties. But coalition is wanted to pass conscription, and to that I cannot agree"¹.

Noting the same sentiment to Rowell, Laurier told him of the urging of Ontario friends to accept the coalition offer. Laurier indicated coalition "was always repugnant to me" but "to keep the cause" he would have accepted the offer, late as it was, and put aside his personal views. But "the basis upon which it was offered to me was unacceptable"².

In the same letter Laurier described the chief reasons why he opposed conscription. He began, stating that while conscription might help the cause, it would injure it more because "you are going to create a line of cleavage in the population, the consequences of which I know too well, and for which I will not be responsible." According to Laurier his informants claimed that the opposition to conscription was not only in Quebec but in the masses across Canada. He observed that Borden denied

-
1. Laurier to Murray, June 5, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.195921-2.
 2. Laurier to Rowell, June 2, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1715-7.

conscription at the war's beginning and one minister, Mr. Crother, regarding a rumour of conscription claimed "any such statement was a Grit lie." Laurier felt that the suddenness of the conscription announcement, without preparation or warning, "was a singular want of foresight on the part of the government." Laurier further noted to Rowell that he had denied the existence of any conscription intent in his naval policy in 1909 noting that now "if I were to waver, to hesitate, or to flinch, I would simply hand over the Province of Quebec to the extremists. I would lose the respect of the people whom I thus addressed...."¹

Writing to Arthur Hardy of Brockville, Laurier re-emphasized the "anti-conscription" aspect of the Nationalists' attack on his naval policy of 1909. He claimed to be the only man who could face the extremists "at the present time." Were he to flinch he'd lose the position "I always maintained" along with his usefulness and self respect. "Do you think that I can now follow another course than adhere to the connections of all my life?"²

Mr. Fielding added a similar opinion. He felt that the measure, itself of extraordinary measure, and passed under extraordinary circumstances, by a Parliament having no authority from the people, was bound to meet strenuous opposition in the country. He counselled Laurier to demand a

-
1. Laurier to Rowell, June 2, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1715-7.
 2. Laurier to Hardy, May 23, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.195681-b-c.

referendum before an outright attack on the bill itself.

"This would satisfy Quebec"¹.

The validity of this Parliament was questioned by Laurier in a letter to Premier Murray of Nova Scotia. Laurier called it a "rump of a parliament" and a "doubtful authority." If such a Parliament passed this bill "it could not be enforced except by violence and bloodshed, not only in my province but in the Western Provinces"².

Laurier predicted trouble for the bill, in a letter to Dafoe. "If the Government persist in their bill, they will have to enforce it against the strong opposition and protest of the labour classes and Heaven knows where that would lead"³.

This dislike of conscription which Laurier held, was unswervingly consistent. This was made evident in a letter sent to Mr. Jaffray of The Globe, Toronto.

Laurier drove home three points as the basic reasons that he opposed coalition, and its necessary corollary, conscription. These points, in order, were the fear of disunity, the united opposition of Quebec, and the fear that Nationalist politicians would gain control of Quebec politics. But underlying these points and lacing them together

-
1. Fielding to Laurier, May 31, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.195844.
 2. Laurier to Murray, June 5, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.195921-2.
 3. Laurier to Dafoe, June 20, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.710, no.196095.

was the basic position of Laurier that "I am not a conscriptionist"¹.

Thus on the eve of the introduction of the Military Service bill, the Liberal Party suffered badly from a decided rift. While this division was not a serious one in early June, it was to shatter the nationwide unity of the Liberal Party once the Military Service bill was launched.

The strategy behind the coalition offer to Laurier next must bear close examination. To begin with, the nature of the offer incorporated one cardinal point, viz: that coalition was synonymous with the acceptance of conscription itself. But why the offer of coalition in the first place?

To begin with the Borden Government had a sufficient majority to pass the Military Service bill even if the entire Opposition voted against it. Yet Borden underwent a period of protracted negotiations to get Liberal support for such a bill. The Liberal support he tried to get was the cooperation of the Liberal leader Laurier, and not just a few followers. Had Laurier joined coalition then both parties would be officially supporting the bill. The key to the situation lay partly in the curious alliance of Quebec Nationalists and the Conservative Party in the election of 1911. At that time both groups combined to defeat Laurier but from different directions. The Conservatives condemned his Naval Bill as not being comprehensive enough while

1. Laurier to C. Jaffray, June 9, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.710, no.196050-2.

Bourassa and followers pictured it as smacking too much of British Imperialism and the setting up of an Imperial Defense scheme. Now, in 1917, by declaring for conscription, Borden would lose the support of those Quebecers who voted Nationalist in 1911 because the Quebec voters as a bloc were solidly opposed to conscription. Borden feared a wartime election. The alternative was to try for an extension of the life of Parliament for another year. But this would simply delay the inevitability of an election, whether it was to be held in wartime or peacetime.

Professor Skelton, the Canadian historian and loyal ally of Laurier, summed up the situation quite neatly. According to his viewpoint, the government had lost its grip on the country and, in an election, would probably lose to the Liberals, due to the Government record. The alternative was a coalition, half the seats going to the Liberals, and perhaps the premiership. By declaring for conscription, "the ginger groups, the for-God's-sake-do-something critics would be propitiated." Skelton felt that Quebec would be lost to the Conservatives and split among Liberals and Nationalists, or "if a unit would provide a basis for attacks and for solidifying the English speaking provinces"¹.

Thus Borden, in seeking coalition would, if successful, form a government whereby both parties would share the credit, or opprobrium on conscription. This would mean that

1. Skelton, Laurier, II, 507-8.

the Conservative Party, while instigating conscription, by joining with the Liberals would no longer be solely synonymous with wartime conscription. A joint responsibility would mean that the future Conservative Party would not be the sole scapegoat over conscription at election time. The spectre of conscription would haunt both parties. This would enable the Conservatives to gamble on getting future votes in Quebec.

While Borden sought Liberal support for his proposed conscription, in order to counterbalance the loss of the Quebec support gained in 1911, there was obviously another reason for his fear of an election. This was the record of his Government.

Throughout 1915 numerous scandals rocked the Government, made worse by the fact that they went without any great effort on Borden's part to guarantee a cleaner administration. Professor Skelton enumerates many serious disorders including bad boots to troops, a rake-off in bandages for one Conservative member of Parliament plus another member being involved in selling worn out horses to the Government. The patronage lists were revived. The Prime Minister merely "chided" the erring members¹.

The year 1916 saw deplorable corruption in Provincial Conservative administrations. True, the Federal Government was not involved, but any anti-Conservative dislike on a local basis was bound to be slanted indirectly at the National Party. An example of the wrath directed at the

1. Op.cit. 452.

Conservatives took place in British Columbia. Sir Charles Tupper demanded: "I ask Conservatives to drive from power this government which has disgraced the province and been the servile tool of adventurers"¹. They were driven from power.

Professor Skelton observed that the Conservative Roblin Government fell in Manitoba after "the most colossal stealing in Canadian political history had been revealed." He noted that the Hon. Robert Rogers had been involved. He noted too that while Sam Hughes evoked criticism, the Cabinet itself "lacked unity", its "policy was spasmodic" and the Premier himself "had not been able to enforce discipline in his cabinet or ensure confidence in the people"².

While such impressions are useful, it is to be remembered that Skelton was quite partial to Laurier. But many Conservative sources were equally convinced of the public reaction to the records of the local provincial governments. Dafoe remarked to Sifton that the "results in New Brunswick must have been very discouraging to them (Conservatives), as it was in fact a trial of strength between the Dominion parties"³.

Referring to a public reaction to the Borden Government, Sir George Foster made an interesting entry in his diary. "The Quebec and Saguenay mess goes through - an unsavory and absolutely indefensible job - put through by the

1. Quoted in Skelton, Laurier, II, 452

2. Skelton, Laurier, II, 452-3.

3. Dafoe to Sifton, Feb. 27, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no. M-73.

the Prime Minister in pursuance of arrangements made with Forget and the Bank of Commerce nearly three years ago"¹. A year later, referring to the plan to have the Government take over the Grand Trunk Railway, Foster noted that "it could make electioneering material"².

Evidence of a public dislike of Conservatism was shown between August 1915 and June 1917. In seven provincial elections, the Conservative Party was defeated in all of them. In three provinces Conservative Governments were defeated. In all other elections the Conservatives held fewer seats after election than they held before. E.M. Macdonald writing to Laurier observed a salient fact. "Our successes in the provincial arenas are due solely to the mistakes, corruption and incompetence of our opponents"³.

The Morning Chronicle, Halifax, in an editorial (Oct. 19, 1916) described the Borden Government as "the most incompetent administration that ever cursed and blighted a British nation."

The same paper noted (June 5, 1917) that "we think it is now universally recognized that Premier Borden cannot carry the measure of Conscription which he has proposed, in Parliament, not to speak of the country, except with the aid of the Liberal Party...."

The Evening Bulletin, Edmonton, added to this belief

1. Diary, May 16, 1916, Foster Papers, v.55.

2. Ibid. Aug. 16, 1916.

3. E.M. Macdonald to Laurier, Sept. 28, 1916, Laurier Papers, v.702, no.193234-7.

(June 15, 1917).

Sir Robert Borden evidently considers the hostility (of Quebec Nationalists) serious, for he proposed to form a coalition government to "put conscription over" by the combined power of both of the great political parties. And Sir Robert is no believer in coalition governments while party government is workable.

Several prominent Canadians were convinced that the coalition offer was merely the opening move in a game designed to bolster support for the Borden Government and its proposed conscription bill.

Professor Skelton wrote to Laurier on May 30, 1917. "The growing demand of Tory newspapers for a coalition to put through conscription shows that help is felt to be necessary in pulling the chestnuts out of the fire"¹.

On July 30, 1917, Mr. G. Watson, K.C. of Toronto was interviewed on the political situation. He said in part: "Why should men of the Liberal Party be called upon now to rescue a moribund and almost defunct government?"²

Dr. Barrett wrote to Laurier from Winnipeg noting that "if there be a general election in the near future, whether it is on conscription or not the record of the government will kill them (...) the attempt (...) to enforce (...) conscription bill will kill them also"³. Mr. J.K.

-
1. Skelton to Laurier, May 30, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.195815-6.
 2. Copy of interview given by G. Watson, K.C. of Toronto, circa July 30, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196398-400.
 3. Dr. Barrett to Laurier, July 11, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.710, no.196242-4.

Foran noted that the Government "is tottering"¹.

Mr. William Houston of The Globe, Toronto advised Laurier to let the Borden Government "bear the whole brunt of the military and economic struggle which it cannot carry on successfully (...) by refusing to enter coalition." He reasoned that "to take pact with the Ministry now would be gratuitously to share in its failures...." He advised Laurier to seek an extension of Parliament because even a Liberal victory at the polls would see a Liberal party ridden by factions. "Better a hundred times give the Borden Government a few months more of time and of opportunity to enable them to fill full their own cup of retribution"².

The prominent Liberal, Mr. Graham, writing to Mr. Rowell, exposed in cutting language the political expediency behind the coalition offer. "Do you believe in coalition? So did I till I discovered that it merely meant a union to carry out Tory policies, not conscription alone, but several others"³.

One bit of irrefutable evidence as to the expediency of conscription came on the eve of the Union Election in 1917. Two weeks before the election General Mewburn issued a pledge that farmers' sons would be exempted.

-
1. J. K. Foran to Laurier, July 14, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.710, no.196264-7.
 2. Wm. Houston to Laurier, July 15, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.710, no.196276-80.
 3. Graham to Rowell, June 20, 1911, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1745.

I will give you my word that if any farmers' sons who are honestly engaged in farm work and in the production of foodstuffs, are not exempted by the tribunals and are called for military service, I will have them honourably discharged¹.

The Unionist campaign had done well in the cities but was not so well organized in the rural areas. Bourassa in analysing the rural opinion in Australia had pointed out that it was definitely against conscription, a condition equally extant in Canada². Thus the Mewburn announcement guaranteed that an anti-conscription vote by the farmers would be unlikely to take place. Then, the election won, the Government in March 1918, cancelled the exemptions given to men between twenty and twenty-two years of age. The exemptions, afforded the farmers concerned, an idle winter but in April as the spring - summer work rolled around, the exemptions were cancelled. That the Mewburn pledge was merely a pre-election promise, was proven by the breaking of his word after the Union Government was returned, and proven too by the fact that farmers descended in great numbers on Ottawa, protesting this action, but to no avail. They were not convinced the cancellations were justified.

An added insight into the reaction to Borden's dealings with various Liberals, came to light in a Rowell Memorandum dated June 23, 1917. Concerning a visit made by Sir John Willison, Rowell noted that Graham and Pardee had been asked to join a coalition government "and they had both

1. Quoted in Skelton, Laurier, II, 536.
2. Le Devoir, Nov. 3, 1916.

declined, not because they were opposed to coalition, but they did not think that individual Liberals should consider going into the present government" because "the matter should be dealt with from the standpoint of the Liberal Party"¹.

But on the eve of the Military Service bill, it was difficult to determine just how the Liberal Party would vote on conscription. Granted, some were known to be for it, some were reticent to pronounce on it while other Liberals were adamantly opposed to compulsory service.

The vote on the second reading would make clear to Borden just what Liberal support was forthcoming for his compulsory service bill. This in turn would affect his decision whether to ask the Imperial authorities for an extension to the life of Parliament or to dissolve Parliament and hold an election.

Perhaps the most truthful indication of how the Liberals would react to conscription was found in correspondence between Rowell and Pardee, immediately after the first reading of the Military Service bill. On June 14, Rowell wrote to Pardee concerning the attitude of Ontario Liberals in the Federal House. "I believe they expect our members from this province to voice their real convictions and express their real sentiments when the time comes for a vote on the Bill"².

-
1. Memorandum, June 23, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1738.
 2. Rowell to Pardee, June 14, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics v.1, no.1722-3.

Pardee's reply confirmed this sentiment but was intended to express the viewpoint of the individual Liberal. Referring specifically to the Liberal members' reaction to the Laurier position on conscription he noted "that we must now simply take on our own course and go down the line regardless of the consequences, either politically or otherwise"¹.

Such was the atmosphere within Liberal ranks when the Military Service bill came to be voted upon.

3. The Liberal Party and the Passage of the Military Service Bill.

The passage of the Military Service bill was to indicate to Borden the amount of Liberal support he would get, a support that would be reflected favorably to the Government in the event of an election. It was quite obvious that Borden would have to campaign on his record. Up to June 1917 this was admittedly a risk. But conscription was another matter. The bluntness of its timing, the hatred of Quebec for it, coupled with a growing Liberal support of it, indicated to Borden that his Government would survive or fail at election time on the conscription issue. The addition of many Liberal supporters would be a decided asset. The inclusion of Liberals in a coalition would prove a heavy advantage towards victory, as was actually shown by the election of the Union Government in 1917. But before Borden could formulate any definite plan regarding an election, he had to introduce

1. Pardee to Rowell, June 18, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics v.1, no.1743.

his bill, counting on Liberal support, not merely to pass it, as the Government majority would ensure passage, but to get it accepted by the public, an acceptance that was vital to Conservative re-election, unless Borden wanted conscription to boomerang on his Conservative Party.

How much Liberal support did Borden get for his compulsory service scheme? An examination of the facts proved this support to be enormous, to the immense good fortune of the Government.

On June 11th the Military Service bill was introduced and received its first reading. In his introductory speech Borden reiterated the need for men and the necessity of reinforcing overseas troops. He cited the ugly temper of the returned soldiers if the bill was not passed. "I am not so much concerned for the day when this Bill becomes law, as for the day when these men return if it is rejected"¹. This speech of the Prime Minister "was well received by our men and was applauded by many Liberals. Sir Wilfred said little and looked pale and wan"².

The Debate upon the second reading lasted from June 18 to July 6. During this debate the bill was vigorously assailed by Laurier, Frank Oliver, and Charles Marcil, among others. Laurier's opposition was notable in that he demanded a referendum before the Bill was passed. He mentioned that

-
1. Borden, *Debates*, July 11, 1917, col.2195.
 2. Borden, *Memoirs*, II, 701.

he was not favourable to a referendum as such but desired it because of the public sentiment for it, especially the labouring classes "who have asked for this privilege." He promised that Quebec would obey the result of the referendum verdict whatever it was¹. That he was fully aware of the tension and division within the ranks of his party, was shown by his reference to how his fellow Liberals in the House should vote on the referendum. "If there is ever to be a time when every man should think for himself, decide for himself and act for himself it is the present." Then he uttered a fateful statement. "This moment is too solemn, the issue (...) too great (...) the questions (...) are of too far reaching importance to have them decided by any other voice than the voice of each man's individual conscience"².

As if taking Laurier at his word a succession of Liberals arose during the long debate to pledge support of the Military Service bill. The debate was a tedious one relieved only slightly by a series of proposed amendments. Mr. Barette proposed a six months hoist or shelving of the Bill³ while Laurier proposed a referendum to allow the public to decide upon the issue of conscription⁴. Mr. Copp proposed to defer the Military Service bill until proper consideration be given to supporting relatives of overseas troops⁵.

-
1. Laurier, Debates, June 18, 1917, col.2403.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Barette, Debates, June 21, 1917, col.2524.
 4. Laurier, Debates, June 18, 1917, col.2403.
 5. Copp, Debates, July 5, 1917, col.3078.

The first of the Liberal supporters of the Bill was Mr. Guthrie from Ontario. "I favour coalition; I favour extension of this Parliament and I favour this Bill." Then he set a trend that was well illustrated by many more Liberals. "I do not believe this Bill will be successfully put in force by a single political party; I fear it will not"¹. Guthrie indicated his desire for conscription of wealth as well as men,² but denounced the Laurier amendment as antagonistic to responsible government³.

Guthrie was followed by Mr. Pardee of Ontario on June 21. He justified his support of the bill by painting a picture of the German threat to Canada⁴. He demanded that Canadians "awake to their responsibilities"⁵. Pardee pleaded for all to "not think too much of party"⁶. The cause took precedence over party. Then he paid tribute to Laurier as a Liberal leader but pointed out he could not support his leader's amendment "for the reason that my sincere conviction is that my course is right - I could not do it otherwise"⁷. He gave a more practical reason for fearing referendum. Pardee felt the unsettled conditions of the country might defeat it. He feared "that with that defeat the door would be shut absolutely in the face of recruiting and in the face of all

1. Guthrie, Debates, June 19, 1917, col.2463.
2. Ibid. col.2453.
3. Ibid. col.2459.
4. Pardee, Debates, June 21, 1917, col.2526.
5. Ibid. col.2527.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

other kinds of conscription which ought to be made"¹. He explained that "I do not think the pocket of the rich man in this country has yet been touched"².

On the same day Mr. McCraney of Saskatoon took over. His argument for support of the bill was the failure of voluntary recruiting plus the military needs of Canada³. For him, the Laurier amendment "recognizes no need, suggests no remedy, applies no alternative; it proposes only that there shall be a referendum"⁴.

On June 22, Mr. Graham from Ontario spoke on the Bill. He denounced the Government's inefficiency and mismanagement of recruiting⁵ and defended Quebec's reaction to this situation⁶. "I am in favour of conscription, because I believe that it will have some effect in stimulating the filling up of our battalions." He explained further that he could not vote "against any measure that will have the effect, directly or indirectly, of assisting in the prosecution of the great struggle in which we are engaged"⁷. He paid tribute to Laurier and pointed out that true Liberalism allowed him to differ with his leader, yet still respect him⁸. He opposed referendum on the Bill as he felt the divisions in parliament "among individuals" as opposed to parties, would solve it⁹.

1. Op.cit. col.2529.

2. Ibid.

3. McCraney, Debates, June 21, 1917, col.2559.

4. Ibid.

5. Graham, Debates, June 22, 1917, col.2574.

6. Ibid. col.2573.

7. Ibid. col.2582.

8. Ibid. col.2572.

9. Ibid. col.2582.

Next Mr. Michael Clark of Red Deer, Alberta, took his stand. "I shall support the Government's measure; (...) with a clear conscience (...) believing that it is in the best interests of the country, of the Empire, of the world (...) of civilization...."¹ He opposed referendum because it was not practical to conduct it in wartime and because it was unlikely to improve the situation². Mr. Clark of all the conscriptionist Liberals was the only one to actually praise the Government's record as "an excellent thing" in regard to the administration of food and fuel³.

The same day saw Mr. A. K. Maclean, long an exponent of conscription, throw his weight in support of the bill and against referendum "in justice to those who fight and out of respect to the memory of those who have died...."⁴

Liberal prestige suffered a severe blow on June 27 when Mr. Frank Carvell, of New Brunswick, pledged support of the bill as a last means of getting troops but on the plea that a final try be made to get volunteers before the bill be put into operation⁵. He opposed referendum on the grounds it might be defeated. "Should the referendum be defeated, what then?" he asked. "This country is at war and must have men"⁶.

June 28 saw Mr. Neely of Humboldt, Saskatchewan, join the growing parade of Liberals who defended the Military

-
1. M. Clark, Debates, June 26, 1917, col.2661.
 2. Ibid. col.2666.
 3. Ibid. col.2665.
 4. A. K. Maclean, Debates, June 26, 1917, 2680.
 5. Carvell, Debates, June 27, 1917, col.2715.
 6. Ibid. col.2714.

Service bill. His ground was "the winning of the war"¹. This led him to oppose referendum.

Mr. McCoig of Ontario then added his support to the bill, stating "I am desirous of doing everything possible to assist in having it carried through if it is going to be any assistance to the Allies in their great struggle"². But McCoig, unlike his previous Liberal supporters of Conscription, demanded a referendum on the grounds that if conscription was defeated, it would prove the bill itself could not have been forced anyway³.

Further support of the bill came from Mr. Sinclair of Nova Scotia, who desired a referendum, but agreed to vote for the bill if the amendment for referendum was defeated in the House⁴.

"So I say that conscription is right. It is equitable, it is just"⁵. Thus on July 3, Mr. Knowles of Moose Jaw voiced his opinion, but went on to point out that "I do not think that a referendum is at all an obnoxious thing"⁶.

Mr. Loggie of New Brunswick based his support of the bill on the grounds that "I think the country is in jeopardy"⁷. He scorned the referendum as failing to supply men if the people rejected it⁸.

-
1. Neely, Debates, June 28, 1917, col.2781.
 2. McCoig, Debates, June 28, 1917, col.2787.
 3. Ibid. col.2788.
 4. Sinclair, Debates, July 3, 1917, col.2882.
 5. Knowles, Debates, July 3, 1917, col.2897.
 6. Ibid. col.2900.
 7. Loggie, Debates, July 4, 1917, col.2986.
 8. Ibid. col.2987.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

A most ardent supporter of Laurier, Mr. Levi Thomson then deserted the Liberal ranks. This was rather significant because it revealed Thomson to be a member of a core of Liberals, Pardee, Graham, A. K. Maclean who were long supporters of conscription. In May, 1917 Levi Thomson, in writing to Laurier remarked that conscription wouldn't be necessary if voluntary recruiting had been handled properly but "as matters now stand, it seems to me that it is necessary, and should not be opposed by us"¹. In Parliament he noted "our actions must be guided by our judgment and not by the judgment of someone else (...) I will follow the dictates of my conscience"². He felt Parliament should decide conscription, and not refer it to the people³.

Four more members made up the last of the conscriptionist Liberals who spoke in favour of the bill. These included Mr. MacNutt from Nova Scotia, Duncan Ross and Mr. Truax from Ontario, and James Douglas from Alberta. While they agreed essentially with other Liberals supporting the bill there were two exceptions. Duncan Ross favored conscription of wealth⁴ while Truax favored every effort to exhaust the voluntary system of recruiting before The Military Service Act, 1917, was enforced⁵.

-
1. Thomson to Laurier, May 19, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195623.
 2. Thomson, Debates, July 4, 1917, col.2993.
 3. Ibid. col.2996.
 4. D. Ross, Debates, July 5, 1917, col.3044.
 5. Truax, Debates, July 5, 1917, col.3050.

Two things were evident throughout this Debate, both associated with the pro-conscription Liberals. One was the demand for heavier restrictions on incomes and wealth, ranging from a proposal for conscription of wealth made by Guthrie, Graham and Thomson and Ross, to heavier taxation by Douglas. The second point, much in evidence, was the absence of any antipathy to Sir Wilfred Laurier on the part of the Liberals who were bolting the party. Excepting Clark from Red Deer, these Liberals, while differing from their leader, were lavish in praising his statesmanship.

Thus these seventeen Liberals and later Mr. Turriff, supported conscription in the Debate, six from the West, six from Ontario and five from the Maritimes. Three more Liberals from Ontario and one from the West, while not debating, were to vote for the bill. This gave a total of twenty-two Liberals in support of the Conservative measure.

Before the vote on the second reading, the Barette and Laurier Amendments were disposed of on July 5. The voting on these show interesting insights into party allegiances.

The six months' hoist amendment of Mr. Barette was voted down by 165 to 9¹. Among the nine, all of whom were French Canadians, were four Conservatives, viz: Barette, Bellemare, Girard and Patenaude.

The Laurier amendment for a referendum on conscription was defeated 111 to 62². Among those who voted for the

1. Debates, July 5, 1917, col.3074.
2. Ibid.

amendment were the nine who favoured the six months hoist plus such pro-conscriptionist Liberals as Knowles, McCoig, McMillan, Sinclair, L. Thomson and Truax.

On the same date another amendment was defeated, that introduced by Mr. Copp which proposed to defer further consideration of the Military Service bill until "such adequate provision has been made for the dependents of soldiers enlisted for overseas as will remove the necessity of raising money by public subscription for their support"¹. This amendment was defeated 115 to 56, a majority of 59. Six conscriptionist Liberals voted for this amendment, viz. McNutt, McCoig, McMillan, Sinclair, Truax and Turriff.

The motion for the second reading of the Military Service bill was voted on July 5². The motion was carried by a vote of 118 to 55. This gave the motion a majority of 63 votes.

The bill was in Committee until July 19, and on July 24 Sir Robert Borden moved the third reading. The Debate that followed was very uneventful, seeing speeches given by Turriff, Pardee and Guthrie as well as Laurier and Meighen. The third reading carried 102 to 44 to give the bill a majority of 58 of which twenty-two were conscriptionist Liberals³.

When the bill came to the Senate, its passage was marked by much racial acrimony, with the same pros and cons

1. Op.cit. col.3084.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. June 24, 1917, col.3736-7.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

regarding the bill being found among the Senate members as was evident in the Commons. In Toronto, The Globe gave a most accurate prediction as to the party division in the Senate over the bill itself.

While the Conservative majority in the Upper House, allowing for two French Canadian Senators, who are certain to vote against conscription, is only two, there is no fear in Government circles that the bill will have anything like so small a majority. The Liberal Senators have kept their own counsel pretty well, but it is certain that a considerable of the men from Ontario and the West will follow the example of the Ontario and Western Liberals in the commons and give their support¹.

During the passage of the bill in the Upper Chamber, Senator Bostock, Opposition leader, introduced an amendment proposing the bill be passed but not enforced until after a general election. The amendment was defeated 44 to 35, with the thirty-two Liberal Senators, plus three Conservatives joining together to vote for the bill. The vote on the second reading saw one of the Conservative Senators plus the nine Liberals, who previously supported Bostock's motion, vote for the Military Service bill. The final vote stood at 54 to 25. Bostock himself voted for the bill, along with four Western, two Ontario and two New Brunswick English speaking Liberal Senators. The addition of six new Senators prior to the vote, who later voted for the bill, aided the Government majority. Thus the racial and geographical determination evident in the vote on the bill in the Commons, was mirrored just as vividly in the vote on the bill in the Upper Chamber.

1. The Globe, July 29, 1917.

One other item of great bearing on the issue occurred over the extension of Parliament for another year.

Borden could see by the vote on the motion for the second reading, that the Military Service bill was going to pass with good Liberal support. Then he made a fateful decision. He would introduce a motion to extend Parliament and if the Opposition approved, ask the Imperial Authorities to grant the extension. "On July 14th, 1917, I took up the question in Council and informed my colleagues that even if the motion should carry by a majority vote, I would not act upon it if the Opposition as a party should oppose it"¹. Accordingly the motion was introduced. The effect was surprising. Mr. Graham countered with a new motion suggesting a deferring of the motion to extend Parliament until those able to pay "will be asked to contribute their full share to the cost of the war" and until the agricultural, industrial, transportation and natural resources of Canada were organized to give the greatest assistance to the Empire. Also the Graham motion demanded steps be taken to reduce the cost of living². This amendment was defeated 78 to 61, a majority of 17³. On this vote all the Conscriptionist Liberals voted for the amendment, except Dr. Michael Clark.

Borden's own motion for the extension of Parliament for another year, was carried by a vote of 82 to 62, a

-
1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 714.
 2. Graham, Debates, July 17, 1917, col.3461.
 3. Debates, July 17, 1917, cols.3483-4.

majority of 20¹. The Borden extension of Parliament motion had the support of such conscriptionist Liberals as Clark (Red Deer), Cruise, Guthrie, Levi Thomson and Turriff.

Of all the Liberals who supported Borden on the Conscription bill only Michael Clark of Red Deer, Alberta, attacked Sir Wilfred Laurier. When Laurier assailed the motion to extend Parliament, Clark then arose and denounced his old leader claiming the election "is being forced on us at this time by a refusal of extension, with a view, not to helping the war, but to exchange people who are in office for those who are opposed to them for the purpose of securing the sweets of office...."²

Borden added a note of explanation as to why he refused to send the motion of extension to the Senate despite its passage by the House. In introducing the motion "I then declared that I did not think it would be acted upon unless there was unanimity or practical unanimity in the House with regard to it." He noted that the result "of that vote upon the resolution showed something very far short of either unanimity or practical unanimity for the vote stood 82 in support of the resolution and 62 against." He then observed that due to his predetermined course already laid down the Government did not "propose taking further action upon the resolution as it was carried by a majority of only 20"³.

-
1. Op.cit. col.3501.
 2. Clark, Debates, July 17, 1917, col.3493.
 3. Borden, Memoirs, II, 718.

At this stage some obvious conclusions can be drawn. In introducing his bill, Borden, due to the negotiations over the offer of coalition, was assured of some Liberal support. This support was psychologically a great lift to Borden, because, as reiterated before, his bill was bound to lose him the support of Quebec Nationalist and Liberal members, as well as the large majority of the voters of that Province. His record was bound to alienate some support among the voting public at large. Hence his original attempt to have Laurier share responsibility for the bill. Borden's technique in announcing conscription, then inviting Laurier to join a coalition, and having Laurier refuse, left Borden in the position of being the one leader pledged to get further reinforcements. Laurier was therefore left in a position of opposing The Military Service Act, 1917, a position further substantiated by his demand for a referendum.

The Military Service Act, 1917, was obviously designed to get more troops and could have been passed regardless of the Liberal position. But Borden had an election in mind and the offer of coalition, while refused by the Liberal leader, left the Prime Minister with twenty-two Liberal supporters, and these were key political figures, not mere rank and file political members.

Thus the evidence is irrefutable that Borden used the bill first to gain more troops, and then the bill was used in turn to split the Liberal opposition and gain Liberal support for the bill, thus strengthening the Prime Minister's position in the event of an election.

As far as the extension of Parliament was concerned, there is ample proof that it could be obtained from the Imperial authorities. This is found in correspondence between Secretary of State for Colonies Long and Perley, thus refuting the notion that an election came about because Parliament couldn't be extended.

I am in a position to assure you, that if (...) the Governor-General submits an Address from the Senate and the Commons of Canada praying for an extension of the life of Canadian Parliament, we shall feel ourselves bound to ask Parliament to give effect to it. Provided that the request of the Canadian Parliament comes before us in proper form, it would not be right for us to go behind it by raising the question as to the majority in either of the two Houses by which the Address had been voted¹.

The timing of the decision to have an election is important because it was done after the vote on the second reading of the bill, when Borden was assured of the support of twenty-two Liberals.

These Liberals included nine Ontario liberals, eight Western and five from the Maritimes. When it is brought to mind the support pledged Borden by the Ontario Provincial Liberals headed by Rowell and Willison, only then is it realized how powerful this Liberal support really was. Again, the Prime Minister, before the announcement of an election, was actively in communication early in July with such Liberals as Calder and Pardee², men of immense political stature. Calder was the outstanding genius behind the Saskatchewan

-
1. Long to Perley, Jan. 9, 1917, Perley Papers, no.228-a.
 2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 733.

political machine and he brought this organization into the Conservative camp in the fall of 1917, to support Union Government.

What then was achieved by Borden politically? Firstly, the Liberal support for the bill in Commons was based on principle or conscience. That is, with the exception of Clark from Red Deer who attacked Laurier, these bolting Liberals joined forces with the Government on a matter of principle. Again, in doing so, they invariably blamed the Government for the recruiting debacle and praised Laurier. Yet they supported the bill. Clark supported the bill on principle but was the only one to actually attack Laurier. Such Liberal support, based as it was on principle, and coming from the Opposition, imbued to the Government and the bill itself, enormous prestige, largely because it came from a group that had no apparent gain in view in doing so.

Secondly the Liberal Party was split, and split hard. This was obvious as early as June 6 when Foster noted the question of Laurier as leader of his party. "Can he hold the leadership of a divided party? (...). Certainly he will find strong dissent possibly stronger action in accord with dissent"¹. Borden was very well aware of this split because he was told by Laurier himself. "He tells me his party is broken in two on conscription"².

1. Diary, June 6, 1917, Foster Papers, v.55.

2. Borden to Perley, circa early June, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 362, no.40307.

On July 30, Mr. Dafoe writing to Graham, gave his own analysis of the Laurier position. Dafoe claimed "Bourassa controls Laurier through the latter's fear of loss of support in Quebec and Laurier in turn undertakes to control the Liberal Party." To Dafoe this situation "makes Bourassa the real leader of the Liberal Party" and "the power behind the throne" if the Liberals were elected at the next election. Dafoe doubted "many English Liberals will agree to this....". He claimed Laurier felt victory was his if he could only get his own people solidly behind him. Laurier "now plays up exclusively to his own people...." Laurier expected English Liberals "out of regard and affection for him" to follow Laurier and "to suppress their feelings and tag along dutifully in the rear. This is the road to disaster and I think it is near at hand"¹.

This forbidding prediction was made all the more ominous by an earlier forecast by Dafoe to Laurier, when he told the latter that it "is easy enough to predict the kind of campaign the Government will wage if there is an election during war time. It will be made up of the crudest appeals to all kinds of prejudices...."²

To Laurier and his Party, the loss of the Conscription Liberals was a serious one. Their value to the Conservative Party was well shown by a Conservative correspondent,

-
1. Dafoe to Graham, July 30, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no. M-73.
 2. Dafoe to Laurier, April 26, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195352-4.

who writing to Borden, suggested he drop Rogers, Cochrane, Blondin and Crothers to make way for Laurier, Lemieux, Graham and Carvell¹.

A Liberal correspondent, remarked to Laurier that the "bolting Liberals failed to view the situation from all angles so were stampeded into a false position"². He felt that these Liberals overestimated public support of conscription. Another correspondent writing to Laurier wasn't so complimentary to them, calling them "tools, blindly following instructions from any and every source, providing it be from London"³.

Whatever the verdict may be on these Liberals, their deflection left Laurier in a serious position in the mid-summer of 1917.

Other forces were working against Laurier. In his stand against conscription, he was opposing a measure which was already in force in Great Britain and the United States. True, it was defeated by a referendum in Australia, but the Government that was favourable to it was still returned in Australia. This was drawn to Laurier's attention early in May⁴.

Again, as another writer pointed out, the Conservative Leaders and Party were in favour of conscription and no

-
1. Wm. Deforest to Borden, May 18, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 285, no.32186.
 2. C. Kerr to Laurier, July 18, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.196293.
 3. R. R. Cromarty to Laurier, May 29, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.195803-5.
 4. F. W. Hibbard to Laurier, May 19, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195626-7.

newspapers were opposed to it¹. Added to this was a growing force of public opinion, ardently wooed by editorials, speakers and various other organizations such as the Win the War League type of groups.

Laurier's insistence on a referendum, despite his plea of support for the bill if passed, plus his opposition to an extension of Parliament, laid at his doorstep the responsibility of the coming wartime election. Tory newspapers drove this point home incessantly, and even Liberal journals, opposed to a wartime election, took up the theme.

In regard to the election itself, it was suggested that if Borden feared the soldier's vote in the coming election, he was prepared to circumvent this threat. This information was conveyed by a correspondent to Laurier in April, 1917.

I am informed, upon what I consider excellent authority, that Sir Robert Borden has secured an understanding with the War Office, that in the event of an election, the War Office will refuse to allow the votes of the Canadian soldiers to be taken².

Later, in May, Laurier received a similar intimation that "it is clearly to the present Government's advantage to disfranchise the soldier (...) as the Government must realize that the troops, when given an opportunity, will vote almost to a man against the present regime"³.

1. T. Conlon to Laurier, July 16, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.196282-4.
2. A. K. Cameron to Laurier, April 28, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195448-51.
3. J. Creelman to Laurier, May 18, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195616-8.

This was not done, but The Military Voters Act, 1917, was so flexible in its operation that it could easily be manipulated to the Government's advantage.

Thus on the eve of the formation of the Union Government The Military Service Act, 1917, had been set up to provide reinforcements but it had gone much further. It had set the stage for a wartime election. It would be pointless to maintain that it was intended solely to gain soldiers.

Neither could it be proven to be strictly a matter of political expedience. But once the bill had been passed, the Government used it, as it were, as a means of self regeneration via the election in 1917. This meant that the bill could never be removed from the realm of expediency, a role it is to share irrevocably with its primary motive of reinforcing overseas troops.

One writer, Dr. Barrett, writing to Laurier from Winnipeg classed the bill in an expedient role. "The belief out here is that Bob (Rogers) is the father of Conscription and that it is only a political game conceived in his fetish brain for winning not the war but the General Election"¹.

Graham writing to Rowell on June 20 went deeper behind the expedient motive of the bill. He stressed that coalition meant "a union to carry out Tory policies, not conscription alone (...) a certain gentleman going to a very high office if he did not stay in the cabinet...." He then

1. Dr. J. K. Barrett to Laurier, July 27, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.710, no.196246-8.

went a step further in his reasoning, stating his belief that the "conscription bill was thrown into the arena in order to cover up a certain investigation and to secure the soldiers vote which the Prime Minister and Rogers found in Europe that they would largely lose"¹. He went on to remark that Borden "never appears to rise above the view that the Liberals have no interest in this war, and it is but an opportunity for exercising party patronage"².

Logic appears in the reasoning of Graham on the soldiers vote when one examines the statement of an ardent Liberal supporter who writing to Laurier noted "you need have no fear of the result of the soldiers vote, they are heartily sick of the present government"³.

In May of 1917, Rowell entertained similar thoughts on the matter of expediency. In writing to Rodolphe Lemieux, he voiced the opinion that "you may be quite correct (...) in your conclusion" that the government in announcing conscription was "activated by political motives", viz. "to use it as a means to secure the extension of the life of Parliament or as an election cry in the case of an election"⁴.

Laurier denounced conscription as simply a matter of expediency, nothing more. Writing to W. L. Parrish, Laurier

-
1. Graham to Rowell, June 20, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1745.
 2. Ibid.
 3. F. Ahearn to Laurier, April 20, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.708, no.195318-a-b.
 4. Rowell to Lemieux, May 26, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1709.

commented on the fact that Mr. R. B. Bennett had, with the concurrence of the Prime Minister, "disclaimed with great force, in all his speeches, the policy of conscription." He added that Sir Clifford Sifton had opposed conscription when the Government changed its policy on it. Laurier further noted these different opinions to have been expressed when the military situation was no better or worse but "the same as today." He added the reason for the change was not a military one but "the purely political one, and the object not to win the war but to win the elections"¹.

Perhaps Professor Skelton sums up the problem most vividly, but unfortunately, not offering any further light on the subject. "As to the motives for the government's sudden change of policy opinion differed then and will differ until the files are opened on judgment day"².

On April 26, Dafoe, writing to Laurier, predicted the defeat of the Government in the event of an election. "Their defeat when they appeal to the people, appears inevitable, unless some new factor enters into the contest and gives them a good battle cry"³.

Conscription became that battle cry.

-
1. Laurier to W. L. Parrish, Sept. 27, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.712, no.197166.
 2. Skelton, Laurier, II, 507.
 3. Dafoe to Laurier, Apr. 28, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.

4. The Liberal Party and the Formation of the Union Government 1917.

The long series of meetings, intrigues and false rumours, that made up the twisting road to Union Government, fall into three distinct stages. The first stage ended on June 6, 1917, with the Laurier rejection of the Borden offer of coalition. The second stage covered the period following June 6 down to the Liberal Convention in Winnipeg on August 7. Certain Liberals on this occasion attempted to control the Convention and swing it into supporting Borden and coalition. They failed. The third and final stage then followed, resulting in the formation of the Union Government in October, 1917.

With the rejection of coalition by Laurier, coalition itself for a time became secondary in the public and political minds due to the Military Service bill which occupied Commons until late in the summer. Yet, Borden made no halt in his attempts to get coalition, as shown by a letter he wrote on the day following the publication of Laurier's rejection. "You may be assured that I am sparing no effort to bring about the formation of a Government upon the broadest possible terms"¹. On the same date Borden records the reception of a report of an interview held between A. J. Hanna and Fred Pardee, and then discloses "Conferences with A. K. Maclean and Carvell separately at my house"². These words

1. Borden to Dr. Harper, June 7, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39715.

2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 732.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA ~ ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

are most significant because they indicate Borden's interviews with these two Liberals were held in such a way as to suggest caution on the part of the people concerned. It indicates too, that some Liberals in the Federal House were still favoring coalition since Borden in his Memoirs includes these specific references in his description of the negotiations towards Union Government. A. K. Maclean eventually entered the Union Government as Minister without Portfolio, while Carvell became Minister of Public Works.

An interesting link was thus set up between Pardee, Borden, Carvell and A. K. Maclean, but even more significantly Rowell of Ontario was added to this link. Rowell, it will be seen, played a stellar role in the formation of the Union Government. He was the Liberal Opposition Leader in Ontario and eventually became President of the Privy Council. On June 6, 1917, he wrote Pardee discussing at length the possibility of the use of the Militia Act as well as the problems facing a coalition government. "In walking home with Mr. McKay last evening he intimated that you had mentioned Lord Shaughnessy as a possible member of a coalition government (...) I think it would be a mistake to include Lord Shaughnessy in any government at the present time"¹. This communication between these men indicates a marked degree of intimate concern for the Borden proposal for coalition. Even prior to Laurier's rejection of coalition, Borden was already

1. Rowell to Pardee, June 6, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1719-20.

deep in consultation with Carvell and Sifton, both prominent Liberals. On May 26, "Sir Clifford Sifton called upon me and discussed the possibility of establishing a coalition government. (...) On the following day (...) Mr. Carvell called (...) and agreed that the strongest possible Government should be formed"¹.

Thus prior to and immediately following the rejection of coalition Borden was assured, either before or after the rejection, of the support of such Liberals as Clifford Sifton, Rowell, Pardee, Carvell, A. K. Maclean, a support which was of ominous significance for the Liberal Party because of this group, Rowell, Pardee, Carvell, A. K. Maclean (and Sifton's brother, Arthur Sifton), made up over one third of the Liberal Cabinet members of the Union Government. So confident was Borden of the ultimate success of a coalition government that he took an important step to pave the way for such an eventuality, a move he recorded in his notes. "June 12th. All resignations of my Ministers are in my hands, for the purpose of the formation of a coalition Government"².

In the negotiations which followed, there ensued a protracted struggle in the minds of certain Liberals, before a final defection was made from the Liberal Party. Of significance is the fact that the negotiations centred on either the conscriptionist Liberals in the Federal House, or on Liberals of Provincial stature. Borden sums this up neatly.

1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 721.

2. Ibid. 732.

"To establish Union Government upon a secure basis it would be necessary to assign to those Liberals who rejected the leadership of Sir Wilfred Laurier on the question of conscription an equal share (apart from the office of Prime Minister) in a Union administration"¹.

This is the very plan that Borden put into effect but amid the names that roll across the pages of his Memoirs as he records these stirring pages in Canada's history, one name stands out vividly during this phase, that of the Hon. R. B. Rowell, who was appointed President of the Privy Council in the Union Government. Next to Rowell, in sequence of time but no less important, came Clifford Sifton, who was to emerge as the chief figure organizing Western Liberal for coalition, a man whose influence grew stronger each day.

Professor Skelton comments on the basic reason for the attitude held by Rowell. Referring to the swing to coalition Skelton based it on "the unwillingness of Ontario men to accept as the alternative to the existing government a Liberal administration in which Quebec would probably be strongly represented"². Skelton then linked up the two chief centres of the coalition movement, the respective locales of Rowell and Clifford Sifton. "The movement developed chiefly in Toronto and Winnipeg, and largely in independent and Liberal circles..."³

One point concerning the drive for coalition stands out vividly. Both before Laurier was offered coalition, and

1. Op.cit. 728.

2. Skelton, Laurier, II, 496.

3. Ibid.

after its rejection by him, the demands for, and suggestions as to, coalition came from Liberal sources, not from Conservative. For example on May 24, 1917, during the preliminary stages of the offer of coalition tendered Laurier, Borden held meetings with his own colleagues. He received no clear cut mandate from them. In point of fact he finally stopped his discussion with them noting that "several of my colleagues (...) were violently opposed" and on May 24, the "discussion (...) eventually became so wearisome that I interposed (...) informing my colleagues (...) that the duty of decision rested with me...."¹ Then his remaining discussions on coalition centred chiefly with Laurier, as well as Carvell and other Liberals, who favored it. The mass of the Borden Papers at this stage shows no pressure from Conservative sources, and the Memoirs are equally devoid of any notable Conservative urgings on this point. In fact, there is abundant suggestion to show that the Cabinet itself would obviously not favor coalition. Borden's offer of half the Cabinet seats to Liberals would mean the dropping of that many existing members². Again, there was no guarantee that many of the Cabinet members would be appointed to the remaining half of the seats to be allotted to Conservatives. Borden agreed to "make the Conservative wing of the Cabinet acceptable to him (Laurier). This was going very far as it practically entrusted to Sir

1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 720.

2. Ibid. II, 721.

Wilfred the nomination of the Conservative members of the Government"¹.

Unquestionably one man who would be dropped to satisfy the majority of Liberals was the Hon. Robert Rogers. This man was disliked by the Western Liberals among others. According to Borden "the hostility of Western Liberals to me was merely symbolic of their opposition to the methods which Rogers had followed in the West, especially in matters relating to the War"².

Borden would have been more logical had he admitted that the record of Rogers in Manitoba made him unacceptable regardless of his career in the Federal Cabinet. The Globe (July 22, 1914) made a remark that indicated the Cabinet was bound to undergo changes, necessitating the dropping of some as unavoidable. "Some members of the present Government are impossible because of incompetence or worse." The Ottawa Journal-Press, (May 28, 1917) indicated that the Liberal attacks and attitude towards the Government made coalition impossible. "In short an atmosphere has been created which rendered the idea of coalition personally repugnant to honest men on the Conservative side." Skelton remarked that the "Conservative press (were) almost unanimously against coalition"³. Again, regarding a Conservative caucus held June 7, at which Borden explained the various steps of his

1. Op.cit. 723.

2. Ibid. 741.

3. Skelton, Laurier, II, 496.

discussion with Laurier, the Prime Minister made an interesting observation. "All our supporters were in wonderfully high spirits, but I felt that the caucus would have been less enthusiastic if coalition had been accepted"¹. Therefore, it is abundantly evident that the Conservatives, both rank and file, and the Conservative press, were not in favor of coalition before or immediately after the Borden-Laurier negotiations. As the evidence will show, the initiative towards coalition after June 6, 1917, fell on the shoulders of a select group of Liberals. But what was the situation in Liberal ranks as the summer of 1917 began to unfold?

By the end of June, the party had split asunder over the Military Service bill. Twenty-two of the Liberals in the House of Commons had supported the Government measure. The London Advertiser (July 7, 1917) noted that the Conservative newspapers "gloat over the 'disruption' and 'split' in the Liberal Party as a result of the Military Service bill." But the Manitoba Free Press observed (June 12, 1917) that the Liberal Party was divided at the Ottawa River, with the Ontario Liberals and Western Liberals, excepting a few politically unimportant, favoring conscription. "Whether this was designed or not, the first effect of Sir Robert Borden's stroke has been to destroy for the time being the Liberal Party as a national organization." This paper then went on to call on the conscriptionist Liberals to give all out support to future policies of the Borden Government.

1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 730.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

It is seen that there was absolutely no chance of support for coalition except it came from those Liberals who had already been anxious for it.

Mr. Rowell, of Ontario, did not cease his labors on behalf of coalition until it was finally achieved.

On June 9, 1917, Rowell addressed a huge rally in Toronto on behalf of conscription. This kept him in contact with other Liberals of a similar bent.

On July 6, Rowell told Borden of his intention of supporting coalition noting that if an election were held "the majority of members elected (...) should be able to get and give us a strong and effective National Government...." He argued the grave problems of the moment should be handled "from a national rather than a party standpoint." Rowell felt that those entering coalition "should carry with them the parliamentary support of the party which they represented." He observed that a difference existed between the Liberals in the House of Commons and himself and noted that "in considering any proposals I must have regard to my duties and responsibilities as leader of the Liberal Party in the Ontario Legislature." Since Rowell "believed in conscription and in the formation of a Coalition or National Government, I said I should be glad to do anything in my power to help bring about, if possible, an understanding whereby such a government might be formed" but he held out little hope of success in lieu of the prior conditions, and the results of Borden's former efforts. He finally noted that the entry of

one or two Liberals, "including myself" would help little but observed that any action he would take would be in co-operation with Liberals who supported conscription¹.

Writing to Graham on July 11, Rowell noted a cleavage in the Liberal Party and that "the only way we can make progress is by frankly recognizing that there is this cleavage" Rowell then observed, "I believe the Liberal Party in Ontario must be frankly conscriptionists" and back the war effort "frankly, openly and whole-heartedly" or it "hopelessly compromises its position for generations (...) in Ontario the Liberal policy should be conscription." Rowell also stated that the Liberals who voted for conscription did so because "nothing short of the strongest conviction on this matter would have led them to support the present government, in lieu of their opinion of the administrative record of the government" and also because of the conditions surrounding the Government's introduction of conscription².

Earlier Rowell had written to Graham that "while I have not had the opportunity of discussing the matter with you, I have learned from Mackay, Dafoe, and others that you personally believe in and are in favor of conscription"³.

Two days later a visit from Sir John Willison gave a clearer picture of the future role of Rowell. Willison

-
1. Rowell to Borden, July 6, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 358, no.400064-6.
 2. Rowell to Graham, July 11, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1782-5.
 3. Rowell to Graham, June 16, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1724-8.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

asked Rowell if he would consent to enter a coalition government if half the members were from the Liberal Party. According to Willison Sir Robert Borden's view was "that if I (Rowell) accepted and the Government was formed, the Liberals entering (...) should have an equal voice with him and the Conservative members in (...) matters of (...) policy and administration." Borden was "prepared to consider (...) reasonable suggestions with reference (...) to personnel and policy...." Rowell told Willison that next to Laurier, the Hon. Hugh Graham, from Ontario, should get the offer "rather than me." Sir John indicated that if Borden hadn't offered it to Graham "Sir Robert was prepared to make it." From this interview it was made known that several federal members had been consulted through Pardee but they declined to enter coalition¹. Pardee had also refused to join. A Memorandum of Rowell's, dated June 23, indicated Graham and Pardee, though offered a chance to join a coalition, refused. They were not opposed to coalition personally "but they did not think that individual Liberals should consider going into the present government but that the matter should be dealt with from the standpoint of the Liberal Party"².

A further Memorandum on June 24 indicated a forward step had been taken. Rowell observed that the condition of coalition was not based on Rogers continuance in the

-
1. Memorandum, June 18, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1730-6.
 2. Memorandum, June 23, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1738.

Government or House of Commons¹. This was a further indication of Rogers being a stumbling block to the Liberals' acceptance of coalition.

After such an exchange of information it is easily seen that Rowell was hesitant about forcing the issue as he still felt his position in Ontario put him in a different position from those Liberals in the Commons. Borden shows this vividly in his Memoirs.

"June 8th. Willison wired that Rowell would join coalition.(..)" June 18th. Hanna reports Rowell unwilling.(...) June 26th. Rowell ... desirous of assisting but said that, as an outsider, he must work in harmony with those in Parliament"².

Borden noted that he had a further conference with Rowell on June 29, and noted the latter to be "rather pessimistic"³. However, Clifford Sifton noted in a telegram to Dafoe, on June 30, that negotiations were still in progress to bring about coalition on the basis of giving English speaking Liberals equal terms⁴.

At this stage it is impossible not to realize that Clifford Sifton and to a slightly lesser degree, Dafoe, began to emerge as the spokesmen for the English speaking Liberals from Western Canada. Borden's Memoirs and the Rowell Papers

1. Memorandum, June 24, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1740.

2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 732-3.

3. Ibid. 732-3.

4. C. Sifton to Dafoe, June 30, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.

support this. Borden and Sifton consulted on June 21 and the latter was frankly pessimistic over the political situation and wanted the Military Service bill postponed due to Quebec's attitude. Then on June 26 Sifton agreed that an election "must be held." On June 27 Borden observed Sifton as being "hopeful as to coalition" but fearing Laurier might win the election. On June 28 "Sifton confident that coalition can be formed. He thinks Calder important." On July 4, Borden noted that Sifton "used violent language with respect to Maritime Liberals"¹.

Then events took a rapid turn. On June 29 Borden conferred with Arthur Sifton (soon to be Liberal Premier of Alberta and a member of Union Government) and H. W. Wood, both members of the Alberta House. According to Borden, Wood "promised his aid." That evening Borden conferred with Rowell noting him "rather pessimistic"². Then on July 3, Calder, Dafoe and Hudson (Liberal Premier of Manitoba) arrived for a conference with Laurier, and were later joined by Arthur Sifton³.

On July 6, Borden made a most revealing observation. "Sifton more hopeful. Meighen reports that there are very strained relations between the two Liberal factions"⁴. On July 11, Borden noted that "Pardee came in the afternoon and warned me of motion on 3rd reading"⁵.

1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 732-3.

2. Ibid. 733.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

By the middle of July, and since Laurier's refusal of coalition, Borden was negotiating with Clifford Sifton, Dafoe, Rowell and Pardee of Ontario, Arthur Sifton and Wood of Alberta, Hudson, Premier of Manitoba, and Calder of Saskatchewan, while Rowell actively communicated with Graham and Pardee, with Dr. Clark of Red Deer seeing Borden on July 21¹. This was a formidable array of English speaking Liberals, both Provincial and Federal. These were powerful politically, two being Provincial Premiers, and most of them eventually gaining Cabinet status in Union Government of October. However, Clifford Sifton emerged rapidly as the spokesman for this Western Liberal group and he was to strike the greatest blow against Liberal solidarity since the advent of the Military Service bill.

The Parliamentary discussion of conscription was reflected by great public interest resulting in meetings for and against it, all over Canada. Party allegiance slackened due to the concepts of race and patriotism. "Sir Clifford Sifton and Sir Robert Borden were quick to see the renewed opportunity for coalition, but coalition of a limited kind. They were met half-way by a group of Liberals, chiefly of provincial rather than federal activity"².

An election was now inevitable and the centres of activity for coalition became Toronto and Winnipeg. Western influence rose to the fore with Sir Clifford Sifton publicly

1. Op.cit.

2. Skelton, Laurier, II, 522-3.

demanding on July 3, Union government and conscription plus an extension of parliament.

Sifton a short time after this public demand for coalition left for the West and helped arrange a Convention of Western Liberals to be held in August. He made several public addresses to arouse support for his coalition demands¹.

Immediately after Sifton's demand for coalition, the Manitoba Free Press began a campaign attacking those Liberals who voted against the Military Service bill and lauded those Liberals who supported Borden's measure. "It is the English Liberals who voted with Sir Wilfred Laurier, not those who voted against him, that need to fear the judgment of the electors"². But this paper showed its true colors when it demanded the formation of an English Liberal Party. "Once organized the English Liberal Party will be in a position to consider its position and duty to the country." It went on to suggest the Party would be a "power in the country" and that it was reported in the Conservative press that "Sir Robert Borden is prepared to offer fair terms to such a party to join with him in the task of governing the country"³.

In July the same paper described the conscriptionist Liberals as the "real Liberals in the House and they are supported by the real Liberals in the country"⁴.

This continued build up of the Sifton position

1. Op.cit. 523.

2. Manitoba Free Press, July 10, 1917.

3. Ibid. July 12, 1917.

4. Ibid. July 18, 1917.

culminated in an attempt by him to control the Liberal Convention in Winnipeg in August, stand for coalition, and in fact start a separate English Liberal Party which would oust Laurier as leader. As will be seen, this plan failed signally.

But prior to the calling of the Liberal Convention in Winnipeg, two new trends appeared in Liberal circles. One centred on two meetings held by Ontario Liberals during July. The other was a growing trend to cement Ontario and Western Liberals and was backed by Rowell, Willison, Sifton and Dafoe.

On July 20 a meeting of Ontario Liberal members, and candidates was held in Toronto. The following Federal members attended: Graham, Murphy, Charlton, Pardee, Truax, McMillan, McCoig, D. Ross, Nesbitt, Proulx, German, Guthrie. Only Murphy was against coalition, ^{most of} the rest being members of the conscriptionist Liberals who favored the Military Service bill. Coalition received a set back. The majority at the meeting were against an extension of Parliament, against coalition with the Borden Government, against the enforcement of conscription until another voluntary drive for men occurred, and the majority pledged support for Laurier as Liberal leader¹.

Such a course of events was a set-back to the plans of Rowell but this man did not intend to give up. On July

1. Reported in The Globe, July 21, 1917, p.1, col.2.

21 he bared his reaction to the Liberal meeting, in a letter to Dafoe, lamenting that it was "a mistake that we did not have the conference of the Provincial Liberal body in Ottawa." He felt another conference necessary immediately to avoid a breakup into factions and to avoid the disastrous course of failing "to support the war." He also expressed surprise at the decisions reached at the meeting. "I had a very definite understanding with Graham before the meeting as to what was right and in the public interests as well as the interests of the public....¹

Obviously from this despatch, both Graham and Rowell were able to exert little or no influence on those at the meeting, as the outcome indicated. Borden noted that Sifton himself was discouraged "by the attitude of the Ontario Liberal Convention"².

But the plight of Rowell was immeasurably relieved by a meeting in Toronto on July 27 of many editors of Liberal papers in Ontario. These representatives came from Liberal papers in Brantford, Woodstock, Guelph, Stratford, Toronto, Bowmanville, London, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Ingersoll, Orillia, Belleville, Hamilton, Simcoe, Richmond Hill, Acton, Mitchell, Kingston and Owen Sound. The editors were largely from southern and western Ontario and their influence on public opinion was important. It was to prove much greater considering the surprising motions approved at their meeting.

1. Rowell to Dafoe, July 21, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1809-10.

2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 733.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

The first motion passed was to support compulsory service. The second was equally a surprise.

"It is essential (...) that the Liberal Party in Ontario should stand squarely for compulsory military service and that no candidate should be supported who will not support this."

The third motion cited that Borden's Government had proved itself unequal to the demands of war-time leadership observing that "no purely party Government at the present could deal with them. A war cabinet and Government representing both parties (...) is therefore necessary"¹.

The Globe lauded this meeting as "a ringing note of patriotism" and a "clear call to Ontario Liberalism to rally to policies which support the country's honor and course of world liberty"².

Immediately after the Liberal meeting of July 20, Rowell writing to Dafoe had urged a way out of the dilemma. "If the situation is to be saved it must be by co-operation between the real-win-the-war Liberals in Ontario and those in Western Canada." He felt it could be saved by this course³.

This reaction by Rowell is notable because a short time before, Dafoe's paper had advocated the formation of an English Liberal Party grouped around the conscriptionist Liberals, who would then accept the coalition offer. Thus

1. Quoted in The Globe, July 27, 1917, p.1, col.3.

2. The Globe, July 27, 1917.

3. Rowell to Dafoe, July 21, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1809-10.

began the quickening of the drift to union between the Ontario and Western Liberals¹.

Willison caught up the tune on July 22 and communicated it to Borden. Regarding the probability of Borden getting support from the foreign elements in the West, Willison stated "I would regard a coalition with Western Liberals or even with the Grain Growers as far more important." He went on to cite the danger to the Imperial connection if Quebec and the Western Canada foreign element were allied. "The Western Liberal leaders have the confidence of these (foreign) elements and therefore security for Canada and the Empire lies in a union of Eastern Conservatives with Western Liberals." Willison remarked that "Dr. Michael Clark is an effective spokesman for the West"².

At this time, however, Rowell still was hesitant about the success of coalition and Borden noted to Sifton, "I advised against any attempt to put Rowell in a corner"³.

On July 25, Dafoe proposed to Rowell a suggestion approved by three Western Premiers, C.R. Mitchell (Alberta), A.B. Hudson (Manitoba), and Geo. Bell (Saskatchewan), viz: that the Liberals in the West fight the election as a Western group, and then join coalition after election. This suggestion was based on a fear "that if they went into a union government at present they might not carry the whole Liberal

1. Manitoba Free Press, July 12, 1917.

2. Willison to Borden, July 22, 1917, Willison Papers, f.32, no.2512-3.

3. Borden, Memoirs, II, 733.

strength in Western Canada with them...." Also, by the other course "they thought it would be possible to keep the party intact behind the government." Thus was illustrated a point that was to prove a stumbling block in later negotiations, viz. reluctance "towards the project of a coalition with Sir Robert Borden, coupled however with a frank recognition that a coalition government must come sooner or later if Canada was to make a creditable finish in the war"¹.

An instance of the scope of the intrigue in Liberal ranks occurred when Rowell wrote to Mr. G. McCraney, Liberal member from Saskatoon on the subject of Borden as leader. McCraney and Rowell supply a link to Saskatchewan, a link so far established between Borden and Calder. Rowell in his note to McCraney mentioned that Dafoe and other Western Liberals in Ottawa had stated that "the Liberals of the West would not form a coalition under Sir Robert Borden. I find very strong feeling among Ontario Liberals to the same effect...."²

Rowell was very concerned at the inability of the English speaking Liberals to agree on coalition. In a letter to Liberal Premier Brewster of British Columbia, Rowell indicated that if a coalition were not formed before an election then it would occur after, since the new Parliament would contain four factions. These would include Conservatives

-
1. Dafoe to Rowell, July 25, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73,.
 2. Rowell to McCraney, July 27, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1834-6.

and Liberals who favored conscription and the Liberals and Conservatives who opposed it. He felt that the pro-conscriptionist groups would combine to form a Government since no one of the four groups alone could be strong enough to carry a Government¹.

On July 26, Rowell denied to a correspondent, Mr. Gordon, a rumour spread by Willison that Rowell was to personally enter coalition. "I have never said to Sir Robert Borden or to any member of his government or to any one on their behalf that I will enter his government." He did admit to Gordon however that it was "known by both Liberals and Conservatives that I am in favor of a coalition government." Despite his own view on a Cabinet position for himself, Rowell was still anxious to keep the Liberal Party together at all costs. He pointed out to Pardee that in the event of no coalition before an election, then the conscription vote would go to the Government. Therefore he argued, the Liberal Party must support conscription or face hopeless defeat. He cited the necessity of the Liberals playing a post-war role, a role only afforded by victory at the polls.

Unless we get together in some way, and our candidates are conscriptionists, the Liberal Party of this province will be hopelessly divided in a general election, and not only divided, but there will be a big slump of Liberal conscription votes to Conservative candidates².

-
1. Rowell to Gordon, July 26, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1828-31.
 2. Rowell to Pardee, Aug. 3, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1847-8.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

On the eve of the Winnipeg Convention the inability of the Conscriptionist Liberals, and Western Liberal leaders, to accept Borden as the leader of a coalition Government, seemed to make coalition further away than ever. Hugh Graham made this clear to Rowell in a letter dated August 4.

According to Graham, if such a government were formed many conscriptionists would oppose it, on the dual grounds that such a government had no right to expect public confidence and that this government couldn't be trusted "to enforce compulsory service fairly"¹.

The Conservative Government of Borden however, were going to drive a hard bargain, on the question of Borden himself as leader of the proposed coalition. This was made painfully aware to the chief leaders of the Western Liberals in a telegram sent to Dafoe from Ottawa by Clifford Sifton on August 4. He told the latter not to divulge the knowledge he was to receive and then bluntly informed him that "all efforts to get acceptance (of) outside leader have failed." He stated that the Liberals must organize under Borden². On August 14 Sifton reviewed this state of affairs in a letter to Dafoe.

"We have entirely failed to get any arrangements for an outside leader. We can't afford to break up the solid Conservative party and therefore could not consider anyone

1. Graham to Rowell, Aug. 4, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1849-50.

2. Sifton to Dafoe, Aug. 4, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, Microfilm Reel no.M-73.

that was not satisfactory to them...."¹

The argument for Borden as the leader of any coalition formed, was given a great boost by "The Win the War Convention" in Toronto. This group, composed of men of all parties and from all walks of life, attracted a great deal of attention as it was attended by delegates from many parts of Ontario and Canada. Several resolutions were passed but the third one had the greatest interest for Borden.

"Whereas this Convention deeply deplores the holding of a General Election during the War:

Resolved, (1) That the Prime Minister should, without delay, form a National Non-Partisan Government, representative of all who demand the vigorous prosecution of the War, and in determining upon its members should disregard previous party affiliation;

(2) Immediately upon the formation of such National non-partisan Government the Leader of such Government should introduce a resolution requesting the extension of the term of Parliament"².

The Prime Minister replied in skilful fashion to those presenting the resolutions, emphasizing that all should unite to win the war but to avoid an election Parliament should be almost unanimous in granting an extension of Parliament. If this was not done, an election must come, the responsibility for which must be borne by those who opposed extension. He then stated that a general election "gives an opportunity for a campaign of education which may bring about a fuller realization of the realities of this War." Again, "I believe its result will demonstrate the essential unity of

1. Sifton to Dafoe, Aug. 14, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no. M-73.

2. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 737.

our people and their strong and firm resolve that Canada shall not falter in her appointed task"¹.

Thus Borden cleverly justified the plan of attack he actually did follow while putting the blame for such a course squarely on the shoulders of those who opposed the extension.

Then on August 7 came the Winnipeg Convention. Concerning this convention, Laurier had written to F.C. Wade: "Sifton came here about the same time Borden arrived from England He (Sifton) will try no doubt to dominate the Convention (...) and have it pass a conscription resolution. This ought to be fought to a finish"². Again on July 31, Laurier wrote to Hudson, Liberal Premier of Manitoba. "It is not for the purpose of having the programme of the Western Liberals that the convention is called, but rather to split the Liberal party." Laurier pointed out that "Bourassa endeavoured to split the Liberal Party in Quebec and created the Nationalist party based upon creed and race." He accused Sifton of "attempting to do the same thing at the other end of the line. The only difference is that in one case the party was to be French and Catholic, and now it should be Protestant and English." According to Laurier, Sifton "bases his propaganda upon the extreme attitude of the Nationalists for which he makes me responsible and which - even now - I am fighting in the Province of Quebec." Laurier explained further. "If Sifton has his way he will

1. Op.cit. 739-40.

2. Laurier to F.C. Wade, July 25, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.710, no.396324.

try to commit the Western Liberals to conscription." Laurier laid down strategy to forestall the Sifton plan. He advised that conscription be left an open question and to confine the resolutions "to the broad questions for which Western Liberals have long striven, and which will still be alive when conscription will be dead...." Laurier felt this the only policy which could be carried. "We have to build on heterogenous elements." He expressed hope that Hudson could attend the Convention and if conscription should be brought forward "you should at once step up and say that this convention has been called for the purpose of laying down a permanent policy for the Liberal party" since conscription was of wartime transiency and "you are building for the future and not for the present; and that the question of conscription should be left an open one, as it was by the Leader at Ottawa"¹.

Hudson's reply to Laurier indicated that the Convention was unpredictable in its results. "It is not possible for any one to successfully steer this convention, but its pronouncements will in all probability accurately reflect Western opinion"².

On July 27, A. McLeod, writing to Laurier noted that Sifton, "has his son, Frank Fowler, Dafoe, Calder and A. L. Sifton on the job with him and they are working out a regular plan to control the convention...."³ Again, H. Chevrier

1. Laurier to Hudson, July 31, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196361-2.
2. Hudson to Laurier, Aug. 4, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196538.
3. A. McLeod to Laurier, July 27, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196359-60.

informed Laurier on August 28 that Hudson "admitted the control of the local government by the Fres Press and Dafoe"¹.

A further insight into conditions out West were recorded by a friend of Laurier who journeyed out to Vancouver. He noted that the "noisy flag wavers are howling" for conscription and "that funk Liberals are somewhat carried away by the cry but that the sane body of the common people are overwhelmingly opposed to it, especially under existing conditions." Then he grew angry in denunciation of Sifton.

I would not be surprised to see those great apostles of religion and political honesty, Sir Clifford Sifton and Hon. Robert Rogers, uniting in an endeavour to have in Canada a National Protestant Government. (...) the two of them together could not squeeze out enough religion of a sufficient honesty to satisfactorily supply a decent hen coup to make their movement of any danger to anyone².

A violent attack was unleashed on the strategy of Sifton on July 31 when Joseph Clarke of Edmonton published An Open Letter: The Concern of All. In it he reviewed Sifton's dealings in horses and his interests in Canada's natural resources in the West "held by his relatives and friends." He claimed Sifton "has never been anything but a Tory at heart (...) he aspires to be the successor of BORDEN with Western Liberals and R. B. Bennett Tories as one wing and

-
1. H. Chevrier to Laurier, Aug. 28, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196850-2.
 2. F. T. Congdon to Laurier, July 27, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196372-3.

Eastern TORIES as the other faction to make a majority." He scored the "Sifton treachery"¹.

Laurier had ample warning of Clifford Sifton's intended treachery as early as July 30 when he received a letter from Brandon, Manitoba.

"Look out for the Hon. Clifford Sifton. I don't believe he is a friend of yours - and, in my humble judgment, he should have been read out of the Party long ago"².

Laurier's reply is illuminating as it touches on the treachery of the Sifton group.

The great mistake made by our friends in this National Movement, is that the government having a majority in Parliament cannot be compelled to form a union government, this they will not do unless they fear a crisis among themselves, and instead of having a crisis, they have been reinforced by many deserters from our own ranks. Under such circumstances to expect a National Government from the present government is nonsense, unless they find a certain number of our friends willing to go with them upon terms not dictated by our friends but dictated by the Tories³.

Meanwhile Laurier's "friends" had indeed been quite busy. On July 25, Dafoe wrote to Rowell and laid down a plan of attack for the Convention. He had just completed a conference with the Liberal Premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, viz. C.R. Mitchell, George Bell, and A.B. Hudson respectively.

-
1. Jos. A. Clarke, *An Open Letter: The Concern of All*, Edmonton, Alta., July 31, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196419-22.
 2. J. Muir to Laurier, July 30, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196410.
 3. Laurier to J. Muir, Aug. 2, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196411.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

Dafoe stated there was still a "lukewarmness towards the project of coalition with Sir Robert, coupled however with a frank recognition that a coalition government must come sooner or later if Canada was to make a creditable finish in the war." Consequently "I could see that their preference was to fight the coming election as a Western group on the platform to be adopted next month," and "after thus proving their strength, to join with the Conservatives as a union government for the balance of the war." Dafoe's associates feared that "if they went into a union government at present they might not carry the whole Liberal strength in Western Canada with them" but by the other course "they felt it would be possible to keep the party intact as a factor behind the war government"¹.

It should be observed that the preference of Hudson and the other Western Liberals to go to the polls as a Liberal unit in the West rather than coalition first, was concisely the plan Laurier had urged him to follow in his letter of July 31².

Dafoe then gave his own view to the other three Liberal Premiers, a plan that was attempted at the Convention but failed.

The logic of the situation as I interpreted it to them, was that a union government should be formed, in which case the Western Liberal group,

-
1. Dafoe to Rowell, July 25, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1825-7.
 2. Laurier to Hudson, July 31, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196361-2.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

which would be the most influential body of Liberal public opinion behind this government, should be given the task of carrying the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Dafoe concluded his letter to Rowell by pointing out that the three Liberal Premiers favored a resolution on behalf of a National Government being placed before the Convention, but feared it might not carry. Dafoe observed to Rowell that "if such a resolution were to be carried it would be a big step forward towards the formation of such a government"¹.

It should be noted why Dafoe feared that Alberta and Saskatchewan would be difficult to swing to the coalition bandwagon. As will be seen, the influential Hon. C.W. Cross, Attorney General of Alberta, and Frank Oliver, owner of the powerful Evening Bulletin, remained loyal to Laurier. In Saskatchewan, only the Premier of Alberta, and Calder, his Minister of Railways, had shown any great interest in coalition, with Calder holding out to the end before entering the Union Cabinet.

On August 3, Rowell replied to Dafoe and urged the following advice. "Don't weaken declaration by desiring to give voluntary system another chance before getting conscription"².

The Convention itself came and went, fraught with surprises for Sifton, Dafoe and company. Resolutions were passed which called for the rallying of all resources for

-
1. Dafoe to Rowell, July 25, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1825-7.
 2. Rowell to Dafoe, Aug. 3, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1846.

the War effort such as increased food and munitions production; called for the repression of profiteers; called for "the maintenance, in unimpaired strength at the front, of our fighting forces, and the taking of all steps necessary to secure required reinforcements for this purpose." An amendment to the latter introduced by Turriff which would have added "by compulsion if necessary" was defeated. Again, a resolution condemning the gross incompetency of the Borden Government was passed. Also, on the second day of the convention, a resolution was passed stressing the convention's "admiration of the life and work of the greatest of all Canadians, Sir Wilfred Laurier" and hoped that his ability "and matchless statesmanship may be utilized in re-uniting the people of Canada in this great crisis, in the successful prosecution of the War and in carrying out the platform laid down by this convention"¹.

The outcome of the Convention, despite the plan of Sifton and Dafoe, made an interesting story. The Liberal Party was split at the Convention. Some stood for Sifton and conscription, some for Borden and conscription, some wanted conscription under a new government, and while some desired conscription under Laurier, and others desired a separate Western Liberal Party, the majority obviously decided to back Laurier in the future. Hence the attempt to add compulsory service to the resolutions failed. On Union Government Sifton's group were roundly defeated.

1. Quoted in Skelton, Laurier, II, 526.

The majority of political leaders in Manitoba, grouped about the Manitoba Free Press, stood for coalition. British Columbia and Saskatchewan were divided but the Alberta majority, excepting A. L. Sifton, were against coalition. As Skelton observed "the whole convention was so obviously committed to Laurier leadership that Dr. Michael Clark took the train for home the first day without attempting to address it." Skelton observed that the Alberta delegates, "marshalled by Frank Oliver and C.W. Cross, were particularly vigorous"¹ and this allusion is borne out by correspondence between Laurier and Cross.

There is no doubt at all that a conspiracy had been entered into by a number of the leading Liberals in the West to hand over the Western Liberal Convention to Premier Borden and the Conservative party. Without at all boasting, I think the action of your Alberta friends in announcing emphatically their endorsement of yourself as our Leader at the very opening of the Convention, resulted in the defeat of their plans².

Laurier replied in most grateful language.

The Convention at Winnipeg has turned out not exactly as was intended by those who had originated it, but most satisfactorily to the Party generally. As to myself personally, I am very deeply touched by the expression of confidence reposed in me by our friends.

I know the large part which you have taken in the proceedings and how much I am indebted to you personally. Please accept my gratitude³.

-
1. Skelton, Laurier, II, 525. Skelton gives an interesting account of the Winnipeg Convention.
 2. Hon. C.W. Cross to Laurier, Sept. 3, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196908.
 3. Laurier to Cross, Sept. 11, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196909.

Le Devoir argued that the dislike of the Western Grain Growers under Crerar, for the high tariff Borden stand in 1911, cost Borden the support of that group, and kept the Crerar group behind Laurier, who in favoring reciprocity in 1911 was acceptable to this pro-low tariff group. Le Devoir observed that this support of Laurier indicated the Grain Growers were seeking control of the Western Liberal Party so as to be in a better position to bargain with Ottawa. Le Devoir hinted that the Convention reflected a growing conflict between the manufacturing east and agricultural west¹. The Manitoba Free Press echoed this by hinting at a behind the scenes agreement between Liberals whereby for supporting Laurier, and allowing Quebec to dictate the War policy of the new Government, the West was to get "a considerable instalment of economic reform." This paper (Aug. 11, 1917) made this point very clear. "The West was to be made solid for Laurier by virtue of the excellent economic programme adopted by the convention while Laurier was to secure a solid Quebec on the issue of anti-conscription."

The same paper (Aug. 15, 1917) threw added light on the situation by pointing out that at the Convention the delegates from Alberta "were hand picked by the machine" while from British Columbia "Machinists moved in" not delegates, while from Saskatchewan the delegates were "confused" and "could have responded to true leadership." While it praised

1. Le Devoir, Aug. 4, 1917.

the Manitoba representatives as "true Liberals" it added that Manitoba modified its views in the interests of "harmony and party unity." It cited the weakness in the convention as being in the fact that the resolution favoring conscription was fought out and discarded in committee not on the floor of the convention. It observed too that had all the conscription Liberals plus Hudson, Pitblado, Crerar, Brewster, Norris and Brown, fought the conscription issue in public on the floor of the convention then "an honest split would have come." It argued also that since the delegates were sixty per cent pro-Laurier, then the machine politicians were able to control the Convention via the committee sessions and this indicated a desire on the part of delegates to win the election not the War.

Le Devoir echoed this division among the delegates by quoting sources that indicated only Southern Saskatchewan, Southern Alberta, as well as Manitoba and British Columbia, favored conscription.¹

J. T. Robertson of Kamloops, B.C., in a telegram to Borden observed, "believe resolutions Winnipeg Convention do not reflect true Liberal opinion of province"². Again, J.A. Cunningham wrote to Borden on the British Columbia scene. "British Columbia is heartily in accord with your policy of conscription, utilizing the best elements in the Dominion,

1. Le Devoir, Aug. 10, 1917.

2. J. T. Robertson to Borden, Aug. 11, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (2), no.39864.

and the formation of a Union Win-the-War party, disregarding Sir Wilfred Laurier and the machine element...." He added that in the event of an election Borden's policies would get "the united support of the Province of British Columbia"¹.

That British Columbia was coming in strong in favor of conscription and coalition was shown by the delegates stand at the Convention. Rowell had suggested coalition to Brewster in July while advocating a union of conscriptionist Liberals from all parts of Canada² and Brewster was still in active communication with Rowell late in August³.

Thus, with the passing of the Winnipeg Convention, the second stage of the movement favoring coalition had failed. The third stage began. Again, those forces which had striven so hard for it in the past, viz. Rowell and Ontario Liberals, along with Sifton and the Manitoba Free Press once again took the lead. But from this time on Borden was to take an equally active role.

The period after the Winnipeg Convention showed up attempts by Borden and the Clifford Sifton bloc to establish a satisfactory leader of the proposed coalition. The pages of the Borden Memoirs record a succession of attempts and failures in this respect. Borden on August 6, noted that

-
1. J.A. Cunningham to Borden, Aug. 21, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (2), no.39886-7.
 2. Rowell to Brewster, July 30, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, 1843-5.
 3. Brewster to Rowell, Aug. 23, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1873-4.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

"Rogers is the stumbling block"¹. Then Borden suggested on August 10, the Hon. Mr. Justice Duff form a Government, a suggestion fiercely opposed by Meighen and Reid². On August 13, Clifford Sifton suggested as leader Sir William Meredith, Chief Justice of Ontario, but Borden's colleagues indicated no change was desired by them. Even the name of Sir Robert Falconer was suggested by Borden but unacceptable to his own colleagues. On August 13, "Sifton spoke of the objection to my leadership" by Western Liberals but on August 14, "Sifton came and agreed that any idea of change of leadership should be abandoned"³.

Once again however, the dislike for Borden held by Saskatchewan Liberals was shown on August 16. "Mackenzie says Calder well disposed but cannot induce supporters to accept my leadership"⁴.

Borden then took a most important step. Rowell, writing to Willison on August 11, discussed a letter he received from Borden. In the letter Borden had agreed to drop out of the Union Coalition anyone objected to by the Liberals favoring it. He even agreed to retire himself to facilitate the formation of a Union Government⁵. On August 17, the Hon. Robert Rogers was persuaded to resign from his Cabinet post. Thus was removed from the Cabinet one of the most

1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 734.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. 735.

4. Ibid.

5. Rowell to Willison, Aug. 11, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics, v.1, no.1054-7.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

disliked men in Western circles. But on August 14, Clifford Sifton writing to Dafoe noted an important fact.

We have entirely failed to get any arrangements for an outside leader. We can't afford to break up the solid Conservative party and therefore could not consider anyone that was not satisfactory to them. (...) There is one point that weighs heavily with me. I know Borden and he knows me and we can get along and run the machine effectively. We could do nothing about a stranger. He might be obstructive and might want to take the bit in his teeth and run away with the whole thing. In any event the man can't be found and that is the end of it¹.

One very evident point concerning the position of the Western Liberals, favoring coalition came to light soon after the Winnipeg Convention. Their position was becoming rapidly impossible. They were not satisfied with the Laurier leadership, conscription had seen to that. But they couldn't agree on Borden or any other leader for a coalition government. As early as July 30, Dafoe wrote to Graham that Laurier feared to lose Quebec "and he expects the English Liberals out of their regard and respect for him to suppress their feelings and tag along dutifully in the rear. This is the road to disaster and I think it is near at hand." Dafoe called Bourassa the real leader of the Liberal party due to Laurier's fear of losing Quebec². On August 7, Borden, writing to George Perley noted that "it looks as if the greater part of the Liberal Party in the Western Provinces would adhere to Laurier. There will, however, be a very important element

1. C. Sifton to Dafoe, Aug. 14, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.
2. Dafoe to Graham, July 30, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.

in the West, which is antagonistic to him and this group will probably come out in open opposition during the elections"¹.

The attempt to oppose Laurier was smothered temporarily at the Convention but it arose stronger than ever. On August 12, Dafoe noted to Clifford Sifton that "Calder and H. (Hudson) going East to tell Sir W. Laurier the game is up and that his candidates will be beaten in large majority of seats"². Again, on August 18 Dafoe communicated the information that "Confidential Liberal canvas last night (...) members reported Liberal sentiment against Laurier in all Dominion constituencies except Provencher and Selkirk". He noted that statement had been drawn up "favoring formation of independent Liberal group of Manitoba." He then promised that Premier Norris was to make the statement public shortly. Dafoe indicated a conference soon between representatives of Manitoba and Saskatchewan³.

Two days later Premier Norris of Manitoba publicly opposed Laurier's leadership and indicated his readiness to support a Union Government.

Then on August 19, Clifford Sifton relayed the information that Crerar favored Foster or C.H. Tupper as leader

-
1. Borden to Perley, Aug. 7, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 362, no.40367.
 2. Dafoe to C. Sifton, Aug. 12, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.
 3. Dafoe to C. Sifton, Aug. 18, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

of the coalition. Borden agreed noting "I said I would hold up both hands for Foster"¹. On August 20, Borden interviewed Crerar and Wood and again Foster's name was suggested. On August 21, Borden interviewed A.L. Sifton, Calder and Crerar who then left for a consultation in the West².

August 23 saw an important meeting involving Arthur Sifton, Calder, Crerar and Wood, William Martin and C.A. Dunning of Saskatchewan, and A.B. Hudson of Manitoba. This resulted in an offer to Borden to join a Union Government. A telegram was sent to this effect. The signees included Calder (Sask.) A.B. Hudson (Man.) Crerar (Grain Growers) and Arthur Sifton (Premier of Alberta).

We all favour National Government and creation of War Council of six. Change of leadership essential. Suggest Foster,³ Beck⁴ or Mulock⁵. Suggest to satisfactory arrangements with new leader anticipate strong Eastern colleagues willing (to co-operate?)⁶

Borden showed this telegram to his colleagues and "expressed to them my perfect willingness to retire in favour of any leader whose chances of success in forming a union Government might be greater than my own." His colleagues "were unanimous against any change in leadership"⁷. Clifford Sifton "expressed the opinion that the conclusion of the four

-
1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 735.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Identified as Sir George Foster.
 4. Identified as Sir Adam Beck - later Chairman of the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario.
 5. Identified as the Rt. Hon. Sir William Mulock - then Chief Justice of Ontario.
 6. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 742.
 7. Borden, Memoirs, II, 742.

Western men was final"¹. Borden then summoned a caucus of his party, which met on August 29.

The Western Liberals received a setback as a result of this meeting because Foster declined to replace Borden and the unanimous decision was carried that Borden "should continue the leadership." Sir Robert Borden claimed "it was the largest caucus I have seen; and Sir George Foster described it afterwards as the most wonderful caucus in his experience of twenty-five years"². The importance of this decision in Caucus was duly recorded by The Ottawa Journal, (Aug. 30, 1917).

The Conservative caucus of yesterday resulted in a magnificent personal tribute to the Prime Minister. The ultimatum of the Western Liberals that union was only possible through the elimination of Sir Robert Borden as Leader awakened such a strong revulsion and resentment amongst the members that they let loose their feelings to a degree never before experienced during the long leadership of Sir Robert Borden, and he was accorded ovation after ovation³.

Thus the ultimatum was thrown back into the faces of the coalition seeking Western Liberals. Borden, writing to Willison on August 31 gave a clear picture of the predicament of these Western Liberals.

The Western Liberals, Sifton, Calder and Hudson and the Grain Grower, Crerar, were sincere in their belief that a change in leadership would greatly strengthen their position in the West in case they should join a union government. I know that Calder and Sifton were strongly opposed to any change of leadership; but they had to bring their following, and they desired to bring their organization with them, and those with whom they conferred

-
1. Op.cit.
 2. Ibid. 742-3.
 3. Quoted in Borden, Memoirs, II, 743-4.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

required some change to make their position at the Winnipeg Convention less inconsistent with their support. That in my judgment is really the whole explanation¹.

Meanwhile one event of great significance occurred. This was the taking over, by the Government, of the Canadian Northern Railway, on August 29, the Bill being forced through under closure.

It is difficult to determine just how far this influenced coalition but undeniably it did have an influence.

The Toronto Daily News quite early (Jan. 26, 1917) hinted at the possibility of certain railway interests taking an active role in promoting a national type of government. "We know, also, that certain powerful corporations which are inimical to the nationalization of public services are active in their advocacy of a National Government"².

Laurier himself was so convinced of this, he communicated to Rowell, on June, 4, 1917.

As to a coalition government, or as you call it, a national government, I am less and less in favour of it. I have evidences coming to me every day that certain railway interests are actively at work amongst our friends still, with a view of forming a coalition. Such sinister influences are not calculated to impress one favourably, Anything which is not done openly always seems to me dangerous³.

Mr. Lemieux, in Commons on August 16, linked Clifford Sifton with the Canadian Northern Railway.

-
1. Borden to Willison, Aug. 31, 1917, Willison Papers, f.32, no.2516.
 2. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 556.
 3. Quoted in Skelton, Laurier, II, 522.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

I stated what is current in the city of Ottawa, that Sir Clifford Sifton is interested to the extent of \$750,000. worth of shares in the Canadian Northern. That explains the activities of some gentlemen who want to form a win-the-war party, and who want to get a union government¹.

Mr. Lemieux's charge against Sifton was never proven. But the British Columbia Government held about nine per cent of the stock of the Railroad as a security for uncompleted work to be done by the Railway². The British Columbia Government under Brewster favored Union Government. Many members of the Conservative bloc in the Commons were intimately linked with the great financial institutions acting for or effected by the fate of the C.N.R., including two Senators, (Nicholl and Richardson) who were shareholders in the Railway.

Mr. Dafoe in his biography of Sir Clifford Sifton sheds added light on this topic.

That, in the early days of July when the movement for Union government began to take form, Sir William Mackenzie and his entourage were active in the corridors of parliament, is a fact; (...) he may well have thought it in his interests to busy himself in the hope that if a Union government was to be formed the new members would not be hostile to his interests³.

Because of the enormous finance involved it is quite understandable that many of the men, and firms, who would be affected by a bankruptcy proceedings against the C.N.R., by the Federal Government, would favor the continuation in power of the Borden Government, and hence favor Union Government⁴.

1. Lemieux, Debates, Aug. 16, col.4602-3.

2. White, Debates, Aug. 23, col.4836.

3. J.W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, Toronto, Macmillan, 1931, 433-4.

4. Mr. Murphy gives a detailed picture of the interlocking directories affected by the fate of the Canadian Northern Railway. See Murphy, Debates, Aug. 29, 1917, col.4976-8.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

Then came a most important item of legislation. The Military Voters Act, 1917, passed August 29, allowed all personnel, serving overseas in the Canadian Forces, the privilege of voting in a general election, providing they were British subjects. The provisions were unusual in some respects. The voter could apply his vote in the district wherein he resided the four months preceding enlistment, or if that area was not specified by him, in any district wherein he resided previous to enlistment. To facilitate a voter who could not be expected to know the candidates running in his specified district, he could apply his vote either for the Government, or the Opposition, or a third candidate (e.g. Labour or Independent). The flexibility of this type of regulation allowed for many abuses unless scrupulously administered. In fact any overseas vote count would be at the mercy of an unscrupulous administration, and the actual election in 1917 brought forward many charges of corruption which were widely believed but difficult to prove. However this Bill was passed without division on August 29. Then September began.

At first little occurred except that Duff and Tilley, names suggested by Western Liberals as possible leaders of a Coalition government, flatly refused to hear of such a course since Duff wouldn't enter unless Tilley did so first¹.

1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 736.

On September 7, negotiations to accept Union Government under Borden were almost successfully completed in the West according to Clifford Sifton except that A.B. Hudson declined to serve under Borden,¹ even though Calder, Crerar and A.L. Sifton were now agreeable, despite their telegram of August 26 declining the leadership of Borden and favoring Foster, Beck or Mulock². Ultimately, Hudson did not join the Union Cabinet formed in October.

What had prompted Calder, the last stumbling block, to fall in line and accept Borden? The answer lay in the War Time Election bill, introduced in September and forced through closure on September 10.

"The War Times Election Act achieved Union Government. It compelled the Western Liberals who had sought union on their own terms to accede to it on Sir Robert Borden's terms. James Calder held the key to the Western situation and James Calder handed it over very shortly after this blackjack was brandished"³.

The key to this is a simple one. The Act itself gave the vote to female next-of-kin of all overseas soldiers. It also disfranchised all former citizens of Germany and Austria and all former citizens of other European countries possessing German as the mother tongue, all of these who had become naturalized in Canada since 1902. In effect, this franchise did two important things for Borden. First it gave him the support of those women most apt to support conscription, viz. the next of kin of overseas forces. Secondly, it

1. Op.cit. 746.

2. Ibid. 742.

3. Skelton, Laurier, II, 530.

removed the franchise from those foreigners, mostly in the West, who had been settled by the Laurier Government, (ironically too under Clifford Sifton!). These foreign voters were largely anti-conscription in outlook, and probably solidly for Laurier. In short, this Bill was to defeat the Liberals and return Borden to power. That it was intended to do this, and that it did so, is obviously proven beyond a doubt.

A letter to Borden on June 1 had suggested the "enemy vote and the traitor vote must be ruthlessly eliminated by the Dominion Franchise legislation"¹.

On June 22 at a Provincial Conservative Association Convention a resolution was passed and forwarded to Borden to enfranchise Canadian women and deny vote to Germans and Austrians in the Prairie Provinces unless they had lived there over thirty years, naturalized or born there².

Thus the idea of the changed franchise was germinating in Conservative circles and even spread to Liberal circles as shown in a letter on July 16 sent by Premier Brewster of British Columbia to Rowell. In it Brewster feared conscription would only be approved in an election if the women of Canada had a vote, since the only male voters left were those who refused to fight³. Sir George Foster feared the alien vote in the event of an election⁴.

-
1. A. Jennings to Borden, June 1, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39694-8.
 2. Resolutions, Provincial Conservative Association, Winnipeg, June 22, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39768-9.
 3. Brewster to Rowell, July 16, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.16, Federal Politics v.1, 1539-41.
 4. Diary, July 8, 1917, Foster Papers, v.55.

On August 7, L.F. Washington wrote Borden requesting the vote to mothers, wives, widows and sisters of soldiers but noted "under no circumstances give the vote to any other women; remember they defeated conscription in Australia." He also desired a denial of the vote to anyone not of British origin¹. Borden replied that the "suggestions in your letter (...) will be attentively considered"². Foster noted on September 5 that the franchise "adds to the war vote and subtracts the enemy alien vote"³. He also noted on Sept. 7 that the "deletion of Alien Enemies will give heart to the West"⁴.

On September 5, Turriff wrote to Dafoe. "There appears no certainty of Union and Government feel they cannot do otherwise than introduce rather strong Franchise measures." He added that the majority of conscription Liberals would oppose the measure "but doubt if any measure that could save the country in event of contest on anything except absolute and complete union basis would be acceptable to them all anyway"⁵.

One conscriptionist Liberal, A.K. Maclean, noted "personally I disprove this very strongly and it seems to me highly improper." He observed that the delay in the election was "to enable the Government to obtain a new Franchise Act

1. Washington to Borden, Aug. 7, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 362, 40354-6.
2. Borden to Washington, Aug. 8, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 362, no.40363.
3. Diary, Sept. 5, 1917, Foster Papers, v.55.
4. Diary, Sept. 7, 1917, Foster Papers, v.55.
5. Turriff to Dafoe, Sept. 5, 1917, Sifton Papers, v.206, no.161916.

and put it into operation, hoping thereby to obtain some great political advantage which would somewhat offset adverse public opinion against the Government"¹.

On September 16 Foster noted with favor this course of events. "The Military Bill being enforced, the Soldiers vote and the Franchise Act has changed the outlook"².

Colonel Currie, M.P. referred to "German and Austrian reservists" that the Laurier Government "colonized in every riding in the great West. The War-Time Election Act, under which this election will be held, deprives these Germans and Austrians of their votes"³.

Laurier was quick to note that conscription was merely an excuse to disfranchise many people and win the election, not the War⁴. Dr. Barrett noted however that most of the Catholic vote and what votes were left under the Franchise Act, were for Laurier⁵.

While Borden was lauded by many of his friends for his supposed political skill, other observers since 1917 have condemned his strategy. Skelton referred to the franchise regulations for women as "a stacking of the cards, a gerrymandering on a colossal scale, an attempt without

-
1. A.K. Maclean to Rowell, Sept. 6, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.17, Federal Politics, v.2, no.1885-6.
 2. Diary, Sept. 26, 1917, Foster Papers, v.55.
 3. Mimeographed circular letter by Colonel J. Currie, M.P., contained in G. Brown to Laurier, Sept. 27, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.712, no.197092.
 4. Laurier to W.L. Parish, Sept. 27, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.197166-8.
 5. Dr. J. Barrett to Laurier, Sept. 18, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.713, no.197012-4.

parallel except in the tactics of Lenin and Trotsky to ensure the dominance of one party in the state"¹.

R. MacGregor Dawson, the eminent authority on Canadian Political Economy, summed up the general revulsion to the iniquity of The Military Voters Act, 1917, and The War Times Elections Act, 1917.

The general purpose of these acts were plain and unmistakable: they were to give the vote to those who would support the Government, to take it away from those who would oppose it, and to create a floating military vote, a large part of which would almost certainly be given to Government candidates².

The reasons why the Western Liberals were finally forced to capitulate under Borden's terms were these. Firstly there was little support left for the Liberal Party in the West thanks to the change in the franchise. Secondly, they had, as a group, disavowed Laurier as a leader, even attempting to dislodge him at the Winnipeg Convention. Therefore they could not, due to their past record, continue to support him as leader in an election since he had opposed conscription. Thirdly, if they ran as independents, they could not get the support of the small Liberal vote still left in the West. This meant that they would be defeated by any Government candidate. Their only hope now, was to bolt the Liberal Party and run on a Union ticket as they finally decided to do.

Without these Liberals, Borden would have had to run

-
1. Skelton, Laurier, II, 529.
 2. R.M. Dawson, The Government of Canada, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1947, 379.

against a solid Liberal Party, for what it was worth, after the franchise change, in the West. But once these bolting Liberals joined forces with Borden, it split the remaining Liberal vote completely and ensured, not merely a Government victory, but a landslide. This was brought about by the fact that the Liberals entered the Union Cabinet before the election. Had they held out as a separate Liberal group, with the promise of Union after the election, they would have gained many votes. By joining, these pro-conscription Liberal votes, whether in the East or West, were ensured for Borden.

Events moved rapidly after the franchise changes. Parliament prorogued on September 19. On October 8, Calder, A.L. Sifton, Crerar, Martin and A.B. Hudson came to Ottawa, followed by Brewster. One last attempt was made to have Laurier resign. He refused. On October 11, nineteen leading Liberals including Carvell, A.K. Maclean, W.S. Fielding and Fred Pardee, were in Ottawa conferring with Borden. Along with the group just mentioned, were W.T. Turgeon a former opponent of Union Government, from Saskatchewan, plus Murray, Premier of Nova Scotia. At the end, English-speaking Liberals who finally disavowed Union Government included W.R. Wood, M.L.A. of Saskatchewan, Cross and Gariepy of Alberta, Graham, E.M. Macdonald, Sydney Fisher, Mackenzie King, D.D. Mackenzie, and Charles Murphy.

The swearing in of Guthrie and Ballantyne came first early in October. Eventually Rowell, Carvell, General

Mewburn, A.L. Sifton, Crerar, Calder and A.K. Maclean, all Liberals, entered the Cabinet.

The election that followed was a landslide for this Union Cabinet and the English Liberals who accepted Union played their role.

Laurier referred to them as "deserters from our ranks"¹. L.G. Power, M.P., noted to Laurier that "Borden's great anxiety to avoid an appeal to the people on the record of his government has (...) found support in the selfish desire of certain Liberals to become Ministers without delay"². Sir John Willison assessed the role of Borden and Clifford Sifton. "If at length such a government was organized, to Borden and Sifton the credit chiefly belongs"³. Clifford Sifton had demanded a Senatorship⁴. Earlier Perley noted to Borden that "I don't think we can win the election without the support of the 'Win-the-War Liberals, and we should not do anything to shock or irritate them"⁵. On November 1, J.B. Coyne noted to Rowell that despite the soldiers' vote and The War Time Elections Act, 1917, Borden would have had a hard time winning the election or even have suffered defeat

1. Laurier to J. Muir, Aug. 2, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196411-5.
2. L.G. Power to Laurier, Oct. 1, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.714, no.197435-7.
3. Quoted in J.W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, Toronto, Macmillan, 1931, 431.
4. Borden, Memoirs, II, 736.
5. Perley to Borden, Sept. 14, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 370 (1), no.41070-2.

"had it not been for the course of the Liberal Conscriptionists...."¹ Finally, after the election was well over, Calder thanked Dafoe noting that the "fight in West largely yours"².

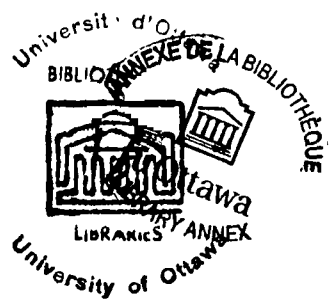
Thus it is easily seen that the Liberals who deserted Laurier and Joined Borden's Cabinet, plus the rest who came out in support of the Union Government, made victory for Laurier impossible. Had they remained loyal to Laurier, as did a few like Murphy, Graham and Mackenzie King, and fought Borden on his record, the Liberal Party could have remained intact and stood some chance of winning, if not the election at least more seats. But, by deserting wholesale due to ambition or principle or both, they caused a fatal split of the Liberal Party across English-speaking Canada, divided its vote, and ensured for Borden a guaranteed victory at the polls, aided of course by the franchise changes, all of which relegated the election to the safest one a Canadian Government ever contested.

-
1. J.B. Coyne to Rowell, Nov. 1, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.4, Federal Politics, v.3, no.2144-2145.
 2. Calder to Dafoe, Dec. 18, 1917, Dafoe Papers, Correspondence, microfilm reel no.M-73.

BORDEN : CONSCRIPTION AND UNION GOVERNMENT

by

James A. Crowley



Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa through the School of Graduate Studies as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Degree conferred May 22, 1958

E. J. ...

Toronto, Canada, 1958.

Secret. Graduate Division

CHAPTER THREEINFLUENCE OF NEWSPAPERS AND PUBLIC OPINION
ON CONSCRIPTION AND UNION GOVERNMENT.

I

NEWSPAPER INFLUENCE ON CONSCRIPTION

In considering the influence of newspaper opinion on the introduction of conscription, one factor emerges early in such a survey, viz; that this influence, while gathering sporadic headway late in 1916, increased steadily during 1917 until the announcement of compulsory service. Then the papers came out fully, for or against, until the measure was introduced.

During 1916 certain Liberal journals were among the first to urge compulsion. One Liberal paper, The Daily Telegraph and The Sun, St. John, (June 19, 1916) asked that compulsion be applied when the voluntary system was exhausted, while on November 23, 1916, this paper noted that conscription "justly applied, would have many advantages." A Conservative journal, The Quebec Chronicle, (Sept. 8, 1916), demanded a "qualified form of conscription" or "the right man go" and "the right man remain."

In Quebec, at this period, The Gazette, Montreal, (Sept. 20, 1916), noted that conscription, "as it is called, must be a last desperate measure to save the country." Le Pays, Mar. 22, 1916), warned against "bankrupting" Canadian manhood, while Le Soleil observed (June 7, 1916), that

500,000 men "was not above the forces of Canada"¹.

The Montreal Daily Star, (Oct. 30, 1916) summed up its dislike of a referendum on coalition. "To have conscription proposed and rejected is much worse than to have left the whole thing alone." This paper (May 21, 1917), was to support conscription, stating that the voluntary system "has pumped the well dry."

Throughout 1916, Le Devoir, preached steadily against the drain upon Canada's economy, if 500,000 men were sent overseas. Bourassa's paper (Jan. 1, 1916) scored the fact that if ^{the} voluntary system failed, conscription was the only alternative and this was already on the books through the Militia Act. Again (Mar. 10, 1916), Le Devoir quoted Lord Shaughnessy "We must go slowly about recruiting." Le Devoir (Oct. 20, 1916) spoke up sharply. "Canada must confine military forces to the defence of Canada." In the same year (Oct. 30, 1916) Le Devoir predicted that a public vote on conscription would defeat it in Canada because, in Australia, where the people were more of British descent than in Canada, it was defeated. This paper called the promise of 500,000 men "l'hypothèque du sang." Obviously then, Le Devoir, a rallying journal for Nationalist spokesmen, had no desire for a huge army of 500,000 men, let alone conscription to raise it.

The London Advertiser, Liberal, took an open stand on conscription, observing (Oct. 31, 1916) that the issue "should

1. Quoted in C.A.R., 1916, 340.

be decided by the people." Another Liberal paper, The Globe (Oct. 10, 1916) spoke out boldly on this problem. "If compulsion is finally set aside as impractical - and the Globe believes it to be - what is to take its place?" The Globe was a firm advocate of a more active appeal to recruits as a solution to the recruiting problem, though it firmly advocated (Jan. 24, 1917) the enforcement of the Militia Act.

Throughout 1916, The Toronto Daily Star frequently referred to the possibility of conscription. It stated (Sept. 12, 1916) the "Government should exert, if not its authority, at least its influence (...) by issuing proclamations (...) calling upon every fit man (...) to take up arms...." On October 26 it noted that compulsory service "within the commonwealth is already the law," while earlier, (Oct. 17, 1916) it stated that there was little chance of the energetic action taken elsewhere in the Empire being taken in Canada. The paper's tone on this occasion was objective but its discussion of such a topic created the impression it would approve of "energetic action." Then, (Dec. 5, 1916), it defended a reader's attack on Lincoln's draft system by pointing out that while it was a poor attempt to get more men it was the same as the Canadian volunteer system, some men enlisting, some not. Finally, (Dec. 30, 1916), The Toronto Daily Star suggested the Militia Act be used to call up replacements for soldiers going overseas "unless the Government would use stronger means for home or overseas service."

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

The Manitoba Free Press (May 29, 1916) observed that before conscription was possible there must exist the "social and military organization sufficiently perfected to direct and apply the forces thus brought into play...." The paper remarked such forces to be unlikely to exist "before the close of the war." In Edmonton, a Liberal paper, The Morning Bulletin, (Oct. 20, 1916), scored the recruiting methods of the Borden Government but did not advocate conscription.

But in Regina, The Morning Leader, (Oct. 16, 1917), strongly supported conscription.

The Leader has already expressed its own conviction that compulsory service is the proper system in a great life-and-death struggle such as Canada is now engaged. The state should command the services of every man."

As 1916 ended there was no great pressure for conscription (in fact very little) by the newspapers. It was ignored by the Quebec Nationalist press, and discussed objectively by the Liberal and Conservative journals. The former, following Laurier's footsteps, sidestepped the issue, while the Tory press refrained from much criticism of Borden. To advocate conscription for them would be to criticize Government recruiting. Most Tory journals were not prepared to go far in this respect.

During 1917, most of the important papers in Canada expressed their opinion on conscription. The remainder took a stand once Borden announced it as inevitable. The press campaign was to prove a most powerful influence in helping the Government decide this issue, since the vast majority of

the Canadian press ultimately favored compulsory service in some form.

For example, the three leading Liberal papers of the Maritimes came forth strongly for the measure. The Daily Telegraph and The Sun, St. John, gave its support (Feb. 2, 1917). "The men must be had, voluntarily or by conscription, and not only the men but the money...." Earlier (Jan. 11, 1917), this paper accused the opposition of being "neglectful of the peoples' interest" if they opposed conscription. Later (June 4, 1917), the paper reiterated its demand for conscription of money, but approved conscription of men. Still later (June 12, 1917), it voiced "no criticism of compulsion."

The Morning Chronicle, Halifax, during 1917, scored Government recruiting methods, and noted (May 24, 1917) conscription of wealth to be as logical as that of men. This paper held out for the voluntary system (May 21, 1917), and noted (June 5, 1917) that conscription would fail because the Government "cannot carry the measure of conscription" without the help of the Liberal Party. The paper demanded a reorganization of the voluntary system, to be followed by the Militia Act enforcement if necessary but asked for a referendum on conscription. However, (June 20, 1917), it supported the Military Service bill as a step towards "full mobilization of men...."

The Island Patriot, Charlottetown, while hostile to the Government, observed (April 18, 1917), that conscription was acceptable if "necessary" but supported the Laurier anti-

conscription stand up to that point. It stated (May 10, 1917) recruiting to be dead, blaming the Government, not Quebec. Again, (May 21, 1917) it noted "the absolute necessity of some method being adopted to stimulate recruiting." This paper (June 1, 1917), condemned the delay between the announcement and implementing of conscription because it gave the anti-conscriptionists "so great an opportunity to arouse opposition."

In Quebec, in the meantime, few papers were in favor of conscription among the French language journals. The Canadian Annual Review summed up the position of this portion of the Quebec Press.

As a whole it was more concerned in Quebec matters, in the issue with Ontario over Bilingualism, in the "menace" of Conscription or Imperialism, in the political supremacy of Sir Wilfred Laurier, than in the War, its conduct, its Canadian support or its final issue. Le Canada of Montreal and Le Soleil of Quebec led the Liberal political life of the Province; La Presse of Montreal, also Liberal in politics, and much more influential in circulation and opinion, led in the fight against Ontario's educational policy and the claim that Quebec had done its duty in recruiting - it was devoted to French Canadian and Catholic interests; La Patrie of Montreal was usually Conservative in tone and a supporter of recruiting and conscription but ultimately in favour of a Referendum; L'Evenement of Quebec was the only French journal in the Province which steadily supported the Borden Government, recruiting, conscription and union; L'Action Catholique of Quebec, and La Croix of Montreal, were much-quoted Church journals - the latter small in circulation and influence; Le Devoir was the Nationalist organ with a considerable and persistent power¹.

Le Devoir during 1917 attacked the Borden plan to raise half a million men. Early in the year (Feb. 24, 1917)

1. C.A.R., 1917, 489.

it scored the "warmongers who decided to ruin Canada for the sake of the Empire" and therefore demanded more men. Bourassa's theme in 1917 was not specifically anti-conscription but rather anti-extension of the Canadian war effort. In effect this precluded conscription. Later (Mar. 9, 1917), Le Devoir claimed conscription to be against the Canadian tradition noting the Militia Act didn't empower the Government to send men overseas. Four days later he pointed out the drain conscription would have on Canada's labor force. Le Devoir (Mar. 14, 1917), condemned the conscription demand of the Montreal Board of Trade and Colonel Ballantyne. Next day it hinted that the demand for conscription would increase, "helped by apathy, the weakness of many, the false sentiment of loyalty...." Bourassa's paper drove home this point about conscription being a drain on the economy (Mar. 21 and 27, Apr. 2, 9 and 16, and May 29 and 30, 1917). Le Devoir depre- cated the sacredness of Britain's cause (May 25, 1917) point- ing out that to fight for freedom Canada "should fight for Ireland and India." Again, (May 29, 1917) Le Devoir stated that to get a maximum war effort the Government should have instituted conscription when war began. This journal stated Canada had done enough; and had done more than Britain and France or the U.S.A. on a per capita basis. During May Le Devoir stepped up its campaign against draining Canada's re- sources pointing out (May 31, 1917) that British and French troops were being sent home to the harvest, while Canada was sending men overseas instead of to the farm. Then (June 2,

1917), Le Devoir spoke for French Canada. "Il est inutile de déguiser la vérité: deux millions de Canadiens-français sont opposés en bloc à la conscription." This journal demanded a referendum on conscription (June 2, 1917), predicting defeat for conscription if such a vote were held. Earlier (May 25, 1917), Bourassa traced the conscription "germ" to the Laurier precedent of sending Canadians to South Africa. Bourassa felt Britain should defend Canada, not Canada defend Britain.

In general, Le Devoir took the position that Canada had done enough and would face ruin by further participation in the war; also it exposed Britain as a grabber of German colonies (May 25, 1917), thus discrediting Britain's motive for war. However (May 28, 1917), it preached against any violent reaction in Quebec to conscription.

"The French Canadian press was almost solidly opposed to conscription from the beginning. The Quebec Evenement and the Montreal Patrie stood alone among the French Canadian newspapers in backing the government throughout"¹.

The English speaking press in Quebec during 1917 took a different viewpoint from Le Devoir. The Quebec Chronicle, (Conservative) demanded (May 10, 1917), that the Militia Act be enforced and later (May 19, 1917) noted that Borden would have "the support of all right minded and patriotic citizens" for his proposed conscription. In Montreal, The Gazette (Apr. 30, 1917) hinted conscription might be necessary "if

1. Armstrong, Crisis of Quebec, 194.

this country is going to do its full duty." Again, (May 10, 1917), the paper called for "some form of compulsory service." Then (May 19, 1917) it termed conscription "the only way."

The Montreal Daily Star (May 21, 1917) observed that there was "no other way. Voluntarism has pumped the well dry," pointing out (May 24, 1917), that conscription was already on the books in the Militia Act. The English language press in Quebec tended to be very conciliatory towards the opinion of the Nationalist press and called for unity and understanding on many occasions.

The Ontario press, during 1917, on conscription, showed some interesting turns. A Liberal paper, The London Advertiser, "without advocating compulsory service" (Mar. 10, 1917) felt the Government ought to implement National Service. This paper, a foe of the Government on nearly all issues, argued (May 19, 1917), that conscription would straighten up the recruiting situation, noting the "Government has finally yielded to a general demand from soldier and civilian organizations." Then The Ottawa Journal-Press entered the fray (May 3, 1917). "One way remains to deal with this situation; namely the way of compulsory service...."

A Toronto Tory journal The Mail and Empire favored conscription early (Apr. 19, 1917). The Evening Telegram of Toronto approved conscription (Mar. 8, 1917). "The Borden Government should ask Parliament for a mandate to establish conscription." Again (May 10, 1917), this paper desired compulsory service while on an earlier date (Mar. 12, 1917), it had noted the Militia Act to be "a pale substitute for

conscription." The Toronto World demanded Borden apply the Militia Act (May 18, 1917).

The Toronto Daily Star pointed out (Mar. 7, 1917) that only the use of the Militia Act could save the reinforcement situation, by calling out men to replace those going overseas. Then (Mar. 20, 1917) it scorned the Home Defence scheme as an inadequate solution to the problem. After conscription was announced The Toronto Daily Star expressed the opinion (May 22, 1917), that its enforcement must be by a non-party government while next day it reiterated its stand that the Militia Act was the "best form by which draft can be put into force" because it was already "established in its place" and accepted by all parties and provinces.

The Liberal paper, The Globe, demanded (Jan. 24, 26, 1917), that the Militia Act be enforced and then repeated this demand (May 10, 1917). This paper claimed that conscription might become an issue if the Government failed to maintain its forces without a change in policy, (Apr. 17, 1917). The Globe observed (May 19, 1917) that it was too late to amend the past mistakes of the Government. Compulsion was therefore necessary. "Voluntary recruiting is as dead as Julius Caesar." The influence of The Globe was noted by The Victoria Daily Times an editorial (May 24, 1917).

The Globe was the first newspaper in Canada to demand the principle of compulsion - and that was at a time when Sir Robert Borden and R. B. Bennett were announcing from public platforms from coast to coast that there would not be conscription in Canada.

Laurier, writing to P.C. Larkin, made the observation that The Toronto^{Daily} Star "led in the conscription campaign and then induced the Globe to follow." Then occurred an interesting reaction.

After a short time it was stated that the Globe rather outdid the Star and that having got the Globe in that position, Atkinson put the soft pedal on Conscription and then suddenly launched out in strong attacks upon the Government with reference to its taxation measures and general policy, and that the Globe was left out in the cold in their position and alone. The result, it is said, has been that a good many subscribers have notified the Globe to cancel their subscriptions and that these in course of time will all be taken up by Atkinson, as the newspaper men say he is famous for playing this sort of game.

The journals of Western Canada during 1917 were interested in conscription too, and their reaction was important to Borden since the Liberals reigned supreme in the four Western Provincial Governments. The Manitoba Free Press conducted a campaign criticising the Government's recruiting policy, saying (May 7, 1917), that the Government's method of recruiting "was the most indifferent" and (May 21, 1917) that the Government was chiefly responsible for the "chill that fell on recruiting." It was later, over coalition, that the Manitoba Free Press was to support the Borden Government.

In Edmonton, The Morning Bulletin, a Liberal paper, called for a "really" voluntary system but if recourse was made to compulsion "then real compulsion" applied by authority (Apr. 7, 1917). This paper however made no demands for

1. Laurier to Larkin, Aug. 6, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.711, no.196533-5.

compulsory service but stated (May 19, 1917) that "compulsory means will meet with General approval. (...) voluntary enlistment has practically ceased (...) the alternative seems to be compulsion or default." Later (May 25, 1917), the paper demanded some form of conscription of wealth.

The Morning Leader, Regina, a Liberal paper, (Mar. 23, 1917) observed "Conscription must be enforced if Canada is to fulfil the pledge to the Empire." Then (Apr. 30, 1917) the paper repeated its demand and later (May 19, 1917), it expressed satisfaction over the Borden announcement of compulsory service. "Conscription is the only proper and effective policy."

The The Liberal Victoria Daily Times demanded (Feb. 14, 1917) that the Militia Act be invoked to raise Borden's quota of half a million men. It demanded (May 10, 1917) that measures be taken for more men. "If voluntary system has failed to meet the demand (...) the state must deal with the situation in the only other way open to it, namely by compulsion." Furthermore, (May 18, 1917), it demanded the Militia Act be used, while the next day it noted that "compulsion must be resorted to" and "the sooner employed the better." The Daily Colonist, Victoria, a Conservative paper indicated (May 6, 1917) that the "time has arrived when compulsion is necessary." "Again (May 18, 1917), the same paper came out more strongly. "One course alone is open to the government, and that is some form of compulsion."

Up to the announcement of conscription in May 1917,

Borden had received support for such a measure, (either by enforcing the Militia Act or by some new legislation) from nearly all the leading papers in Canada, both Liberal and Conservative. But once he had made known his intention of passing some form of legislation along these lines, equally strong support was forthcoming. Up to May 1917, such journals as The Island Patriot, The Daily Telegraph and The Sun, The Morning Chronicle, and The Toronto Daily News, all Liberal, supported conscription as did such Liberal journals as The Toronto Daily Star, The Globe, Manitoba Free Press, The Morning Leader, and Victoria Daily Times. Also supporting were The Quebec Chronicle, The Gazette, Montreal, The Montreal Daily Star, plus The Toronto World, The Evening Telegram and The Mail and Empire, all of Toronto, along with The Daily Colonist, Victoria. The London Advertiser and The Evening Bulletin, Edmonton did not press for conscription but accepted it when it came.

Shortly after the announcement of conscription by Borden, The Montreal Daily Star published (May 21, 1917), a list of press comments of those journals supporting conscription¹. Such a survey indicated that Borden had support, not only for compulsion, but also a general rallying to any plan he felt necessary in order to get reinforcements overseas. The survey was very complete leading off with the Conservative Halifax Herald which noted Nova Scotia "ready to do her

1. Quoted in The Montreal Daily Star, May 21, 1917, clipping of The Montreal Daily Star in T.P.L. Scrapbook XXI, 183-4.

part." The St. John Standard exclaimed that the "situation demanded it" while The Daily Telegraph and The Sun, Liberal, in support of conscription demanded conscription of wealth too. The Telegraph, Quebec, indicated that "if conscription is practicable (...) no patriot will oppose it." The Conservative The Quebec Chronicle supported it as did The Ottawa Journal-Press which called it the "only alternative." The Independent, The Ottawa Citizen, approved it as did The Evening Telegram, Toronto. The Globe, Liberal, spoke out boldly, "The Premier owes it to men (...) that the honor of the nation (...) is fully upheld." The Liberal The Toronto Daily News spoke of a "proper time for the new departure." The Toronto World, Conservative, spoke of a "new spirit" in the Canadian Army while The Mail and Empire, Tory, spoke of "rejoicing in the Canadian lines...." Both The London Advertiser (Liberal) and The London Free Press (Conservative) gave conscription support. The latter noted "Canada pledged the last man and the last dollar, and we are going to live up to that promise."

The Hamilton Times (Liberal), observed the "country ready for it" and while The Hamilton Spectator (Conservative) stated it "had to come", The Hamilton Herald (Independent) remarked that the country desired it. The Liberal St. Catharines Journal wrote "it should be received with approval; the Conservative St. Catharines Standard called it "an important announcement."

The survey by The Montreal Daily Star continued west-

ward and showed a very strong newspaper support for conscription. The Manitoba Free Press noted it would "bring cheer" to overseas forces. The Winnipeg Telegram (Conservative) called it a "proper course." The Calgary Herald, Conservative, approved conscription but The Calgary News Telegram, Liberal, demanded a referendum. The Edmonton papers supported it, The Evening Bulletin, Liberal, saying "the alternative is default...." and The Journal speaking of it as "a great relief...."

The Morning Leader, Regina, described the announcement as "a welcome one." The Moose Jaw Evening News approved of it, as did The Saskatoon Daily Star (Independent) and The Saskatoon Phoenix (Liberal). Vancouver's papers approved conscription, including the Conservative Vancouver Province, the Liberal Vancouver Sun, and a third journal, The Vancouver Advertiser.

This type of survey sums up the support afforded by the Canadian press towards Borden's proposed compulsory service within a few days of the announcement of conscription in Commons. Of utmost significance was the fact that the opposition press almost in its entirety pledged support for Borden's measure while the Conservative Press gave it unanimous support.

However between the time the announcement came on May 18, 1917 and the introduction of the Military Service bill on June 11, 1917, the press that supported conscription expressed opinion on two other items of a more secondary

nature. These were the question of heavier form of taxation on wealth, and the matter of a referendum on conscription itself.

The Island Patriot (June 6, 1917), advised a last attempt at the voluntary system. The Morning Chronicle while supporting conscription, felt (June 5, 1917), that conscription couldn't be carried without Liberal support, and demanded a referendum. Again (June 12, 1917), it demanded conscription of wealth. The Daily Telegraph and The Sun (June 4, 1917) asked for conscription of money too. Later in the summer, other Quebec papers spoke out. Then (June 19, 1917), The Montreal Daily Star termed referendum "a delay." Later (June 28, 1917), The Gazette, Montreal opposed referendum. Neither The Montreal Daily Star or The Gazette suggested a heavier assault on wealth.

In Ontario, prior to the introduction of the compulsory service legislation, The Toronto Daily Star demanded higher taxes on wealth (May 25, 1917) while The Globe felt the Militia Act to be sufficient instead of new legislation (June 4, 1917).

In the West at this period the Manitoba Free Press wanted higher taxes as well as conscription of men (May 25, 1917) while the Evening Bulletin, Edmonton, on the same date demanded an identical approach to war financing. The Victoria Times, (June 1, 1917), stated the Militia Act to be sufficient but demanded a heavier tax on excess profit.

The Calgary News Telegram demanded a referendum¹.

Several papers, while supporting conscription, were ultimately opposed to a referendum on the matter. These included The Toronto Daily Star, The St. John Globe, The Hamilton Times, The Woodstock Sentinel Review, The St. John Telegraph, Manitoba Free Press, The Winnipeg Tribune, and The Kingston Whig².

The London Catholic Record (June 7, 1917) asked for a referendum³ and later (June 22, 1917) the same demand came from Le Canada and L'Évènement⁴.

Le Devoir (June 2, 1917) expressed a desire for a referendum on conscription. It summed up (June 5, 1917) its verdict on the real cause of conscription as being due to United States pressure. According to this paper, Canadian conscription was to block American slackers entering Canada to avoid the draft.

"La conscription établie simultanément dans les deux pays, la tâche de surveiller les slackers serait énormément simplifiée. (...) c'est tout bonnement pour faire la police du gouvernement américain."

Between the time the bill was introduced, until its final passage there was no noticeable change in the press

-
1. Quoted in The Montreal Daily Star, May 21, 1917, clipping of The Montreal Daily Star in T.P.L. Scrapbook XXI, 183-4.
 2. G.A.R., 1917, 347.
 3. Quoted in The Globe, June 7, 1917, clipping of The Globe, in T.P.L. Scrapbook XXII, 97.
 4. Quoted in The Montreal Daily Star, June 22, 1917, clipping of The Montreal Daily Star in T.P.L. Scrapbook, XXII, 97.

support for the Military Service bill. Those papers supporting it did not relinquish their support and those opposing it continued to do so. Le Devoir condemned the bill itself and its effect on Quebec. Its editorials criticized the exemptions to be granted as not extensive enough, pointing out that the married and the farmer should have been specifically exempted. The paper felt they were as entitled to it as Doukhobors¹. La Liberte scored the lack of exemptions to theology students, specifically attacking Mr. Doherty on this lack. "Truly when one becomes a traitor to his race, he is not far from becoming a traitor to his religion"².

Much interest was aroused on July 28 by an interview which L'Action Catholique secured with Cardinal Begin. The Cardinal asserted that the failure to exempt certain members of religious life constituted a "grave interference with the rights of the Church and one which all good Churchmen should oppose"³.

Excluding such opposition to compulsory service as came from the Nationalist press, the newspapers across Canada, both Conservative and Liberal, gave full support to conscription. This support, while sporadic during 1916, grew stronger until the announcement of the intention to institute compulsory service on May, 1917. Such support during 1916

-
1. Le Devoir, June 25, July 9, 1917.
 2. Quoted in The Montreal Daily Star, July 28, 1917, clipping of The Montreal Daily Star in T.P.L. Scrapbook, XXII, 139.
 3. Armstrong, Crisis of Quebec, 194-5.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

was centred largely in Eastern and Central Canada with the Manitoba Free Press and The Morning Leader, being the major source of this pressure in the West. 1917 saw practically all the papers of any political importance, from coast to coast, calling for some form of compulsion. This indicated not only a united press support for such a plan but of more significance, it included the leading Liberal journals as well as Conservative. Such support was well organized, vociferous, hitting directly at the reader and it came early, early enough to assure the Prime Minister of the united support of the fourth estate outside Quebec. In Quebec, the English press demanded and later supported conscription. The Nationalist press, bound to be anti-conscriptionist, was more than overwhelmed in its influence because it was confined in its scope to a provincial public. Quebec was lost to Borden on conscription but the Canadian press proved a really effective ally in his most important arena, viz: among the English speaking electorate from coast to coast.

II

NEWSPAPER INFLUENCE ON UNION GOVERNMENT

In assessing the newspaper support for a coalition or union or national government (the terms were used loosely throughout the war), some interesting trends are noted. The earliest suggestions for it came from Liberal papers, not Conservative. In fact the Conservative journals were frankly hostile to it up to the mid-summer period of 1917.

The Liberal, The Ottawa Free Press (July 10, 1915) described "Dominion Coalition Government under Sir Robert Borden, if it is desired, would be the truly patriotic thing (...) for the Empire and patriotic for Canada"¹.

The Toronto Daily Star (Jan. 4, 1916) scored the presence in Ottawa of a "party" Government. "The country should have a non-partisan War Administration." Such a Government for Borden "would be the end of his troubles and the beginning of his usefulness"². The Toronto Daily Star, (Nov. 1, 1916), stated that The Simcoe Reformer (Simcoe, Ont.) favored a national government. Next day the Toronto paper indicated that the Government, not the Liberals, should initiate coalition. Again, (Nov. 17, 1916), it called on the Tory press and Government to back coalition reflecting that two Conservative journals, The St. Catharines Standard and St. Thomas Times, were for it. Then, (Nov. 29, 1916) The Toronto Daily Star declared that a national government was possible if a few men "will speak the necessary words." Two days later it pleaded for coalition as the "people were for it." Next day it pleaded again. Finally several more editorials appeared urging a national government³.

The Manitoba Free Press (Jan. 6, 1916) spoke out. "A united National Government is important, united action by

1. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 557.

2. Ibid. 557-8.

3. The Toronto Daily Star, Dec. 20, 22, 26 and 27, 1916.

the whole country is more important. The former is fundamental because it is the only way of effecting the latter"¹.

The Liberal The London Advertiser (Dec. 21, 1916), attacked the partisanship of the Government but felt that a Liberal victory would substitute one party for the other. Hence (Dec. 30, 1916) this paper demanded a reconstruction of the Government on the basis of the "best men" of "energy and enthusiasm" who "should command the esteem of the people."

The Conservative The Quebec Chronicle (Dec. 22, 1916), injected a jarring note to the Liberal demand for coalition. "Our government is a national government. It stands upon the confidence which the people repose in it. If that confidence is withdrawn it must fall."

But what of the attitude of the Canadian press during 1917?

The Conservative press, at the beginning of 1917, looked askance at the idea of Union or National Government and regarded its advocacy by such Liberal journals as the Toronto Star with open suspicion - increased by the continuous attacks of that paper upon the Government's financial policy, the more than vigorous onslaughts of the Globe upon Mr. Rogers, the vehement Government criticisms of the Regina Leader or Edmonton Bulletin².

1917 saw a growing support for coalition although The Toronto Daily News (Jan. 26, 1917), blamed the demand for coalition on a wartime hysteria.

"Coalition has been up to this time, almost exclusively a Liberal propaganda so far as the press was

1. Quoted in C.A.R., 1916, 558.
2. C.A.R., 1917, 555.

concerned, though with support from The Toronto World...."¹

During 1917 the Liberal press was split on the issue of coalition with the main support for it coming from Toronto papers as well as the Manitoba Free Press.

The Toronto Daily Star was the firmest advocate of a coalition government during 1917. It noted (Mar. 6, 1917) that a national government would end the Conservative-Nationalist alliance. Then (Apr. 11, 1917) it came out flatly for its goal. "For months we have urged the Prime Minister to call in the leaders of the Opposition and to form a non-partisan war administration." The same editorial scorned Liberals who wanted only Laurier as Prime Minister and Conservatives who desired only Borden for the post. One edition (Apr. 30, 1917) saw The Toronto Daily Star define a national government as "an absolute necessity" and claimed it should be formed regardless of whether or not an election occurred. Again it called for a national government on the first two days of June, 1916. After the coalition failure it summed up its position once more, (June 8, 1917).

For nearly a year the Star has been urging the formation of a National Government, because neither one party nor the other could, separately and alone in office, command that support of the bulk of the people the whole country over, which would enable it to carry on the war measures which as time went on would be required.

The Globe entered the fray (May 28, 1917) calling on Liberals to join Borden in backing any measures aiding the

1. Op.cit. 556.

Allies, such as enforcing conscription. The next day it called for fusion of both parties but (June 3, 1917), it demanded that Borden get rid of Rogers. Then (June 7, 1917), it blamed the coalition failure on the fact that no Liberal "would accept office" with Rogers at the council board.

More support for coalition came from several Western Liberal papers.

The Manitoba Free Press (Jan. 2, 1917), observed Canada as the only "Allied country" under party government, and called for a "National Government." Throughout January several editorials demanded coalition (Jan. 3, 6 and 11, 1917). Then (Jan. 13, 1917) the paper condemned the Government. "It will require the united effort of the nation to substitute a National Government for blind partisan leaders of the blind." The paper demanded (Jan. 15, 1917) a government formed of all representative groups (Labor, Agriculture, etc.) as well as both parties. The Manitoba Free Press continued its drive claiming (Jan. 27, 1917) that a "Coalition or National Government" was "fundamental" to show what "fearless" leadership "might yet accomplish in this national crisis." Again, (Feb. 17, 1917) it stated the Liberals hesitated to demand coalition lest they be accused of "selfish motives" or attempting to use "subterfuge" to get into power. Borden, according to the editorial, was hanging onto office "with a grip that only death will relax." Again, (Mar. 15, 1917), it accused the Conservative Party of wanting "the public to associate every bit of war effort with the Conservative Party."

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

Came the last day in May and this paper claimed the coalition offer was brought about by circumstances forcing Borden to abandon party politics. It went on to claim that the offer was motivated by party tactics. The offer, if successful, would continue the Government in power and thus avoid an election; if an election ensued, the Conservatives would then have an issue "which would put tens of thousands of Liberals up against the hard choice" of voting for a Government they disliked and distrusted "or appearing to oppose a policy which the experiences of Great Britain and the United States" had proved necessary to utilize the full power of modern democracy applied in the War. The Manitoba Free Press (June 2, 1917) indicated Laurier should have been consulted before the offer was made. Finally (June 12, 1917), this paper concluded its verdict on the coalition offer, by commenting on the split in the Liberal Party. "Whether this was designed or not, the first effect of Sir Robert Borden's stroke has been to destroy for the time being the Liberal Party as a national institution."

The Evening Bulletin (Feb. 1, 1917) remarked that Canada already had a "coalition of Tory and Nationalist." But (Feb. 13, 1917) it demanded "a real" national government. This paper (June 9, 1917) suggested a coalition government as a means of enforcing compulsory service. A further editorial (June 13, 1917) claimed Borden sought Liberal help when the Quebec Nationalists deserted him on conscription. It added that Laurier hadn't turned down a "real coalition." A

further editorial (June 14, 1917) observed that the Liberal Party "is not hungering and thirsting to be known in history as the participators in the heritage the Borden Government has piled up for the embarrassment of those who will have to answer for its accumulation." The next day this paper stated the offer was designed to use both political parties to put conscription over, and "Sir Robert Borden is no believer in coalition governments while party government is workable."

Late in 1917, the Victoria Times, another Liberal journal, stated (May 28, 1917) that it "believes a National Government would be better (...) composed of the best brains (...) without regard to political distinction." This paper did not press strongly for coalition during 1917.

Other Liberal papers did not favor coalition. The St. John Telegraph, (Dec. 13, 1916), felt a true national government without an election was fine but preferred an election to merely perpetuating the old government. Later (June 1, 1917) saw the paper in favor of coalition if Borden was sincere but four days later it observed Borden wasn't honest when revealing facts on the manpower situation. Then (June 7, 1917), it explained the Opposition wanted conscription of more items than merely men, as well as full control on food and prices. Coalition was designed to help Borden weather an election (June 8, 1917.)

The Morning Chronicle (June 8, 1917) observed that Borden "missed the boat" early in the war and his offer of coalition came too late. This paper and The Island Patriot

did not welcome coalition. The latter noted (June 2, 1917) that Borden was trying to use coalition to get his Party out of "unenviable difficulties."

The London Advertiser, a Liberal supporter, (Feb. 7, 1917) said that while Liberal rule would be superior, the Liberal Party, it believed, would not try to seek power but would be willing to co-operate in a coalition "in order that the country's brainpower may be harnessed to the war machine without the brake of partisanship or quarrelling to press upon the wheels." Again (April 14, 1917), this paper demanded a union of the "best brains" into a new government.

This paper (May 31, 1917) noted coalition was fine providing Borden wasn't using it as a cover to place blame of his party record on the Liberals.

In Regina, The Morning Leader, a most loyal Liberal supporter, gave no encouragement to the varied press support for coalition.

Across Canada, the Conservative Press early in 1917 gave, at best, a lukewarm support of coalition, but the leading papers became more favorable to the notion by late spring.

The Quebec Chronicle had opposed the idea (Dec. 22, 1916) stating the government "is a national government." But (May 30, 1917) it felt that the seriousness of the war demanded a reconstruction of the Government. Liberals, interested in the cause of the Empire should be invited to join. Then (June 8, 1917) came its condemnation of Laurier. "In the hour of Canada's greatest crisis Laurier has been weighed

in the balance and found wanting. (...) The voice is the voice of Laurier but the hand is the hand of Bourassa."

The Gazette, Montreal, (Jan. 5, 1917) claimed Canada already had "an effective national administration in existence." Then (Jan. 20, 1917) it felt the Government to be "fine enough." Later, (Feb. 26, 1917), the paper claimed the Government could not be improved. The paper did not lament Laurier's refusal of coalition as it felt Borden was doing well as a national leader.

The Montreal Daily Star did not press for coalition but felt (May 29, 1917) that a coalition of "strongest leaders" was necessary. A day later, it called for a national government, not merely a coalition. Then (June 4, 1917), this paper said Laurier's inclusion in a coalition cabinet was worth an army division. Laurier was not condemned for his role in refusing coalition (due to his views on conscription) without referring conscription to a referendum (June 8, 1917).

During the negotiations for coalition, The Toronto World exclaimed (June 2, 1917) that coalition would "smash" the party system.

In Toronto The Mail and Empire was slow to support coalition noting quite late (May 29, 1917) that such a move would "facilitate the work" of the Government.

In Victoria The Daily Colonist (May 27, 1917) felt that Borden should invite some of the conscription Liberals into his cabinet.

Other Conservative papers were not very enthusiastic over conscription. The Evening Telegram, Toronto, observed (May 28, 1917) that only those Liberals favoring compulsion, who had not been swayed by the prospect of a Cabinet seat, be invited to join. The Ottawa Journal-Press stated (May 28, 1917), that the attitude of the Opposition (in criticizing the Government) had created an atmosphere "which rendered (...) coalition personally repugnant to honest men on the Conservative side...."

The highly regarded paper of Sir John Willison, the Liberal Toronto Daily News gave its summary of the situation (June 9, 1917). "Laurier has become, willingly or otherwise, the champion of all the unpatriotic and reactionary elements in a cosmopolitan population."

Such a strong worded statement from a Liberal paper is an indication of the rising flow of political passion that was to grow until it engulfed the entire nation in the bitterness of the late fall election.

The period following the failure of the first coalition attempt saw the press of the nation keeping alive the matter of a united or national government. The conservative press, while at best not as enthusiastic over coalition as some Liberal papers, still exhibited the greatest consistency in its outlook. This consistency bears examination.

July saw The Quebec Chronicle (July 21, 1917) quoting John Dafoe on the necessity of coalition while five days later it congratulated Clifford Sifton's "open letter"

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

demanding coalition, noting the latter's "manly and outspoken course." Another Tory paper, The Gazette, attacked the position of the Liberals stand on conscription as pulling party above military necessity (June 19, 1917); then, (Aug. 7, 1917) it cried "in the name of humanity, let a National Government be formed." Later, (Sept. 4, 1917) it praised Borden's "absolute sincerity and unselfishness" in the negotiations for Union Government, while earlier (Aug. 30, 1917) it regretted that the price of Western Liberal co-operation appeared to be Borden's resignation. This journal felt the franchise regulations should separate aliens of good and bad repute. It maintained fairness and good taste in its approach to the matter of coalition. The Montreal Daily Star (June 8, 1917) spoke of calling into the Government "the strongest men in the community." Four days later it pleaded for "broad and generous statesmanship" for the sake of national unity. Again (July 26, 1917) it urged Laurier to share the responsibility so necessary for victory. It supported the disfranchising of aliens (Sept. 7) "who won't support the war effort." It lauded the inclusion of Ballantyne and Guthrie in the Cabinet as "wise strengthening of the Government" noting these two to be "no less Liberals than patriots" (Oct. 4, 1917). The remarks of this paper were always characterized by a lack of any animosity or hysteria towards the Opposition. This daily, however, was a most influential medium of expression.

The Mail and Empire of Toronto, while not opposing coalition, did not give it any very strong support during

the latter part of 1917 though it stated (Oct. 4, 1917) that the hope of the country lay in "a National Government." Earlier, (June 8, 1917) it expressed regret over the failure of coalition. It supported the franchise bill (Sept. 8, 1917) and lauded the conscription Liberals (Sept. 11, 1917). The Toronto World, dealt largely with the matter of compulsory service but noted (Sept. 8, 1917) that the franchise bill would win the war. It cited the Union Cabinet as a great help to wartime victory (Oct. 15, 1917). The Daily Colonist of Victoria, described Laurier's actions over coalition as a wrong course (June 8, 1917) but fairly pointed out that he acted "as he thought right." Concerning a future election it stated (July 18, 1917) that "the fight will be a straight one between conscriptionists and anti-conscriptionists." It further predicted that Borden would reconstruct his Cabinet either from Conservative or Liberal members. It observed that no conservative would oppose the "war Liberals" a group held in esteem by this paper. Again (Sept. 11, 1917) the paper approved the franchise and two days later pleaded for a union government for the sake of Canadian unity. It pointed out earlier (Sept. 23, 1917) that the "Win-the-War" movement resulted from the failure of the previous coalition movement. Then (Oct. 4, 1917), it summed up its views on the negotiations for a Union government. "The trend of public opinion throughout the Dominion has convinced those War Liberals who have wavered about joining a union administration that the vast majority of the people are in favor of unity of action

during the crisis." But, (Oct. 12, 1917), it praised the "Patience and statesmanship" of Borden. This journal, in its utterances, used a very high tone in its approach.

Other Conservative journals were not as strong in support of coalition. Two examples were The Ottawa Journal-Press and The London Free Press. Both had opposed coalition in June, 1917 and did not offer any great support for it during the rest of the summer. Again, both were highly laudatory of the Government's administration and of the stand of the conscription Liberals.

One Conservative journal, The Evening Telegram, was most strongly opposed to coalition during June and for the rest of the summer but was prepared to accept it when it came. This paper (June 22, 1917) referred to The Toronto Daily Star, The Globe and Manitoba Free Press as "refugees from the camp of Laurierism" but welcomed them as "eleventh hour soldiers of conscription" who "will be judged by the merits of the parts they play, not by motives." It scored certain Liberals such as Graham (June 26, 1917) and Pardee (June 29, 1917) asking how the latter could be for Laurier and conscription. It noted it was not enthused over "Liberal weepers." Such views indicate the paper's lack of regard for these conscription Liberals. On July 9, 1917, it spoke up again. "A party government, all Conservative or all Liberal, founded upon conscription would be a national government. A coalition Government, half Conservative and half Liberal, founded on compromise, would not be a national

Government." It indicated its preference for Clifford Sifton, not Laurier, as a help to the administration (Aug. 7, 1917). During August, The Evening Telegram of Toronto injected much venom in its utterances (by dragging in religion). When (Aug. 11, 1917) it spoke of "Quebec's State Church and its branches in other Provinces" being for Laurier and against Borden. Three days later it attacked the sincerity of the Pope's peace proposals. Then (Aug. 23, 1917) it spoke of the Vatican as "no friend of freedom." It is obvious from such outbursts that this journal, which at that time had a great following among Toronto Orangemen, was unable, or unwilling, to approach current political matters in an unbiased fashion.

On the last day of August, it urged Borden to prove by his actions that his "Ministry is a Union Government," then no charges of "party government" could arise. However, this paper relented in its stand against coalition (Sept. 14, 1917) by blaming such pro-Laurier "partisans" as Carvell, for holding up the proceedings of a political union.

In reviewing the stand of the Conservative press on coalition during 1917, it is noted that the bulk of it favored coalition but not with the fervor of some Liberal journals. However, nearly the entire Conservative press was in support of it, or at least had dropped serious objections to it, by the period of September. Again, the bulk of such press supported the franchise changes admitting the alien vote would go against Borden. Obviously the fact that a union government was going to increase the chances of Borden being returned as Premier, with his supporters both Liberal and

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

Conservative pledged to uphold conscription, enhanced the project of coalition in the eyes of these journals. The outspoken praise by the Conservative press for the franchise changes, with the obvious intent of such changes to aid the return of the Government, also increased the popularity of a union government in the eyes of the Conservative editors since the remaining vote, largely conscriptionist, was bound to go to Liberal or Conservatives who supported conscription. A union government, such as was formed, would corral such votes for the union administration, thus weakening the Opposition Liberals, reducing them to a small minority. The mass reaction of the Conservative press during 1917, even those originally hostile to coalition, indicates that, like Borden, these journals saw in the ultimate Union Government so formed in October 1917, a solution to winning the following election and returning Borden to power.

In contrast the position of the Liberal press during the latter period of 1917 on the matter of coalition affords some interesting observations. After the coalition failure in June, the Liberal press was still divided but significantly enough, while most Liberal papers still supported conscription, coalition itself was treated as quite another matter.

The Liberal press of eastern Canada still continued strong opposition to union government (a term generally accepted by late summer, instead of the earlier coalition reference.)

The Daily Telegraph and The Sun (July 18, 1917)

attacked the conscription bill as setting the stage for an election, and (Aug. 7, 1917) accused Clifford Sifton of attempting a union of Western Liberals with the Borden Ministry "for election purposes." Again, (Aug. 22, 1917) it noted that "a Union government" would be formed to save the administration. It reiterated this sentiment (Aug. 30, 1917) noting "it was felt the whole scheme (of Union government) is designed to save the administration rather than serve the country or the Empire." Then came condemnation of the franchise bills (Sept. 10, 12, 1917). The latter editorial stated "the government has been steadily setting the stage for a flag election. It hopes to achieve two purposes by disfranchising the aliens." One purpose was "to give itself a character for noble and patriotic motives. The other is to limit the jury in close constituencies in hope that it may escape defeat which it otherwise will regard as certain." Two days later it quoted Clifford Sifton as being against the compulsory service bill but noted he later supported it. This paper felt his motives were to split the Liberal party rather than "to promote the union government scheme from disinterested motives." In one editorial (Sept. 12, 1917) this paper suggested a reason for the Sifton action. It stated that Sifton avoided the Western Convention itself because he was told he'd get a hot reception and this paper asked if Sifton wasn't motivated by revenge on Laurier because the latter had asked him (Sifton) to resign as Minister of the Interior several years previously. Finally (Oct. 5, 1917), this paper stated union

government overtures had as their chief object "the saving of the Borden Government and the perpetuation of its rule."

The Morning Chronicle, Halifax, continued its opposition to union government, pressing its attack largely during September. It observed (Aug. 17, 1917) that "tragic failure is written over the record of Sir Robert Borden and his Government. Their removal from office cannot be too quickly recovered." The paper later demanded to know whether it was patriotism, partisanship or personalism which prompted Borden to make an offer when he knew Laurier could not accept it (Sept. 6, 1917). Two days later it termed the franchise changes "a monstrous attack on the freedom of voting." Again (Sept. 13, 1917) it spoke of "Union by disfranchisement" and scored the use of closure to get The Wartime Elections Act, 1917 through Parliament. Next day it struck hard at a Parliament as a "Rump Parliament" of some forty-six vacancies, being used to get the Canadian Northern bill through Parliament. Four days later it noted that Britain and Canada went to war against Krueger in South Africa when Britishers were denied the franchise in the Transvaal. Later (Oct. 1, 1917) the paper printed a copy of a telegram¹ sent by a Toronto women's organization which requested a survey of opinion with regard to the question: "Would the granting of the Federal Franchise to women make conscription assured at the general election; if such is inevitable, taking into consideration

1. The organization sending the telegram and the recipient were not identified by the paper.

the vote of foreign women?" The telegram dated Toronto, August 2, 1917, requested the information be gleaned "as quietly as possible." The editorial scored the use of such organizations by the Tories who were afraid to conduct the enquiry openly. The publication so late in the fall of this information indicated this journal was anything but complimentary about the entire organization of the Borden Government or any that might join it.

The Island Patriot opposed to coalition in June, gave it no support during the summer and actively opposed it in August. This paper indicated (Aug. 25, 1917) that Laurier was "invited to join the Ministry for the purpose of disarming Liberal hostility to the Ministry that could not stand alone." It denounced (Sept. 11, 1917) the disfranchising regulations calling them "more German than Canadian" and the next day it attacked the C.N.R. deal. This journal held no love for the Borden administration.

The London Advertiser, opposed to the trend for a union government came out strongly for an election (July 19, 1917) while later (July 25, 1917) it noted conscription couldn't be an election issue since it would be on the books before an election occurred. This paper was willing to accept a genuine union government (July 28, 1917) but pointed out (Aug. 24, 1917) that such couldn't be attained "so long as Sir Robert chooses to remain at the helm...." Then (Sept. 13, 1917) it called on the Liberals "to save the country from disaster." Earlier, (Sept. 7, 1917) it had noted that the

Liberals kept unity in mind with an eye on the post-war years. A week later (Sept. 15, 1917) it warned the Liberals about the "Ottawa Greeks bearing gifts" and then observed four days later that the Franchise Act had only one end in view, viz: "the winning of the coming elections." It termed it "a brilliant piece of legislation" but "unfair and outrageous." One editorial (Sept. 21, 1917) urged a vote for Laurier over the Canadian Northern Railway bill, while another (Oct. 6, 1917) saw Ballantyne described as deserting the Liberals in 1911 over reciprocity. Then, as a final thrust it hailed the Union Cabinet of October as "The Patchwork Cabinet" with only Carvell a strong member (Oct. 13, 1917).

The Morning Leader, long a foe of coalition, was not too partial to it during the rest of 1917. It felt union fine if a strong leader could be found to work on a basis of the broad question of winning the war (Aug. 31, 1917). It scored Borden's desire to be the leader of such a union (Sept. 19, 1917), and two days later decried the disfranchising of foreigners. Next day it pointed out that such a party, victorious on this franchise, would sit tight and would not resign. However, (Oct. 13, 1917) this journal relented and praised the formation of the Union Government but gave all credit to the "patriotism and self sacrifice of the leading Liberals" as the chief reason for the Union. It based its argument on the idea that such a Government utilizing men like Calder, Carvell, Crerar and Rowell was immeasurably better now, since Crothers, Perley, Hughes, Rogers, Hazen and Roche

were out of it. At best it would appear that this paper appeared to see in Union Government the return of some Liberals to power in face of the dismal wartime future facing the official Liberal Party under Laurier. Still it heralded the coming of Union Government as filling a decided need in the country by the fall of 1917.

The Evening Bulletin formerly partial to coalition attacked Borden throughout the summer claiming Canada needed a new leader (July 19, 1917) and arguing four days later that the Western Liberals could force a union government upon Borden. It explained (June 13, 1917) that Borden called for help from Laurier when the Nationalists threatened to desert over conscription, and then (Aug. 1, 1917) claimed that big business wanted both a new leader as well as the disaffected Liberals to win the election. Clifford Sifton was suggested as a likely replacement by the paper. Six days later saw the same charges reiterated. Later, (Aug. 29, 1917) Sifton was called a would-be "wrecker" of the Liberal Party, while (Sept. 27, 1917) it called the disfranchising of some 40,000 aliens "Kaiser methods." Then this paper pulled out all stops (Oct. 8, 1917). Scoring the link with the Canadian Northern "exploiters" and disfranchising of citizens, the paper said that any man "who now enters the Borden government - whether Borden remains in or not - takes upon himself the responsibility of the attempt to establish autocratic as against democratic rule...."

The Victoria Daily Times (July 19, 1917) held that

Western Liberals were willing to give leadership to the country but couldn't under Sir Robert Borden. It attacked the franchise changes (Sept. 10 and 11, 1917) and praised Liberals who joined the Union Government (Oct. 19, 1917), but this journal, while partial to the Liberal coalitionists, had little good to say of the Conservative administration of Borden.

At this point it should be recorded that the chief change to be found in the attitude of Liberal papers since June was the shift of The Evening Bulletin from a position partial to coalition to one of violent attack on the union idea. But another trend is to be observed. While most Liberal papers gave the union agitation support or at least tolerance, The Toronto Daily Star and The Globe pushed harder than ever for it and were exceeded in zeal only by the Manitoba Free Press.

The Toronto Daily News gave it strong support during the summer, noting (July 30, 1917) that it was vital that there be no interference with coalition. It attacked the alien element in the West (Aug. 8, 1917) and accused, The Toronto Daily Star and The Globe of giving nominal support to coalition but wanting to destroy Borden. Obviously this paper was satisfied with Borden as leader of a coalition government.

This accusation concerning the two Toronto journals was quite true. The Toronto Daily Star (July 7, 1917), called for a reconstructed Government if a coalition was not formed. It noted that the Liberal editors in Ontario did not

favor Borden as Premier. Then (Sept. 4, 1917) saw this paper call for the "formation of a non-party National War Administration" and later (Sept. 8, 1917) it proposed a War Cabinet, separate from the regular Cabinet, excluding Borden from this scheme. The reason given was that the Conservatives favored only Borden as Premier, while the Western Liberals refused to serve him. It denounced the franchise Bill dealing with the foreigners in Canada (Sept. 6, 1917). Again, this journal scored the extreme bigotry of some of its Tory contemporaries. It noted (Sept. 15, 1917) that the Toronto Orange paper, The Sentinel, "has the Pope on the brain" while (Sept. 17, 1917) it termed The Evening Telegram "a rabid anti-Catholic journal" and blamed it for the first proposal to disfranchise various Canadians. Then (Oct. 13, 1917) The Toronto Daily Star claimed the Liberals in the Union Cabinet gave energy to it. This was the only type of approval it gave the Union Government.

The Globe of Toronto pushed for coalition as the summer folded to a close. It stood (Aug. 13, 1917) for "the immediate formation of a Cabinet representing the very strongest, straightest and most aggressive element in Canadian life; men whose capacity (...) has been tested, and in whose moral honesty and political sagacity the people of Canada have confidence." Later (Aug. 24, 1917) it stated that a "strong National Administration (...) would have the support of the Globe." Next day, the editorial favored The Military Voters Act, 1917. Again (Aug. 30, 1917), it felt

that only Borden remained as the stumbling block to a union government. It condemned the franchise change (Sept. 7, 1917) as "more German than Canadian." The next day it observed that "the manipulation of the franchise is a punishment for those Western Liberals who refused to enter a National Government under the leadership of Sir Robert Borden."

The Globe (Oct. 13, 1917) stated simply: "The Globe welcomes the formation of a Union Government."

The Manitoba Free Press (July 12, 1917) blamed Borden for the failure of the coalition effort in June terming the "form and character" of coalition to be "Borden's crowning political blunder." But it lauded the Premier for recognizing belatedly that demands of war exceeded party government. It noted that the public would support a new English Liberal Party (standing for Conscription), if it was prepared to join in coalition, provided the action was "inspired by regard for public good." The paper lauded a speech (in favor of union government) made by Clifford Sifton (July 12, 1917). Another edition (Aug. 7, 1917) believed that union government "is undoubtedly what people would like to see." Three days later it attacked Laurier for not joining coalition in June. Then, (Aug. 13, 1917), this paper urged the public to support only "Win-the-War" party representatives. This again illustrates the emphasis of this journal on co-operating with the war effort. Further support for union government was forthcoming (Aug. 16 and 17, 1917), to be followed by the statement (Aug. 23, 1917) that "a union government under Sir Robert

(Borden) is far preferable to no union at all...." Once more (Sept. 15, 1917), the paper urged union emphasizing "patriotism requires that this country should be saved from the evils of a party election and that it is the duty of Liberals to participate in the union government and give it all the possible assistance in its formation." It gave support to all the franchise changes noting on September 13, 1917 that the aliens would probably get the vote if the situation justified it. Finally (Oct. 1, 1917) this journal called once more for a union government.

Throughout the summer this paper was decidedly hostile to Laurier and the Liberals who opposed conscription. This hostility set in by mid-summer and did not abate as long as the paper strove for a union type Cabinet. Again, hostility was also shown against Quebec (July 27, 1917) while it violently attacked the Winnipeg Convention over the loyalty it showed to Sir Wilfred Laurier (Aug. 10, 1917).

Thus Borden received strong support from three of Canada's leading Liberal papers, The Toronto Daily Star, The Globe and the Manitoba Free Press. The latter's support was particularly important because it spoke for such outstanding Liberal protagonists of union government, viz: Clifford Sifton, John Dafoe and many Western Liberals.

The Nationalist press during the summer of 1917 was mainly concerned with the Military Service bill which it understandably opposed in vehement fashion. But as the summer passed, they fought for a lost cause.

Le Devoir (June 6, 1917) accused Borden of attempting a coalition in order to impose conscription and to prolong Parliament. He referred to Borden as "William (Hohenzollern) the Autocrat" and called Laurier "Wilfred the conciliator." The paper complained that both men had promised verbally that there would be no conscription. He warned Borden against duplicity and told him only the public had the right to decide on conscription. "Toute coalition des partis, à l'heure actuelle, serait inutile, dangereuse et immorale (...) Le Parlement n'est pas seulement moribond, il est mort, moralement...."

Three days later he softened towards Laurier and claimed that only Laurier could save the nation against her will. One editorial (July 4, 1917) lashed out at Sevigny. Playing on the Louis XIV dictum "L'état s'est moi", the paper noted that Canada was Sir Robert Borden, flanked by Robert Rogers and Albert Sevigny.

Then (July 26, 1917) it once again struck at Laurier whom it accused of desiring the same end (of all out war) as did Borden, noting however that instead of conscription for overseas service, Laurier wanted an all-out voluntary form of enlistment.

Entering August, Le Devoir still continued its attack on Borden's war effort as being too costly to Canada then transferred its attack to coalition expressing the notion on August 11 that coalition was a conspiracy and had failed due to an aroused public opinion led by Laurier and the Liberal

Party over conscription. Further, (Aug. 16, 1917), this journal blamed Laurier for not accepting the Borden offer to withdraw the demand for extending Parliament. The paper felt it would have stopped any further consideration of extending the five year limit of Parliament, a limit set by the Constitution of Canada. Then (Aug. 24, 1917) Le Devoir denounced the machinations of the Borden-Rogers-Sifton group. Then in two editorials, (Aug. 27, Sept. 7, 1917), this paper attacked the franchise changes. In the former editorial Le Devoir scored the idea of creating a special or new caste out of soldiers for voting purposes, observing that the soldiers would vote as they were told. In the latter editorial Bourassa's journal came to a blunt conclusion. "Tout cela, on ne s'en cache pas le moins du monde, pour assurer aux théories du gouvernement une majorité des suffrages exprimés." Four days later the paper spoke of the "mad-time" election Act and struck at the creation of "a militarist society" and observed that decent citizens couldn't vote under the Act while female relatives of some very obnoxious, even criminal types of soldiers, got the vote. Finally (Oct. 12, 1917) Bourassa passed judgment on the Union Cabinet. He noted that there was no real proof of strength in the Cabinet observing that Carvell was now associating with men he had previously attacked. Bourassa lamented that only Sevigny was to represent French Canada commenting that no other French Canadian "would condescend to sit" in the Union Cabinet.

Borden had lost the support of the Nationalist press over conscription but was supported by nearly all the prominent journals, both Liberal and Conservative. On union government he held the support of many prominent Conservative papers and the leading Liberal journals in Toronto and Winnipeg. Eastern Canadian Liberal papers plus one or two Western journals opposed union government. On the whole, while newspaper support on conscription was nearly unanimous, the support for union government, while not as strong, was significant in its intensity and location. Borden did well by the press of both parties on conscription and the formation of the Union Government.

III

PUBLIC OPINION: ITS EFFECT ON CONSCRIPTION.

Public opinion, as to conscription, was almost non-existent as a major force during 1914 and 1915. In a talk given at Upper Canada College, Toronto, reported editorially in The Mail and Empire of Toronto, (Oct. 19, 1914), Lt. Col. Hendrie, President of the Canadian Defence League, made a strong demand for conscription. The Mail and Empire reported another speech by the same Colonel (Aug. 31, 1915, p.1 col.1) when he demanded compulsory service in a speech opening the Canadian National Exhibition. The Toronto Star Weekly, (Oct. 23, 1915) quoted a demand for conscription from four legal figures in Toronto, Magistrate Kingsford, Chief Justice

Falconbridge, Mr. Justice Kelly and Col. Paterson, K.C.¹ Then The Globe (Dec. 1, 1915, p.8 col.4) reported a meeting of the Canadian Defence League. "A resolution petitioning the Government to exercise its power and call out the first class of the militia, namely, all the men over 18 and under 30 years who are unmarried or widowers without children, was passed unanimously by the large meeting." This same group were reported in The Globe (Mar. 29, 1916, p.6 col.4) as demanding the enforcement of the Militia Act. The Canadian Defence League, formed in 1909, was composed on the executive level of military figures as well as James Hughes, brother of Sam Hughes, and Sir Edmund Walker.

During 1916 prominent business men and firms protested the drain recruiting had upon their industries. These included Sir John Eaton, The Consumers Gas, The Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company, the Dominion Steel Company as well as the Munitions Section of the Canadian Manufacturers Association². Again, on March 9, 1917 Lord Shaughnessy complained that the offer of 500,000 men would prove a serious draft on the working population of the country³. Nevertheless strong

-
1. This reference is attributed to The Toronto Star Weekly, Oct. 23, 1917, the clipping being labelled such in the T.P.L. Scrapbook, XX, 104a. The wording indicates an interview with The Toronto Daily Star, but the Star, on this date, does not contain it while the file on The Toronto Star Weekly for this period is no longer available. In all likelihood the interviewer was a Toronto Daily Star reporter since both papers had the one owner.
 2. C.A.R., 1916, 319. The C.A.R. gives an excellent balanced account of public opinion during 1916-1917, on this subject.
 3. Ibid.

demands came forth for some sort of compulsory service. These included: J.W. Woods, President, Board of Trade, Toronto (Jan. 17); Col. Denison (Feb. 26) favoring the Militia Act; the President, Canadian Automobile Association (Mar. 8) supporting the Militia Act; Lt. Col. Guthrie, M.L.A. (Ont.); The Citizens Recruiting League of Winnipeg, (Apr. 3); The New Brunswick Legislature (Apr. 12) favoring "the calling to the colours all men of suitable military age...."¹

On April 14, 1916, delegates from forty-two recruiting Leagues from across Canada waited upon the Prime Minister to offer suggestions as to recruiting matters. Chief Justice Mathers of Winnipeg, speaking for the delegates asked for "enforced military service or some well regulated system of selection"².

The Globe noted the Premier's reply: "As for conscription itself, he could not commit himself before conference with his Ministers, but promised earnest consideration of the delegation's representations"³.

As a result of the Ottawa meeting, the various recruiting leagues across Canada decided to join as one. Accordingly there came into existence the Canadian National Service League with Judge Mathers (Winnipeg) Honorary President, and J. M. Godfrey (Toronto) President. Its objectives

-
1. Op.cit. 322.
 2. Quoted in The Globe April 15, 1916, p.20, col.1.
 3. Ibid.

included "any form of National Service" with compulsory action the "practical advocacy"¹.

In an interview given to The Toronto Daily News (June 12, 1916, p.2, col.5) Mr. Godfrey spoke his views. "I favor authoritative selection. Such selection (...) would mean a selection (...) of every person of both sexes, from 15 to 65 years of age, for all purposes in connection with the war."

Then, in a meeting of some twenty two societies, on June 12, 1916, all members of the Canadian National Service League, a resolution was passed demanding the voluntary system be replaced "by enforced national service under a proper system of selection"².

As the summer bore on further urging for compulsion came from these groups: Anglican Synod of Ruperts Land, Edmonton, (Aug. 10); Montreal Women's Club, (Oct. 23); a Hamilton Labor Leader, speaking in Toronto, (Nov. 5); The Canadian Military Institute, (Nov. 9); Local Council of Women, Victoria, B.C.; Sam Hughes, Lindsay, Ont. (Dec. 24)³.

Throughout 1916, many outstanding men added support for some type of compulsory service. These were made up of: Rev. Prof. Law, Knox College, Toronto; Sir Wm. Peterson, McGill, Montreal; Mayor Trilley of St. John, N.B; R.E. Kingsford and Judge Coatsworth of Toronto; Bishop Farthing of Montreal and Bishop Williams of Huron; Sir Hugh Macdonald of

1. Quoted in C.A.R. 1916, 323.

2. Ibid. 324.

3. C.A.R., 1916, 324.

Winnipeg; S.F. Washington, K.C., Hamilton; Lieutenant-Colonel Mathews, D.S.O., Victoria; J.P. Bell, General Manager, Bank of Montreal, Hamilton; Sir Clive Phillips-Wolley, Victoria; Sir C.H. Tupper, H. Bell-Irving, G.H. Cowan, K.C., H.H. Stevens, M.P. of Vancouver¹.

Further support for compulsion came in Resolutions from the following: The Local Council of Women, Toronto, Montreal; The Women's Canadian Club, Toronto; The Presbyterian Ministers' Association, Montreal; The Army and Navy Veterans, Winnipeg; The Anglican Synod of Huron; The Grand Orange Lodges of New Brunswick and Ontario West; The Congregational Union of Canada; Toronto Anglican Synod; The Citizens Recruiting League of Toronto, Windsor, Stratford, Fredericton and Saskatoon².

The various recruiting leagues kept up their efforts during 1916. The Toronto Globe (Sept. 22, 1916, p.11, col.5), remarking on the activities of the Welland County Recruiting League quoted the League as concluding that the limit of the voluntary system had been reached, and that the only resource left was conscription. Further, a "resolution was unanimously passed calling upon the Government to put Conscription into force. (...) Recruiting leagues throughout Canada will be asked to endorse this action."

Some demand arose for a compulsory registration of all Canadians, but this was not as drastic a step as the

1. Op.cit. 322.

2. Ibid. 324.

growing force favoring conscription. The following voiced a strong demand for registration of manpower: The Central Recruiting League, (Mar. 18), Stratford City Council and Board of Trade; Saskatchewan Lodges, Sons of England; Executive of Western Recruiting League, (Apr. 25); Anglican Synod, Methodist Conference and Presbyterian General Assembly, Toronto and Winnipeg; 4,000 women representing their Toronto organizations, (June 2); Canadian Manufacturers Association, (June 14-15); Conference, Recruiting Agencies, Montreal¹.

But this pro-registration sympathy was easily converted to a positive position on conscription, as noted by Castell Hopkins, Editor, Canadian Annual Review.

Naturally, the advocates of Registration merged more or less into an advocacy of Conscription, while the critics of voluntarism and all who found recruiting slow or difficult easily fell into a support of compulsory methods. As the months passed the Militia Act became a favored basis for action².

Thus, up to 1916, support for conscription, while nationwide in scope, was confined largely to the bigger cities, and was concentrated in Ontario and Western Canada. Again, most of it came from Civic bodies, Womens' Clubs, Veterans' organizations, Militia officers, Church groups (particularly the Anglican Church), all of an English speaking background. The Mennonites were opposed to it. Little support came for it in Eastern Canada, in rural areas or among ethnic groups of foreign extraction, and no support from

1. Op.cit. 321.
2. Ibid. 322.

Quebec or the French Canadians. But such support for conscription was sporadic and was tinged with a background largely of British extraction. At no time did this support become nationwide in organization (excepting the National Service League), and at best, while vociferous, it remained sporadic and varying in intensity. At best it indicated the source of support for conscription, a support that was largely localized, intermittent, but indicative of a significant potentiality.

But what of the opposition to conscription? A significant lead in this respect was noted by The Toronto Star Weekly, (Sept. 22, 1916). This influence was on the Parliamentary level, and such a dissemination of opinion, by The Toronto Star Weekly, was bound to filter down into the subconscious of the readers.

Those who favor standing by the voluntary system are: Sir Robert Borden, Hon. C.J. Doherty, Sir George Foster, Hon. T.W. Crothers, Hon. T. Chase Casgrain, Hon. P.E. Blondin and Hon. E.L. Patenaude. The Prime Minister and the French Canadian Ministers are said to oppose steps toward compulsion on the ground that Conscription would be politically inexpedient in Quebec and that measures excluding Quebec would be fiercely resented by the rest of Canada. Messrs. Casgrain, Blondin and Patenaude are understood to be particularly antagonistic to any departure from voluntarism.

The same editorial noted that Meighen, Roche, White, Rogers, Perley, Reid, Hazen, Cochrane and Burrell favored conscripting unmarried men if recruiting did not improve.

But the most distinctive influence exhibited against conscription came from organized labor.

During 1916, and throughout the entire year, protests from Labor groups were heard from these sources: Toronto Trades and Labor Council supported voluntary system, (Mar.16); New Westminster, B.C. Trades and Labor Council, (May 10); Victoria Trades and Labor Council opposed to National Registration as a step to conscription, (Dec. 6); Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council opposed to National Registration (Dec. 21); Toronto Meeting of Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, (Sept. 25-30)¹.

Borden personally received ample proof that some portions of labor opposed conscription. On December 21, 1916 the Executive of a West coast labor group demanded a referendum unless there was to be "total conscription"². Next day a second telegram arrived, this one from a labor journal on the West coast which put its point bluntly. "Let it not be forgotten that the shilling comes first"³. On December 30, a Vancouver Labor Group protested that National Registration would lead to conscription and demanded a referendum on compulsory service⁴.

"The Social Democratic Party in Winnipeg, the Socialist organization in general, and the Single Tax League, joined in this opposition"⁵.

-
1. C.A.R., 1916, 430.
 2. Executive, Trades and Labor Council, Vancouver and Victoria, to Borden, Dec. 21, 1916, Borden Papers, OC 313 (1), no.34635.
 3. B.C. Federationist, (paper) to Borden, Dec. 22, 1916, Borden Papers, OC 313 (1), no.34638.
 4. Vancouver Trades and Labor Council to Borden, Dec. 30, 1916, Borden Papers, OC 313 (1), no.34640.
 5. C.A.R., 1916, 430.

Such clamor from organized labor did not represent the official viewpoint of labor leaders, but rather the rank and file. Most Canadian labor, was unorganized and had enlisted in great numbers. Still, these protests from labor groups, were the only tangible opposition to conscription, and were significant in that they were protests from an organized element in the Canadian scene. While not uniform, they were widespread and signalled the determination and tenacity of the groups concerned.

During 1917 support for conscription grew stronger during the early months but waned considerably between the time Borden left for England (February) and returned (May). Then it burst forth in violent fashion.

Borden's National Service scheme received support in a telegram (Jan. 5, 1917) sent by the Orange Lodge of Rocklake County, Manitoba. "We the members of the above Lodge of the Orange Association most heartily support your National Service policy...."¹

But direct support for conscription during January and February as reported in the Canadian Annual Review for those months, came from these varied sources: Sir H.C. Tupper, Independent Conservative, (Jan. 4); Conservative group, Niagara Falls, (Jan. 9); A.M. Nanton, C.W. Rowley, J.H. Munson and other prominent Winnipeg citizens (petition to Borden); The War and National Service League, Vancouver,

1. Rockland County Orange Lodge, Manton, (Man.) to Borden, Jan. 5, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 313, no.34662.

(Jan. 24); a Council of Military Officers, under Maj. Gen. Logie, Ottawa, (Jan. 24); The National Service Board Conference, Ottawa, (Feb. 10); Lt. Col. J. Cooper, Toronto, (Feb. 12); Military Officers, M.D.1, London (Feb. 12); Winnipeg Convention, Manitoba Agricultural Societies (Feb. 14); Toronto City Council, (Feb. 19)¹. Typical of the requests coming from these groups was that of the National Service Board at Ottawa which asked that "action should be taken by the Dominion Government to mobilize a large army for home defence, and the provisions of the Militia Act in that behalf should be made effective"². On February 4, the Grand Orange Lodge at Vancouver demanded conscription be passed³.

Early in January, 1917, Mr. Godfrey, President of the Canadian National Service League gave a big boost to conscription. "Everyone engaged in active recruiting for any length of time becomes a conscriptionist. He soon sees that the voluntary system is ineffective, unfair, unequal, undemocratic, wasteful, and not really British"⁴.

The Globe (Jan. 3, 1917, p.3, col.2) recorded a demand for compulsory service from a representative gathering of citizens from Windsor, Walkerville and Sandwich.

Again, (Jan. 28, 1917, p.1, col.1) this same paper quoted Sam Hughes, ex-Minister of Militia, as saying that if

1. C.A.R., 1917, 337.

2. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 337.

3. C.A.R., 1917, 482.

4. Quoted in Hopkins, Canada at War, 84.

he were still Minister of Militia he'd enforce the Militia Act and enroll up to 300,000 men.

Parliament prorogued in February and Borden went to England. Public demands for conscription dropped off during this period but arose again later in March. From March to May, 1917 The Globe published demands from the following variety of sources: Great War Veterans Company, Toronto, (May 9, p.9, col.2); Hon. T. McGarry, Ontario Provincial Secretary, (Mar. 6, p.10, col.1); Toronto Headquarters, Loyal Orange Lodge, (Mar. 15, p.7 col.3); Montreal City Council (refusal to pass a motion condemning use of Militia bill, (Mar. 15, p.3, col.5); Mayor Church of Toronto, (Mar. 19, p.8, col.4); The Womens Club, Belleville, (Mar. 28, p.3, col.6); Royal Navy Recruiting Meeting, Loew's Theatre, Toronto, (Mar. 28, p.8 col.4); combined meeting of Ingersoll (Ont.) Town Council and Woodstock City Council, Board of Trade, Returned Soldiers Association, and Patriotic Association, (all addressed by Maj. Gen. Hodgins of Ottawa), (Apr. 6, p.2 col.2); Sam Hughes, Lindsay, (Apr. 30, p.7, col.1); Meeting of Maj. Gen. Mewburn and Chief Military Officers of Manitoba, (May 3, p.7, col.2); The Canadian Defence League, Toronto, (May 9, p.8, col.4); Alberta War Veterans (Calgary), (May 12, p.30, col.3); Rowell, (address to recruiting officers, M.D. 1), (May 14, p.8, col.6); Toronto City Council, (May 15, p.8, col.1); Orillia City Council, (May 16, p.15, col.1).

This interesting resurgence of support for conscription, after mid-March, is borne out by two other significant

factors. The correspondence of Sir Robert Borden bears no evidence of any great demand for conscription during the early spring of 1917. Again, that excellent survey of national events, the Canadian Annual Review shows a paucity of public reaction between mid-February and May. Its only recorded reference to demands for compulsion in this source saw the Edmonton Board of Trade, the Canadian Defence League and the Annual Meeting of the Women's Anglican Diocesan Auxiliary, all favoring compulsion¹.

One of the most vehement agitators for conscription was Rev. Father L. Minehan, a Catholic priest attached to the parish of St. Vincent de Paul in Toronto. This man and Bishop Fallon of London, Ontario, were the outstanding Catholic clergymen who supported conscription. Father Minehan seconded the motion for conscription passed by the Canadian Defence League, at Toronto, on May 9, 1917².

An indication of the public support, which really existed, came to the fore between the time Borden announced his intention of instituting conscription and the actual introduction of the Military Service bill. This was significant because it enabled Borden to decide between the Militia Act, already Statute, or a new, more sweeping piece of legislation. Again, as will be seen, this support, while much more widespread in scope and greater in intensity than it had ever been, was nevertheless a mirror on a larger scale of the same

1. C.A.R., 1917, 337.

2. Reported in The Globe, May, 9, 1917, p.8, col.4.

source of support already made known. One factor, that was bound to have prompted this sudden boosting in the public demand for conscription was the savage battles indulged in by Canadian troops late in the Spring. These battles had severe casualties. In England, The London Standard commented on the action at Vimy. "From a direct source we hear that the whole four Canadian divisions went over Vimy. The capture of this key position, no matter what the lack, is purely the reward of skilful preparation by the leaders, backed by incomparable troops"¹.

Following the announced plan of Borden to apply compulsion, this type of support for conscription was recorded: Hon. E. Brown, Provincial Treasurer, (May 18); Hon. T.H. Brown, of the Manitoba Government (June 4); Toronto Liberal meeting, (48 men), including Frank Beer, W.G. Jaffray, M.H. Mowat, W. Mulock Jr., J.E. Atkinson, Dr. Michael Clarke, N.W. Rowell, M.L.A; S.J. Moore, Father Minehan, G.G.S. Lindsey, Ald. J. Ramsden (June 9); a Toronto Conservative meeting including S.W. Hearst, Hon. T.W. McGary; R.W. Rowell (Lib.), (June 11); Open Air meeting, Queen's Park, Toronto (June 2); Victoria, (B.C.) Conservative Association, Hon. J.A. Mathieson, Premier of Prince Edward Island;² Methodist Church official groups in New Brunswick, Alberta and Ontario; the General Superintendent of the Methodist Church; Bishop Worrell (N.S.), who claimed 44% of Canadian forces to be

1. Quoted in The Globe, Apr. 13, 1917, p.1, col.2.
2. C.A.R., 1917, 339-40.

Anglican, Bishop Farthing of Montreal, Bishop Sweeney of Toronto, (all Anglican Prelates); the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church¹.

Borden himself received an interesting spread of support for conscription during early June, 1917. The Alberta Methodist Conference telegraphed its support on June 4². On the same date there arrived a demand for conscription from the Lethbridge Board of Trade³. Again, the Patriotic Club of Emerson Junction, Manitoba, sent its support on June 4⁴. June 5 saw support from H.E. Harris of The Advertiser of Kentville (N.S.)⁵. Next day the Brandon (Man.) City Council telegraphed support⁶, while the Mayor of Hamilton, on behalf of citizens there, also telegraphed support for conscription⁷.

Thus in 1917, Borden received the same type of support for conscription as had been forthcoming during the earlier war years. But certain groups were noticeably absent in their support. These included the foreign element out West, French Canada, organized labour, farmers and business groups. Also, his support came largely from English speaking cities

1. Op.cit. 414-5.
2. Methodist Conference, Alberta, to Borden, June 4, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39700.
3. Lethbridge Board of Trade, to Borden, June 4, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39702.
4. Emerson Junction Patriotic Club, Emerson Junction, (Man.), to Borden, June 4, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357, no.39703.
5. H.E. Harris to Borden, June 5, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39706.
6. Brandon (Man.) City Council to Borden, June 6, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39711.
7. Mayor, Hamilton, Ont. to Borden, June 10, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39729-32.

and towns, from councils, service clubs, recruiting groups, and such church groups as the Anglicans and Methodists. By no means was this demand for conscription unanimous or uniform throughout Canada. Quebec and the Maritimes were largely silent, except for Military groups and officers, who along with recruiting groups kept the demand alive.

On the other hand much opposition arose to conscription, and as during the period 1915-1916 it came from organized labor. During 1917, as early as January, such labor groups as these protested any form of conscription: Labor meetings in Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Winnipeg; Socialists at Port Arthur¹. Labor, as a group, felt that conscription of wealth was as justified as that of men. But perhaps the best summary of labor's hostile position both to conscription and to the Borden Government came on May 18, 1917, from the lips of James Simpson,² Vice President of the Trades and Labor Council of Canada.

The Government has not commanded the respect and confidence of the Labour organizations of Canada in its administration of the country's affairs during this crisis.... He (Sir Robert Borden) has not taken the organized labor movement of Canada into his confidence, nor has he conferred with Labour's Chief representative since he returned, and until such time as he does we are justified in assuming that conscription is not necessary³.

However, once the plan for compulsion was announced. labor meetings ranging from Halifax to Toronto, to Vancouver

-
1. C.A.R., 1917, 418.
 2. Mr. Simpson was later elected Mayor of Toronto.
 3. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 418.

and Victoria, protested the plan, with an Anti-conscription League formed in Vancouver on May 27, 1917 while on June 2, 1917, the National Labor Conference meeting in Ottawa passed this Resolution: "We declare ourself as most emphatically opposed to the proposed Conscription measure, and we urge the workers in Canada to oppose, by every means in their power, the enactment of such legislation"¹.

However during June, some labor groups endorsed conscription (Lethbridge, Toronto, Regina) while labor officials (Locomotive Engineers Union) protested that the anti-conscription views of Mr. Watters (President, Trades and Labor Council of Canada) "did not represent Canadian Labour"².

Castell Hopkins, noted that during 1917, "only organized labor expressed itself in an articulate form upon Conscription though 20,000 went (overseas) voluntarily from the former and 130,000 from the organized section"³.

French Canadian opposition to conscription was shown by the huge anti-conscription rallies held in various centres in Quebec. In groups up to 10,000 angry French Canadians met in Montreal, Hull and lesser cities to indicate their dislike of the conscription proposal. This opposition crystallized itself in the latter portion of May, 1917. Le Devoir (May 29, 1917, p.1, col.7) published a petition which it urged its readers to support so as to register protest against a compulsory measure which would send Canadians across the sea.

1. Op.cit. 418-20.

2. Ibid. 423.

3. C.A.R., 1917, 423.

The petition was addressed to the "citizens and mothers of families." This step by the newspaper indicated how deeply were its feelings on the matter.

Le Devoir pointed out (June 22, 1917) that in the English speaking provinces where the important papers favored conscription, a "veritable reign of terror" had been established to the detriment of the anti-conscriptionists. This would suggest why few people (outside of Quebec) would have the courage to attack conscription at any time during the war, since the risk of being labelled unpatriotic would be very great.

During March, 1917, Borden himself received an interesting communique upon the attitude of Canadian women on conscription. The poll was conducted by the magazine, Every-woman's World, and the results sent to Borden by Murray Simonski, the editor.

Whereas by a vote the women of Canada have declared themselves as being strongly opposed to Conscription by a vote giving the large majority of six to one, we, as trustees of the integrity of the Women's Parliament of Canada, present this resolution to the Government of Canada, praying that it will be given due consideration and deliberation in the Councils of the Government which must decide whether enlistment shall be by Conscription or continue to be Voluntary¹.

But once he had announced his intent to enforce some type of compulsory enlistment, Borden found the former supporters of conscription emerging once again. A typical

1. M. Simonski to Borden, March 24, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 313 (4), no.35092.

example was the Toronto Home and School Association that went on record on May 24, 1917, for conscription¹, such a stand being common among similar groups.

Prior to May, 1917, and his proposal to conscript Canadians, Borden saw a divided land on the issue. His support was sporadic and could not be very adequately determined since the supporters of conscription were localized into the towns and cities, were English speaking and centred in Ontario and the West. This support, though vociferous, came from the same similar source, at all times, viz. Clubs, civic groups, recruiting groups, etc. The broad mass of Canadians were not heard from, though French Canadians and labor were regarded as hostile. The Borden Papers show no overwhelming support for conscription from the public while he lends no credence in his Memoirs to the apparently erroneous supposition that the mass of people supported it. It was quite obvious that his Government or the later Union Government would stand or fall upon the issue of Conscription. The fact that he found it necessary to give the vote to overseas troops, plus women bound to support conscription, but not all women, coupled with the fact that he had to disfranchise many thousands of "foreigners" in Canada, all indicated he was by no means sure of a majority support for conscription. It indicated that as the franchise stood in 1917 he feared defeat for the conscription policy by a

1. Toronto Home and School Association to Borden, May 24, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 285, no.32194.

defeat of the Government. Also, he refused a referendum or a vote of public confidence on it once the legislation became law. But the telling point to indicate his fear of public support for conscription lay in the fact that when the election was over, despite all the tricks used to gain votes, the count showed that across the country there were eighty-two straight Liberals, thirty-eight Union Liberals, plus one hundred and fifteen Conservatives.

As usual, but in more pronounced degree, the results did not correspond fairly to the popular vote. In Nova Scotia, the Liberals should have had half, instead of one fourth the seats, and in Ontario one-third instead of one-tenth, while in Quebec the Government polled one fourth the vote and secured one-twentieth of the seats. In Ontario, Laurier polled sixty thousand votes more than in 1911. Much of this lack of correspondence between votes and seats was due to the system of single member constituencies, and incurable unless with the adoption of some method of proportional representation. Much of it, however, in the case of the soldiers' vote, was due to flagrant manipulation and wholesale jobbery, the ballots being assigned to close constituencies regardless of the men's real residence¹.

IV

PUBLIC OPINION: ITS INFLUENCE ON UNION GOVERNMENT.

For more than a year before my return from England the project of a coalition Government had from time to time been mooted in the Press and otherwise. (...) I had always held and I more than once expressed the view that such a coalition could never be created until conditions made it practically inevitable².

1. Skelton, Laurier, II, 541-2.
2. Borden, Memoirs, II, 720.

Public opinion was one of the conditions at play during the War and coalition received its due attention. Significantly the Borden Papers, the various newspapers, as well as the Canadian Annual Review, record little public agitation for a coalition government until 1917. Regarding 1915 the Canadian Annual Review noted "there was desultory discussion of the Coalition idea during the year, based largely upon Sir Wilfred Laurier's utterances in Parliament and in Toronto during May." It observed too that the discussion "was not a serious one...."¹

1916 was uneventful in this respect but the public interest in coalition received an impetus over the matter of the National Service scheme with its (voluntary) registration cards. While conscription agitation was in some evidence during this period, the demand for a coalition was not correspondingly as strong. But the renewed public interest in a more decisive war effort, reflected in and sparked by the registration late in 1916, saw the first real evidence not only of the spread of opinion on coalition but also the degree of intensity.

The obviously apparent fact to be noted during the early part of 1917 was not so much the lack of agitation for coalition but rather the unique confliction of motives held by those interested in it.

1. C.A.R., 1915, 286.

Public opinion at this stage was absolutely nebulous. Party glasses obscured vision except in a few outstanding cases. J.G. Turiff, M.P. (Lib.) thought a National Government spelled control by the "big interests"; Western Grain Growers wondered how far it would advance or retard freer trade and lower tariff movements; Conservative declarations at Party meetings that it was all a scheme of the Liberals to get into office still evoked cheers; those who wanted to "get together" still held vague views as to what form the policy would take - should it be a coalition of political parties as they stood, or an attempt to combine such apparently opposing interests as the French-Canadians and Orangemen, the Manufacturers and Western Agricultural elements in a Union Government for special war effort, or the bringing of financial, industrial and other leaders into what would be a National as distinct from a political Government¹.

Nevertheless, there did exist a strong current of opinion favoring coalition and it was determined in an unusual fashion. The Toronto Daily Star sent inquiries to several hundred Reeves, Mayors, Presidents of Canadian Clubs, and Boards of Trade across Canada, asking their views on coalition. The findings were rather startling. The results were published on several dates (Jan. 2, 25, 27, Feb. 3, 1917) and showed an overwhelming majority of the signees in favor of coalition. One edition (Jan. 27, 1917, p.8, col.1) indicated that of a total of 304 telegraphed answers received, 211 (80%) favored coalition, 82 were opposed and 11 were indecisive. Again, (Feb. 3, 1917, p.9, col.1), a batch of 65 western replies were printed, showing that 80% of these favored coalition.

These findings, by this Liberal journal, covered the entire nation including such diverse cities and towns as

1. Op.cit. 1917, 557.

New Glasgow, N.S., Rapid City, Man., Valleyfield, Que., Campbelltown, N.B., Emerson, Man., and ranged out to the west coast. Again several officials of towns and cities in Quebec showed favor to the idea.

Prior to the negotiations for coalition in May, 1917, ample proof existed to show the presence of a growing demand for some sort of a united Cabinet. Urgings along these lines in 1917 came from: The Winnipeg Ministerial Association, (Jan. 15); The Winnipeg Canadian Club, (Jan. 24); the Toronto Canadian Club; the Winnipeg Board of Trade, (Jan. 25); The Rotary Club of Winnipeg, (Jan. 24); The Vancouver Board of Trade, (Mar. 2); Win-the-War Movement, Toronto, led by Mr. Godfrey, and attended by Sir William Mulock and Archbishop McNeil, (R.C.) which planned a National Convention (National Unity Convention); National Unity Convention, Montreal, attended by such people as Archbishop Worrell, Halifax, Sir William Mulock, Frank Wise and J.M. Godfrey of Toronto, Mr. Justice Runnell and Chief Justice McLeod of New Brunswick, plus other prominent men such as L'Abbe D'Amour, Quebec, Lt. Col. Mulloy, blinded veteran of South African War, and other business and military figures, all of whom favored the resolution: "The provision of necessary reinforcements for the army"¹.

Between January and May, Borden himself received personal telegrams from a variety of groups and areas, demanding coalition of some sort. On January 5, 1917 the Winnipeg

1. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 559-60.

Presbytery called for coalition¹. Labor added its voice on January 17, 1917 when the Brantford (Ont.) Trades and Labor Council asked for a national type government². On the last day of January, 1917, the Trades and Labor Council of Nelson, B.C. endorsed a national government³. During 1917 Labor was not opposed in principle to the idea of a coalition.

While Borden was away in England attempts were made to utilize the findings of the National Service Registration and a home defence force drive was begun. But the public demand for coalition scarcely amounted to anything unusual, let alone a national agitation, during the Prime Minister's absence. The Canadian press, the Borden Papers, the Canadian Annual Review, show little evidence of any strong current of opinion on coalition while Borden was in England from February to May, 1917. But the coming of May and the scheduled return to Canada of the Prime Minister revived the public interest for coalition, particularly since many newspapers were keeping the idea alive. Once again such interest stemmed from such usual sources as prominent Canadians, largely English speaking, from large cities and towns, and was confined to Ontario and Western regions. Little concern for coalition was shown by the public in the Maritimes or in Quebec while both Liberal and Conservative groups, such as local party

1. Winnipeg Presbytery to Borden, Jan. 5, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 285, no.32164.
2. Brantford (Ont.), Trades and Labor Council to Borden, Jan. 17, 1917, Borden Papers OC 285, no.32171.
3. Nelson (B.C.), Trades and Labor Council to Borden, Jan.31, 1917, Borden Papers OC 285, no.32176.

organizations and officials, also evinced little interest in coalition. Borden admitted that even among his colleagues, discussions on coalition helped him very little and he conceded the point that his decision to ask Laurier was based on his own reasoning¹. He gives no indication that he was moved by the presence of any surging pleas for coalition by the public. While some segments of the public had made very audible requests for conscription, this same groupage had not been as vociferous or widespread in their demand for coalition. Even the newspapers, practically unanimous for conscription, were badly split on coalition, the Conservative press lukewarm to it, the Liberal press divided into very hostile camps on the issue. This newspaper reaction points up the fact that the journals themselves provided no uniform lead for public opinion on coalition (as was done in regard to conscription). All of which indicates that prior to May, 1917, Borden did not have any adequate gauge for determining how the broad mass of the public thought on the idea of coalition. Still, he knew the source of his support, and this was not as widespread as its counterpart for conscription. The key to this lay in the fact that party partisan thinking excluded many Liberals and Conservatives from the idea, while the uncertainty of an election as opposed to an extension of Parliament, added confusion to the scene.

1. Borden, Memoirs, II, 720.

Borden, having announced his plan for conscription, invited Laurier to join a coalition government. The Prime Minister had nothing to lose, since the formation of a coalition government was unlikely to provoke an unfavorable response from either party due to the fact that coalition by its very nature tends to bury partyism. Again the desirability of an all out co-operative war effort, the aim of coalition, would have submerged most of the unfavorable reaction.

Borden's strategy in announcing conscription and then offering coalition was clever because it put the onus of refusing the offer square on Laurier. This caused many Laurier supporters to fall away (e.g. John Dafoe).

It is obvious that Borden was aware of what could properly be termed a public indifference to coalition, rather than outright hostility to it, since there is no tangible evidence of any organized resistance to it, (e.g. as labor opposed conscription), or in fact, any opposition other than the party loyalty of many Liberals who refused to share the opprobrium due Borden's Government for its mismanagement of certain aspects of the war effort. Again among Conservatives, the Cabinet did not want coalition, since it would mean the removal of half its membership. The magnificent loyalty shown to Laurier by so many of his followers indicated that Borden could not rely upon any support from those loyal followers. The Conservative hostility to any incorporation of Liberals in the Government, a hostility which ranged from the Cabinet down to many of the rank and file, also signified little

support from that source. While both parties opposed coalition for different motives the effect was the same, little support for it of any great significance prior to May, 1917.

With the announcement of compulsion in mid-May, the picture changed. Support emerged quickly, but the situation too had changed. The pro-conscription element in Canadian life, anxious to put through such a bill and seeing the feasibility of Laurier sharing its responsibility, joined forces. Conscription set the stage for all future negotiations. The Liberal members who supported the Military Service Act gave a new hope for coalition to this element. Late in May, 1917, the Winnipeg Canadian Club indicated its support¹. On May 25, a delegate to the Win-the-War Convention (National Unity Convention) at Montreal telegraphed support for a coalition government². On June 4, telegraphed support for coalition came to Borden from the Methodist Conference of Alberta³, the Patriotic Club of Emerson, Manitoba⁴, and the Lethbridge Board of Trade⁵.

On June 5, the owner of the Kentville (N.S.), The Advertiser wrote to Borden urging coalition⁶. Next day

1. Winnipeg Canadian Club to Borden, circa May 20, 1917, Borden Papers OC 285, no.32191.
2. Albert Burns to Borden, May 25, 1917, Borden Papers OC 285, no.32197.
3. Alberta Methodist Conference to Borden, June 4, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39700.
4. Emerson Junction Patriotic Club, Emerson, Manitoba, to Borden, June 4, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39703.
5. Lethbridge Board of Trade to Borden, June 4, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39702.
6. H. Harris to Borden, June 5, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39706.

Brandon City Council telegraphed a demand for it,¹ while June 10 saw the Mayor of Hamilton representing "citizens in Hamilton", urging coalition². Before June was out further support came from Hugh Guthrie (M.P.), Frank Pardee (M.P.), and Rev. G. Bland from Winnipeg who noted "the passionate desire of Canada for National Government should be met and Sir Robert should reconstruct his Government"³. The Baptist Convention of Manitoba telegraphed to Borden a demand for a "National Government"⁴. June 10 saw over 300 Conservatives meeting in Winnipeg to discuss Government policy but no endorsement of Union Government was made⁵.

Support of a more significant nature emerged during July, 1917. On July 26, Liberal editors from Ontario met and resolved the following: "A Cabinet and Government representing both parties and the strong forces of the nation working for the winning of the War is, therefore, necessary"⁶.

The Canadian Annual Review of 1917 noted that "the Bonne Entente movement of 1916, the National unity plan of earlier in 1917, had developed into a Win-the-War and National Government advocacy with J.M. Godfrey, B.A. Gould, Frank Wise and others as the promoters of a new convention to be held in Toronto on August 2-3"⁷.

1. Brandon City Council to Borden, June 6, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39711.
2. Mayor, Hamilton (Ont.), to Borden, June 10, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39729-32.
3. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 565.
4. Baptist Convention of Manitoba to Borden, June 22, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39765-6.
5. C.A.R., 1917, 565.
6. Quoted in The Globe, July 27, 1917, p.1, col.3.
7. C.A.R., 1917, 567.

On July 20, representative Liberals met in Toronto and condemned a Coalition Government under Borden¹. Thus late June and mid July saw Winnipeg Conservatives and Toronto Liberals not endorsing a coalition.

July itself saw several interesting telegrams all urging coalition in some form. The Guelph Board of Trade², The Pilot Mound and District Returned Soldiers Aid Association³, Orange Lodge No. 2206 of Port Arthur⁴, a Women's group of Lorne Park (Ont.)⁵, the Patriotic Women of Cobourg, (Ont.)⁶, G.W. Lee, Commissioner, Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway⁷, a "National Service" meeting, held by Patriotic Women of Trenton, (Ont.)⁸

The huge Win-the-War Convention held in Toronto on August 2-3, saw John Godfrey in the Chair with over eight thousand delegates attending from various parts of Canada. Godfrey telegraphed Borden personally and reiterated the demand for a non-partisan "Win-the-War Government" which the

-
1. Reported in The Globe, July 27, 1917, p.1, col.3.
 2. Guelph Board of Trade to Borden, July 3, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (1), no.39783-4.
 3. Pilot Mound and District Returned Soldiers Aid Association, Pilot Mound, Man., to Borden, July 18, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39799.
 4. Loyal Orange Lodge, #2206, Port Arthur, to Borden, July 21, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39805.
 5. Women of Lorne Park, (Ont.), to Borden, July 27, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39817.
 6. Patriotic Women of Cobourg to Borden, July 30, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39821-2.
 7. G.W. Lee to Borden, July 30, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39826.
 8. Patriotic Women, Trenton, (Ont.), to Borden, July 30, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39840.

Convention demanded¹. Again, over two thousand women meeting in Toronto on August 2, demanded a "National Government"². On August 4, Godfrey and others followed up his telegram by a personal visit to Borden.

Meanwhile out West, during August, opinion was being marshalled very strongly for coalition. On July 30, 1917, the Hon. W. Martin of Manitoba claimed that "ever since war began, (he) favoured a National Government, but the Conservative party, up to a short time ago, never offered to any Liberal in Canada a position in one"³.

Later the Winnipeg Convention had aroused much opposition. The West Winnipeg Liberals held a meeting over the way the Convention had endorsed Laurier; the South Winnipeg Liberals, meeting on August 21, repudiated Laurier and declared for "National Government"; the North Winnipeg Liberals met and declared for the same⁴. At the meeting of the South Winnipeg Liberals, Premier Norris of Manitoba, (Liberal), supported "National Government." "I have nothing more to say except that our leader having failed us, I am now ready to support Sir Robert Borden in the formation of a National Government pledged to win the War."⁵.

Support for a union type of government came from these sources in August: public meetings in Regina, Victoria,

1. John Godfrey to Borden, Aug. 2, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (1), no.39844.
2. C.A.R., 1917, 568.
3. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 571.
4. C.A.R., 1917, 577.
5. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 577.

Vancouver, Brandon, Winnipeg, Vancouver (2000 women); Portage La Prairie, Brandon, Winnipeg; Win-the-War meetings in Verdun and Selkirk, Manitoba, Vancouver and Victoria; the Life Underwriters of Canada (Winnipeg); the Ottawa meeting of the Sifters, Calder, Wood, Crerar and J.G. Turriff¹.

During the period of August itself, the Prime Minister was acquainted personally with a large segment of public opinion by means of telegraphed demands, urgings or resolutions, all suggesting a coalition or national Government.

August 6, 1917 saw a Conservative Association from British Columbia ask for a "National Non-partisan War Government (...) to enforce the present Conscription Bill immediately it becomes law...."² Next day a prominent lawyer in Walkerton, (Ont.), wanted a union government³. On August 8, 1917 a veterans group from Temiskaming (Ont.) demanded a "Win-the-War Government"⁴. Then two days later came a similar demand from the Mayor of Parry Sound, (Ont.)⁵. August 15, 1917 saw a request for "National Government" from the electors of Crystal City, Manitoba⁶. August 21, 1917 saw a demand for "National Government", to enforce compulsory service, coming

1. C.A.R., 1917, 578.

2. Nanook District Conservative Association, Parsksville, (B.C.), to Borden, Aug. 6, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39851.

3. D. Robertson, K.C., Walkerton, (Ont.) to Borden, Aug. 7, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39852.

4. Great War Veterans Association, Temiskaming, Cobalt, (Ont.), to Borden, Aug. 8, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39853.

5. Mayor, Parry Sound, (Ont.), to Borden, Aug. 10, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.398601-2.

6. Electors of Crystal City, (Man.), to Borden, Aug. 15, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39871.

from a "Win-the-War" mass meeting in Vancouver¹. Three days later the Board of Trade of Cabri, (Sask.), urged the conscription of men and material and the formation of a national government "to win the war"². A telegram, on August 25, from forty Liberals and Conservatives in Fort William asked for a union government³. Then, on August 31, representatives of various women's clubs in Kamloops, asked for a non-partisan national government⁴.

This flurry of telegrams and letters, that continued unceasingly through September coincided with the widespread knowledge that Borden had been in consultation with many Liberals, particularly from the West.

During September the barrage continued upon Borden, a pressure that had begun during the period following the failure of the coalition attempt of early June, 1917. Further urgings came from a Local Council of Women in British Columbia⁵, the McLeod, Alberta, Presbytery⁶, Representative Women of Pritchard, British Columbia⁷, mass meeting of Liberals,

-
1. Win-the-War Meeting, Vancouver, (B.C.) to Borden, Aug. 21, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39961.
 2. Board of Trade, Cabri, (Sask.), Aug. 24, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 357 (2), no.39897.
 3. Forty Liberals and Conservatives, Fort William, (Ont.) to Borden, Aug. 25, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39898.
 4. Representatives, Kamloops Women's Clubs, Kamloops, (B.C.) to Borden, Aug. 31, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no. 39919.
 5. Local Council of Women, Vernon, (B.C.) to Borden, Sept.4, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39923-4.
 6. McLeod Alberta Presbytery, Faber, (Alta.) to Borden, Sept. 5, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39925.
 7. F.Carr, Pritchard Win the War Association, Pritchard, (B.C.) to Borden, Sept. 6, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39926-7.

Conservatives and Grain Growers in Hamiota, Manitoba¹, a Saskatchewan Orange Lodge², the electors of Marquette Constituency, Newdale, Manitoba³, plus the Presbytery of Minnedosa, Shoal Lake, Manitoba⁴. Further pressure came from a country town in Saskatchewan⁵ plus veterans in the same Province⁶.

On September 20, many Liberals and Conservatives held a meeting in Radisson, Saskatchewan, to promote the Military Service bill and get a "National Government", promising support to a "Win the War Candidate to be selected if election to come"⁷.

Thus, as the period of the formation of Union Government approached, Borden was conscious of a growing of forces favoring coalition. This support was largely centred in Ontario and in the Western Provinces, and came from civic bodies, women's groups, veterans, but of most significance, groups of Conservatives and Liberals who often met jointly to encourage their common objective.

Unlike the public sentiment favoring conscription, a

-
1. Mayor of Hamiota (Man.), Chairman Mass Meeting Liberals, Conservatives, Grain Growers, to Borden, Sept. 10, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39925-35.
 2. Fairlight, (Sask.), Loyal Orange Lodge, to Borden, Sept. 11, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39936.
 3. Electors, Newdale (Sask.), to Borden, Sept. 12, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39937-40.
 4. Presbytery of Minnedosa, Shoal Lake, (Man.), to Borden, Sept. 14, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39945-46.
 5. Rural Municipality of Partidale, Stony Lake, (Sask.), to Borden, Sept. 14, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no. 39948-9.
 6. Discharged Soldiers League, Battleford, (Sask.), to Borden, Sept. 17, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39955.
 7. Liberals and Conservatives, Radisson, (Sask.), to Borden, Sept. 20, 1917, Borden Papers OC 357 (2), no.39959-60.

sentiment that grew gradually from the mid period of the war down to May, and was neither organized or of deep intensity, the movement for coalition had much greater support but only after Borden had skilfully introduced the subject himself late in May, 1917. Nevertheless the support for coalition, at its height, was far more widespread, of much greater intensity and more cleverly promoted than was opinion favoring conscription. Coalition support was received from Quebec to a greater degree than that afforded conscription. But Quebec support for coalition, as shown by the polls of The Toronto Daily Star in January, February, 1917, was sporadic, came mostly from town councils, or reeves, many of whom bore English names, indicating "pockets" of English speaking groups. Le Devoir showed no liking for coalition and ultimately supported Laurier. The Maritime Provinces, largely Liberal, indicated no significant support for coalition. Labor, while favoring coalition, felt conscription of men and money just as necessary.

Finally, there was no significant opposition to coalition, but the support for it, while spread widely, was centred in central and western Canada, in towns and cities, came from English speaking groups, clubs and women's groups. The newly enfranchised women obviously favored it but the fact that Borden feared Quebec, and the "foreigners" out west on conscription, caused him to disfranchise his opponent's supporters.

The public opinion expressed on behalf of coalition prior to the Union Government formation in October, 1917, indicated that those who favored conscription, would not oppose a coalition government headed by Borden, since many opposition Liberals favored both conscription and coalition. Public opinion played a telling role in the coming of the Union Government, a role which determined not only the principle of Union Government itself but also the timing of its inception.

CHAPTER FOURIMPERIAL INFLUENCES ON CONSCRIPTION.

I

THE IMPERIALIST OUTLOOK OF BORDEN: ITS EFFECT ON CONSCRIPTION.

Throughout his entire political career Sir Robert Borden exemplified one basic concept, viz: the Imperialist outlook. A very obvious corollary of this point of view was the firm belief that Canada should give all out aid to the Empire in wartime. Thus as 1915 drew to a close Borden pledged an army of 500,000 men. The significant hugeness of this scheme is only realized by considering the sombre fact that in processing recruits, at least one third are lost. To maintain 500,000 would require many thousands more than the difference between the existing 400,000 and the desired extra 100,000 making up the projected standing army of 500,000 men.

When Borden failed to achieve his goal by the voluntary system, then he resorted to conscription. Obviously, the germ of conscription had its inception in the Borden desire to aid England by an army total of 500,000 men.

Borden's strong admiration for Great Britain led him first to develop this admiration in the realm of economics. He noted in 1907 that the "Conservative party has always

stood and still stands for a policy of preferential trade within the Empire"¹.

In 1911 he stated "I propose to throw the trade of this country in British Channels...."² At the same time he voiced great fear of reciprocity with the United States on the grounds it would lead to Canada's political union with that country³. This incessant harping on the relationship of Canada to the Empire branded Borden as the typical Imperialist-minded statesman who was incapable of viewing any situation, even trade, except through this somewhat limited vision. He contrasts with Laurier, who did not fear that "annexation" to the United States would follow reciprocity in 1911.

The matter of Imperial defence shows up Borden in his strongest role, that of the Imperialist colonial, who put the needs of the Empire ahead of the necessity of Canada's building her own defences for future security. His approach to Imperial defence was based on the one premise, viz: that Canada was inseparable from the indivisible whole which constituted the British Empire. He made this clear by stating: "we are either of the British Empire or not of it; we are either in the Empire for weal or woe, or we are out of it"⁴.

According to Borden, international law recognized that Britain at war meant Canada at war. "So long as Canada

1. Quoted in The Liberal Conservative Platform (as laid down by R. L. Borden, Opposition Leader, at Halifax) Aug. 28, 1907, N.p.N.d., 20.
2. Quoted in C.A.R., 1911, 95, Speech at Grandview, July 6, 1911.
3. Borden, Debates, Feb. 9, 1911, col.3309-10.
4. Ibid. Mar. 29, 1909, col.3519.

remains in the Empire, Canada is at war when the British Empire is at war"¹. He thus argued against Laurier's premise, viz: "under conceivable circumstances the rest of the Empire might be at war while Canada was at peace"². According to Borden "being in the Empire and of the Empire we must take our fair share of the burden of the naval defence of that Empire...."³ He further pointed out that in wartime the naval forces of the entire Empire "shall be one united naval force"⁴, while "our ideal has been one King, one Flag, one Empire, one Navy (...) and maintain the integrity of the Empire"⁵.

To be fair to Borden, it should be realized that he desired Canada to have a say in the formation of the Imperial policy of the Empire since Canada was legally and morally bound to support Britain in wars which might result from such policy⁶. "Are you to have one Empire, one foreign policy, one combined naval force to resist every peril or are you to have five foreign policies and five scattered navies to go down against the attack which may come upon them at any time?"⁷

Borden was not loath to have Canada assume the responsibility incumbent upon a greater voice in Imperial affairs, as his course in the War was to prove.

1. Op.cit. Feb. 3, 1910, col.2982.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. Mar. 29, 1909, col.3519.

4. Ibid. Apr. 2, 1910, col.7533.

5. Quoted in C.A.R., 1912, 51-2. Speech to the Royal Colonial Institute.

6. Borden, Debates, Nov. 21, 1910, col.35.

7. Ibid. Feb. 27, 1913, col.4266.

Borden approved in principle the formation of a Canadian Navy as the discussion on the Laurier naval bill proved¹ but felt it must be integrated with the naval policy of the Royal Navy for instant use in war². He even supported annual contributions to the Mother Country³. He went further as Prime Minister and offered the huge sum of \$35,000,000. via the Naval Aid bill of 1912. He justified his action by noting "the situation is in my opinion sufficiently grave to demand immediate action"⁴. It is noteworthy too that Borden came to this realization after visiting with Admiralty officials. While these same officials were glad of the money offer, the British Government would not tolerate the suggestion that Canada share in the Imperial policy that might result in wars in which the \$35,000,000 offer would be of great use. At the meeting of the Imperial Defence Committee in 1911, Premier Asquith, in replying to Sir Joseph Ward's suggestion that the Dominions participate in the conduct of Imperial defence and foreign affairs, had said it "would impair if not altogether destroy the authority of the Government of the United Kingdom"⁵ in such matters.

Despite this blunt rebuff, Borden organized his country into an energetic war effort which was the beginning of a truly remarkable marshalling of his country capabilities.

1. Op.cit. Mar. 29, 1909, col.3517-8.

2. C.A.R., 1909, 27. Speech at Toronto, Oct. 29, 1909.

3. Borden, Debates, Feb. 3, 1910, col.2985.

4. Ibid. Dec. 5, 1912, col.687.

5. Quoted in Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, I, 286.

Despite the scandals and weakness of his administration he reiterated more than once his stand for an all-out effort, an effort consistent with his pre-war conception of the role Canada bore in Empire defence. On August 18, 1914, Borden addressed Parliament. "As to our duty, all are agreed, we stand shoulder to shoulder with Britain and the other British Dominions in this quarrel. And that duty we shall not fail to fulfil as the honour of Canada demands"¹.

It is interesting to note that Borden interprets the Canadian war effort as synonymous with the cause of the Empire, rather than that of Belgium or France, an attitude which indicated that his Imperialist outlook was functioning again. It is true he was appreciative of the general Allied cause but he thought of it primarily in terms of the Empire cause as shown by his Parliamentary references on (August 18, 1914) to Britain's efforts to avert war noting that England "never drew the sword until every means had been exhausted to secure and keep an honourable peace"². This aspect of his outlook in no way reflects upon the Premier's unstirring loyalty to the Allied cause. Rather, it revealed his keen admiration for the stirring role England was playing for the Allies, and indicated too that England's cause had stirred deeply his Imperialist concept of Empire unity.

For example in a speech to The Guildhall, when Borden was given the Freedom of the City of London by the Corporation

-
- Quoted in*
1. Borden, Memoirs, I, 461.
2. Ibid. 460.

of that City, he commented on the reasons why the Empire entered the War, emphasizing the "love of liberty, the ideals of democracy, and the spirit of unity founded thereon which make the whole Empire one in aim and purpose. But there was also the intense conviction that this was forced upon our Empire...."¹

Later, in a speech to the combined Canadian and Empire Clubs of Toronto he touched again upon this topic. "And this war has demonstrated the essential unity of the Empire"².

Throughout his speeches in or out of Parliament Borden referred to this basic theme, viz: the consciousness of England in the war effort rather than the general Allied cause.

When Borden set the figure of 500,000 men he did so in response to public calls for more troops from many prominent English figures including King George who issued a strong call to the Empire in 1915 stating "more men and yet more are wanted"³. The figure of 500,000 men was aimed at by Borden. This figure was to prove a very large one to aim at because later, early in 1918, Kemp was to issue the warning "that in my opinion a great many parts of the country had been combed of manpower to almost the limit, compatible with necessities of agriculture and other important national industries...."⁴

1. Quoted in Canada at War, N.p.N.d., 8. Speech to The Guildhall, July 29, 1915.
2. Quoted in Canada will answer the Call, Ottawa, Federal Press Agency, N.d., 7. Speech to combined Canadian and Empire Clubs of Toronto, Dec. 5, 1914.
3. Quoted in Lucas, Empire at War, II, 16-7.
4. Kemp to Borden, Jan. 3, 1918, Borden Papers, OC 419, no.43932-3.

Prior to Borden's return to Canada in May 1917, he had been in consultation with many outstanding British figures, including Sir Douglas Haig. "Sir Douglas Haig told Borden and Rogers that they needed 50,000 more men, at least, if Canada could send them"¹.

It is significant that it was on his return to Canada after consultation with Imperial authorities that Borden had considered conscription for the first time. Again, while the voluntary system had failed to provide the set quota of half a million men, Borden never waned from this figure that he set at the end of 1915. The half million goal, if met, would have drained manpower beyond a point consistent with the domestic necessities of the country. This was the opinion of G.E. McGrossen, who in writing to the Hon. Charles Murphy observed that according to noted military experts "50% of military men is as far as a country can go...."² He further pointed out that in British Columbia almost three quarters of available military men had already gone. "Those at the Convention in Winnipeg, who wanted Conscription, hadn't considered the economic drain on the country"³.

Borden's persistence in aiming at this figure indicated his desire of an all out war effort.

While Laurier approved an all out war effort too, the Opposition Leader did not allow his concept of this point to

-
1. Hartley Dewart to Laurier, June 1, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.709, no.195909.
 2. G.E. McGrossen to Hon. Chas. Murphy, Sept. 21, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.712, no.197157-5.
 3. Ibid.

extend to conscription itself. The Solicitor-General, Meighen, speaking to the Winnipeg Canadian Club in November, 1915, probably gave the best summary of the extent to which the Borden administration was willing to aid the Empire in time of war. "Nous mettrons le Canada en banqueroute pour sauver l'Empire"¹.

Thus Borden's desire for a standing force of 500,000 men was completely consistent with his pre-war pledge of all-out aid to the Empire in time of war. Again, while he failed to attain this force by the voluntary system, largely due to the mismanagement of recruiting plus the failure of Borden to understand the forces opposing recruiting, conscription was the inevitable resort left to him to enroll such a huge number of men, inevitable that is, since he had bungled the voluntary system of recruiting so badly, he found himself faced with an impasse of his own creation.

Borden's visits to England were bound to affect his thinking (and draw from him a responsive reaction to the atmosphere of wartime England). Such was the effect in the case of Laurier. Laurier, by no stretch of the imagination could be considered Imperialist in his thinking. He was never committed to the responsibilities associated with Borden's elevation to membership in the Imperial ^{War} Cabinet. Yet Laurier was affected very much by his contact with figures in the Imperial Government. For example he bowed to Imperial

1. Quoted in H. Bourassa, Que devons-nous à l'Angleterre? Montreal, N.p., 1915, 256.

pressure and instituted a preferential tariff on British goods. Then he visited England for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee festivities and came home with a title. Willison observed that Laurier accepted the title because the latter felt "that his refusal of knighthood under the exceptional circumstances would seem ungracious and even pretentious, and would be misunderstood and misrepresented"¹. Willison also noted that Laurier "was one of the few conspicuous figures of the Jubilee celebrations, and in fact from the moment that he delivered his first speech at Liverpool he took rank as an Imperial statesman"². But the Canadian participation in the South African War indicated the extent to which even Laurier had been influenced by the call of Empire.

The preferential tariff and other Imperial measures of the Liberal Government, coupled with Sir Wilfred Laurier's visit to the Old Country, and the surprising growth of Imperial sentiment which these measures and events directly stimulated alike in Canada and the British Islands, had much to do in fashioning that public temper which sent colonial contingents to the aid of the Empire in South Africa³.

An agent of the Uitlanders came to Ottawa in 1899 and informed the Canadian Government of the situation in South Africa. Laurier in turn introduced a resolution in the House giving a message of sympathy to the Uitlanders and informing Britain of Canadian approval of Britain's policy as well as Canada's belief in the righteousness of the British cause⁴.

-
1. J.S. Willison, Sir Wilfred Laurier and the Liberal Party, Toronto, Morang, 1903, II, 309.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid. 316-8.

Ultimately a Canadian force was sent to South Africa to help the Imperial cause.

Laurier established the precedent of an official body of Canadian troops being sent to aid England in a War. Borden promised 500,000 in a much greater War. It is perfectly logical to assume that if Laurier, a French Canadian, was influenced by the Imperial cause, then Borden, a man who was avowedly Imperialistic in outlook, was influenced to a much greater degree. Conscription was the device to bring the 500,000 to realization. Hence Borden's visits to England, as in the case of Laurier, bore fruition for the Imperial cause.

II

INFLUENCE OF THE IMPERIAL CABINET ON BORDEN.

The course of the War itself made it inevitable that Borden would be drawn closer into the orbit of Imperial affairs. In 1915 Borden was allowed to sit with the British Cabinet itself and "feast at the tables of the great." In 1917, from February to May, Borden attended meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet and the Imperial War Conference. Borden noted the significance of the Imperial War Cabinet when writing to Lloyd George.

The step which you have taken in summoning the Imperial War Cabinet is a notable advance in the development of constitutional relations, and I am confident that the usage thus initiated will gradually but surely develop into a recognized convention¹.

1. ^{Quoted in} Borden, Debates, May 18, 1917, col.1529-30.

He noted too that the representatives of the British Cabinet, India and the Dominions "met for the purpose of dealing with matters of common concern touching the whole Empire"¹. Borden stated that a million men from the Dominions had responded to the call to arms, and England had promised a voice to the Dominions in the matter of the peace terms. Again "so also it was desirable and necessary that questions of co-operation in the prosecution of the war(...) should also come under consideration by the British Cabinet and the representatives of the Dominions assembled in the first Imperial Cabinet ever held"².

According to Borden the events of the War "made it absolutely essential that the Dominions should have the voice to which I have alluded, and, having that voice, it was natural, and more than that, necessary, that they should be assembled in an Imperial Cabinet"³. Borden envisaged a permanent type of Imperial Cabinet for the future⁴.

Obviously then Borden's new role was one never before accorded to a Canadian Prime Minister. Such a role was not that of a minor colonial official. It was the fruition of the pre-war demand of Borden to have access to the planning of Imperial policy. Time proved that the constitutional advance apparently inherent in the Imperial War Cabinet, and heralded widely by Borden was not to materialize. Dewey explodes the myth of "constitutional advance".

1. Borden, Debates, May 18, 1917, col. 1527.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. col. 1528.

The exaggerated importance attributed to this agency appears to have been derived from its seeming combination of representative character and coercive authority, whereas in fact the degree of attainment of the one was the measure of the negation of the other - the more representative it was of the Empire, the less qualified it was to act as executive of the United Kingdom; conversely the more strictly its membership conformed to that of a British Cabinet, the less influence it could have over the Dominions. Nor could it, under any approximation to normal conditions, rival the status of the Imperial Conference. Whereas the Imperial Conference determined its own composition and functions, the Imperial War Cabinet, despite its ex officio features, was after all the creature of the British Premier. The one profited far less from its possession of legally coercive authority than did the other from the political prestige and influence pertaining to a body composed of the equal heads of autonomous governments. The Imperial War Cabinet was undoubtedly an interesting and significant innovation, but of a constitutional importance in no way commensurate with the attention it received. Its significance lies entirely in demonstrating the effectiveness with which the existing British Constitution can meet any governmental emergency, not in any alteration which that underwent, Imperialist claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Imperialists rightly hailed it, however, as politically a great step in advance for the Dominions. The mere exigencies of co-operative effort in the War would probably have necessitated this in any case, but the Home Government was now more quick to grasp the purport of Dominion wishes¹.

Events after the War proved that this Imperial War Cabinet was not replaced by an equivalent type group for peacetime Empire co-operation. But Borden obviously failed to realize that the Imperial War Cabinet was but a transitory victory at best. Had it signified the advance in Empire relations so accorded it by Borden, then indeed it would have recorded the maturity of the Dominion of Canada in its much

1. Dewey, Dominions and Diplomacy, I, 313.

desired role of a confidant to Imperial policy. But Borden was elated over the seeming advance he had made and his enthusiasm is recorded in his subsequent actions. He felt Canada on a plane equivalent to the Mother Country. Obviously such a role for Canada required of it the equivalent responsibility involved in such a forward step. The greater the responsibility of the Dominion in the Empire War effort, the greater the demands upon it. Hence the one significant aspect of this whole picture, viz: the final effort by Borden, via conscription, to attain the 500,000 men promised in 1916. His statement in May of 1917 attests this when he observed

that early proposals will be made on the part of the Government to provide, by compulsory military enlistment on a selective basis, such reinforcements as may be necessary to maintain the Canadian army today in the field as one of the finest fighting units of the Empire¹.

This statement came after the magnificent record of the Canadian units during the spring of 1917, a record which conceded it to be just that type of organization, viz: one of the finest in all of the Allied armies.

In introducing the Military Service bill Borden continually re-emphasized the record of the British Army rather than the French or Belgian². Such continuous reference to England merely reflected the close mental affinity between Borden the Prime Minister and Borden the Imperialist. This aspect of his reasoning once more revealed the deep-rooted

-
1. Borden, Debates, May 18, 1917, col.1542.
 2. Ibid. June 11, 1917, col.2193-4.

respect and love of England that characterized the political reasoning of Borden. In fact Borden's appraisal of the significance of the Imperial Cabinet preceded his introduction of the matter of compulsory service, both topics forming a complementary core of his speech in Commons for May 18, 1917.

Other Imperial influences were also at work. The Gazette, Montreal, (Aug. 31, 1915), had recorded the fact that the Lord Northcliffe Press in England had wanted to know why Canada did not have compulsory service¹. While such questions were obviously an unwarranted intrusion into Canada's own affairs, such an attitude by an English paper indicated a type of pressure that would appeal to the British Isles and even many people in Canada.

Again, the Round Table Movement was active in the Toronto region aiming at a closer binding of Empire ties. This group kept alive in the public mind the ideals of the 19th Century Imperialists who sought to maintain the essential unity of Empire, while keeping abreast of the evident changes occurring within its framework.

The Round Table Council for Canada included such men (in Toronto) as Professor G.M. Wrong and Sir John Willison, both active advocates of conscription, as well as other Canadian figures of note such as Sir Robert Falconer, Professor W.S. Milner, Sir Charles Tupper, (B.C.) and Sir Edmund Walker, the prominent banker.

1. Reference to The Gazette commented upon by Le Devoir, May 28, 1917.

The Round Table in Canada for February, 1917, noted the following aspect of this organization.

"After six years of study, it is safe to say that the Groups now include no one who does not believe in maintaining in some form our Imperial connection"¹.

The true significance of this movement on Canadian thinking is shown by a speech of Mr. Philip Ker, Editor of the Round Table Magazine, made to the Round Table Groups in Toronto.

"I say to you deliberately that I am convinced that the future of the Empire rests with the Dominions. The United Kingdom alone cannot long continue to sustain so great a fabric. Therefore, gentlemen, before you reject Imperialism, think well what your act implies. It implies far more than your severance from us at home. It implies the eventual disappearance of the Imperial system which has nurtured you into being; the creation of five new nations independent one of another and possessed of no better method of settling their disputes than war; the rise of the dependencies of India, Egypt and the rest - into hostile powers, certainly hostile to you and us and certainly allied with our foes. It implies a new lease of life for armaments and war - a new blaze in the ancient feud between East and West, and above all the deliberate rejection and destruction of the possibility of bringing to fruition perhaps the greatest vision which has yet dawned upon mankind"².

Mr. Ker drove home an important point when he observed that those associated with the Round Table Movement "had this conviction in their hearts: (...) that there is a vital unity in this Commonwealth (...) that its preservation is of vital interest to all its parts and to the peace and

-
1. The Round Table in Canada, Montreal, Rous and Mann, Ltd., Feb., 1917, 2.
 2. Quoted in The Round Table in Canada, Feb 1917, 23

happiness of the world¹.

Thus the presence of this Imperialist minded group, with its membership of many prominent people, many of whom advocated conscription, is an influence that was both subtle and all pervasive, and cannot be overlooked as a factor related to Borden's decision to implement conscription, since it reflected the type of reasoning at work among a segment of the conscription devotees. In a letter to Sir Charles Aylesworth, Laurier blamed the break up of the Liberal Party by mid-1917 upon the Liberals of the "Round Table" Group. Since the Liberal Party broke on conscription, the influence of this Round Table movement on conscription is made very obvious by Laurier's following remarks.

In fact, Ontario is no longer Ontario: it is again the old small province of Upper Canada, and again governed from Downing Street with the instrumentality of the Family Compact, sitting at York, now Toronto. Canada is now governed by a Junta, sitting at London, known as the 'Round Table' with ramifications in Toronto, in Winnipeg, in Victoria, with Tories and Grits receiving their ideas from London, and insidiously forcing them on their respective parties².

Another influence of an interesting type was the startling increase in the number of titles afforded Canadians. Of the existing thirty K.C.M.G. titles, eighteen were created by the Borden administration. The Globe noted editorially (Feb. 21, 1917) that "in the past five years we have increased a full one hundredfold in titled aristocracy." Borden himself

1. Op.cit. 10.

2. Laurier to Aylesworth, June 21, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.710, no.196100-2.

was knighted. "Is it not time to call a halt in this "New Imperialism?" It is not in consonance with the new-world spirit of democracy." Thus this journal summed up the presence of a new influence of the Imperial Government, a subtle, flattering type, which was aimed directly at those in or surrounding the Borden administration. Such influence was very powerful and the acceptance of these titles indicated that a very old form of influence both direct and indirect was levelled at the recipients. In short the entire Borden administration was drawn closer into the orbit of the Imperial Government by this age-old type of flattering influence.

Such influences as the Round Table Group and the awarding of high honors cannot be overlooked in assessing the degree to which Imperialist thought affected Borden's decision to institute conscription in order to fulfil his pledge of 500,000 men.

III

IMPERIAL PRESSURE FOR REINFORCEMENTS.

"Some people afflicted with a diseased imagination have asserted that I took my present course at the request or dictation of the British Government. No more absolute falsehood was ever uttered by human lips. The subject was never discussed between myself and any member of the British Government; if there had been any such suggestion from them I would not have tolerated it"¹.

1. Borden, Debates, June 11, 1917, col.2187.

Thus Borden, with an air of finality, disposed of any suggestion of Imperial pressure for conscription. But he could not deny that the Imperial Government put pressure upon Canada for more men, men that Borden felt he could not raise except by conscription.

As early as November, 1916, the Imperial authorities were pressing strongly for more reinforcements from Canada.

On November 5, 1916, Borden told Perley of a communication received from Sir William Robertson, the British Chief of Staff. "Robertson cables Hughes that authority for mobilization fifth division and nomination commander is urgently required. Before taking action we shall await your report. Please see Robertson"¹. Perley's reply to Robertson indicated Canada's desire to keep the existing four divisions reinforced before attempting to raise a fifth. "Regarding Fifth Division have seen Sir William Robertson (...) Robertson concurs in wisdom this course although he would naturally like to have as many divisions as possible at front"².

December saw further light on the topic in a despatch from Perley to Borden, intended for Sir Edward Kemp. After asking figures on available troops for the next nine months, Perley once again reveals this recurring pressure from the British Chief of Staff.

-
1. Borden to Perley, Nov. 6, 1916, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
 2. Perley to Borden, Nov. 10, 1916, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.

Has almost decided would be best not send Fifth Division to front but Sir William Robertson most anxious have it sent over in February for active service in May - thinks it may be specifically useful then and thinks it pity these troops should be kept here without being used after they are thoroughly trained - I should regret exceedingly send so many to France that we could not keep them always provided with reinforcements but would like do everything possible assist Robertson¹.

Perley's next message, dated January 12, 1917 told of a meeting in the Office of the Secretary of State for War. Included were Lord Derby, Sir William Robertson, General Wigham, General Turner and Perley. This indicated the level to which these discussions on Canada's manpower situation had progressed. The decision reached at this meeting was conveyed to Borden.

After looking over the figures submitted and careful consideration, it was agreed that it would not be wise for us under present conditions to send a 5th Division over to France, as it is evident that we would not be able to supply sufficient reinforcements to keep five Divisions up to strength during the balance of this year and without sending over a 5th Division, we may have some difficulty for the present four Divisions.

At the same time we agreed to complete the establishment of the 5th Division so that it would be available here for home defence, and we were requested not to take drafts from it when any other sufficiently trained men are available².

Concerning this meeting of January 12, Perley wrote (in part) to Sir Edward Kemp:

-
1. Perley to Borden, Dec. 19, 1916, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
 2. Memorandum of Perley on meeting with Secretary, War Office, Jan. 12, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.

"Sir William Robertson is most anxious to get this 5th Division sent over to France and is hoping that we may be able to manage it later on...."¹ Perley also asked the Secretary of State for Colonies, Mr. W.H. Long, not to announce the matter of the Fifth Division and the demand for more Canadian troops himself, but to deal through Perley in his official capacity². A draft telegram was prepared by Long to be sent to the Canadian Governor General and its wording included a demand for a 6th Division. In part it read "even if you can't see way to raise 6th Division then 3 additional infantry brigades would help Imperial Army"³. However when the actual telegram was sent no mention was made of a 6th Division. It is an interesting document because while it sums up succinctly the formal demand for more men, its formality is all the more effective in view of the great pressure, for more men, already exerted by the War Office on Sir George Perley.

The possibility of raising further troops is receiving anxious consideration by His Majesty's Government and after passing manpower of this country in review are taking steps to secure still more men for the Army. Ministers may be interested to know that England, Wales and Scotland had already each furnished over 17% of male population to Army up to 2nd December. They would urge that your ministers should consider the possibility of raising further

-
1. Perley to Kemp, Jan. 17, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
 2. Perley to Secretary of State for Colonies, Feb. 5, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
 3. Telegram to be sent by Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor General of Canada, undated. Circa mid February 1917, telegram not sent. Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.

divisions for service in France. His Majesty's Government are aware that if this is done the new units could not be formed and transported to Europe for several months but it is probable that the climax of the war will by that time be imminent if indeed it has not been reached and in the opinion of our Military advisers it will be far more to our advantage after making due provision for the forces already in the field to raise additional fighting units than to build up further reinforcements for an indefinite period. These units can at the worst be used as reinforcements.

These considerations will show the great value that attaches to the acceleration of the recruiting rate for the purpose of enabling the Empire at the critical moment to exert its maximum force¹.

On February 22, 1917, further pressure for the use of the Fifth Division came from the War Office.

I am commanded by the Army Council, in accordance with a decision by the War Cabinet, to urge upon you to obtain the sanction of the Government of Canada to the despatch of the 5th Canadian Division to France as soon as its training is sufficiently advanced².

Next day came the reply refusing to allow the 5th Division to go to France with the observation that the War Office was to wait for further reinforcements, implying the Canadians were to fight as a Corp³. Then on February 28, General Turner, Chief, Canadian General Staff, communicated with Perley.

In view of the fact that the War Office are pressing to have the fifth Canadian Division despatched to France (...) I do not think the 5th Canadian Division should proceed to France until such time as we have received from Canada the reinforcements which they promised to send us⁴.

1. Secretary, War Office to Governor General of Canada, Feb. 17, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
2. Secretary, War Office to High Commissioner, Dominion of Canada, Feb. 22, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
3. Perley to Secretary, War Office, Feb. 23, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
4. Maj. Gen. Turner to Perley, Feb. 28, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

Finally on March 15, 1917, the Secretary, War Office, was informed that the Fifth Division in Home Defence was not to be used but was to be broken up to reinforce the existing four Canadian Divisions¹.

Apart from the demand for another division, there was evidence of demands from the War Office for troops of a more specialized type. Perley indicated this to Kemp. "As a matter of fact the War Office is pressing us for more Forestry and Railway Construction units...."²

From these sources certain conclusions are quite obvious. The War Office definitely demanded more men from Canada. This was submitted by the Secretary of State for the Colonies as well as the Secretary of State for War. Again, General Haig requested troops. The Chief of the British General Staff, Robertson, had stated that May, 1917, was to be a crucial month and asked that the Fifth Division be in use by then. Furthermore, the War Office wanted a 6th Division while Borden had planned, at best, on a 5th Division. Significantly, this pressure was at very high level, e.g. the War Office, Perley, General Turner and Lord Derby among others. Finally, it is interesting to note that Borden decided on conscription to maintain the Fifth Division, a group not entirely disbanded by May 1917. The measure of conscription was first announced in May, 1917, the key month

-
1. Deputy Minister of Overseas Military Forces to Secretary, War Office, Mar. 15, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
 2. Perley to Kemp, Jan. 17, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 332, no.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

in the reasoning of Sir William Robertson, British Chief of Staff. Conscribed Canadian soldiers would be used to reinforce the 5th Division which could then be placed in action.

Thus it is obvious that the Imperialist-minded Borden, already susceptible to Imperial pressure, was subject to direct and strong demands for reinforcements from the Imperial authorities. He was no longer able to answer this call for more men by the voluntary method. Conscription supplied him with the means of carrying out the demands for reinforcements made by the Imperial War Office.

IV

ANALYSIS OF THE BORDEN POSITION IN RELATION TO THE OTHER
EMPIRE WAR EFFORTS.

Much attention has been given to the fact that such countries as Australia and New Zealand recruited more soldiers on a per capita basis than did Canada. In 1917 this was well known and admitted by Borden in 1918¹. But any comparison between Canada and these two countries or even England, is bound to break down because a real comparison of these countries reveals that no common basis of comparison can be utilized.

To begin with it is fair to assume that Australia, New Zealand (and even South Africa) had much more to fear from Germany than did Canada due to their proximity to Germany in the Pacific and Africa on the one hand, and the

1. Lucas, Empire at War, II, 56.

distance of Germany to Canada, on the other. Proof of this lies in the fact that Australia raised her entire forces without resorting to conscription; (in fact a national referendum defeated conscription there). Such was Australia's fear of the German menace.

Again Australia, New Zealand and England were racially homogenous, viz: English, Irish, Scottish or Welsh. Exclusive of the aborigines of Australia and New Zealand, the English tongue embraced the peoples of the British Isles, Australia and New Zealand.

The British Isles were involved in the War through the medium of Great Britain being a great power. They were situated on the doorstep of the battle regions. Only the insularity of the British Isles saved them from wartime devastation.

Despite the unfortunate Irish situation, a situation which the Government of Great Britain had done little to avoid, enormous numbers of high calibre Irish soldiers came into the British services, numbers that did not diminish despite the Irish political upheaval in 1916.

The uniformity of tongue and racial background so marked in Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain naturally sparked a most intense interest in the war effort. Yet despite the dominant role England was playing, her own armies were ultimately filled by compulsion, as were those of New Zealand. Ramsay Muir, the eminent English historian, sheds light on this question.

Canada and New Zealand offered their manhood as completely as the Mother country, and Australia, though she did not adopt conscription, sent almost as high a proportion; India and South Africa also sent very large contingents, though in their cases universal service was impractical¹.

Conscription was not tried in South Africa and India where the English tongue did not prevail. Conscription was most successful in New Zealand and Great Britain where the uniformity of the English tongue prevailed.

In contrast with the racial and linguistic uniformity existing in England and New Zealand, Borden was confronted with a vastly different set of conditions in Canada. Canada (like South Africa and India) was not British in any full sense of the word. Nor was it French or Irish or German. It was heterogenous both in race and in language, with not two races but at least half a dozen major groups. The English tongue predominated, spread over the English, Irish and Scots. The French Canadians were not a racial minority. They were the only dominant race culturally, socially, linguistically and religiously and were well-knit and interwoven into a grand solidarity as a result of years of striving to maintain a national status. Thus they formed the cultural and racial backbone of Canada. In contrast the English speaking races were united only by language.

Strong pockets of Germans, Ukrainians, Doukhobours and lesser groups were found ranging from Kitchener, Ontario

1. Ramsay Muir, A Short History of the British Commonwealth, London, George Philip & Son Ltd., 1937, II, 776.

to the Saskatchewan River and across the Canadian Cordillera into southern British Columbia. Most of these minority groups were settled in Canada during the Laurier period and were not anxious to don a uniform since they hated war having seen too much of its trappings on the Continent (e.g. compulsory service). European history for centuries abounded with examples of unfortunates tossed back and forth between the brutal ruling factions of Europe. Quite logically these minority groups abhorred war in any form and could not be expected to relish the prospect not only of going to a war, but also to a war involving the race and culture which many had only recently left (e.g. Germans and Austrians).

French Canada was not British and was truly Canadian. British wars upon the continent did not interest many of them because the British tradition and tongue was alien to them. Le Devoir pointed out (June 15, 1917) that French Canada had severed its ties with France one hundred and fifty years before, while earlier (April 7, 1917) it pointed out that France had gone down in comparison to what it was noting it was a long way from "Joan of Arc."

Again, Borden was intent upon drafting troops at a time when English and French were being relegated to the task of harvest work to bolster the dwindling Allied food supply. Le Devoir of (May 31, 1917) denounced Borden's lack of logic in this respect. Le Devoir, (June 19, 1917) quoted the British Minister of Food, Lord Rhondda, as saying "nous dépendons, à un degré vital," upon Canada and the United

States. Canada was a great food producer in fact as well as potential, and considering the distance involved between Canada and the front, it was obviously more feasible that Canada should concentrate on food production rather than trying to replace seasoned troops with, at best, inexperienced and recalcitrant conscripts. Furthermore, food production as a war service would not have proved distasteful to the average Canadian, regardless of race or location.

Another point must be emphasized. The entry of the United States into the War, despite the impact of that nation's war effort, had not produced, by June of 1917, the proportional number of soldiers or dollars spent, to equal the Canadian effort. In the editorial of Le Devoir (May 29, 1917) the paper pointed out that the United States aimed at three million men, which on a comparison basis, would still be only half of the Canadian enlistment to date. Again, this journal claimed that Canada had sent proportionately more men than England. "On admettra, je suppose, que L'Angleterre a un intérêt pour le moins égal à celui du Canada à empêcher l'armée allemande d'arriver à Calais." Le Devoir claimed Canada had done its part, even more than its part. Thus this publication placed the onus of future manpower commitments upon the American and British Governments. L'Action Catholique (June 2, 1917) claimed that any more contribution of men and money by Canada would place the nation "à une impasse"¹. Le Soleil (June 5, 1917) claimed Canada had done

1. Quoted in Le Devoir, June 8, 1917.

enough and had done better than other nations in the War¹.

Already Canada had made unique contributions to the Allied effort through its forestry, railway and medical units, plus the Canadians who made up the backbone of the British flying services.

But these papers were not alone in urging a halt to the use of more Canadian troops. Sir Edward Kemp as late as January, 1918 was most emphatic in his criticism of any further drains on Canadian manpower noting that "in my opinion a great many parts of the country had been combed of manpower almost to the limit compatible with necessities of agriculture and other important national industries...." Kemp also observed that "some Canadians" felt that since the Americans were in the War the latter should do their "fair share" and send men until "they approached the limits" of the Canadian enlistments².

A prominent Canadian writing to the Hon. Charles Murphy in 1917 observed that "50% of military men is as far as a country can go" according "to noted military writers." He noted that by the fall of 1917 63% of the available military men in British Columbia would be gone while if those gone to Imperial units were counted, the figure would range between 71% to 75%. The writer felt that 72,000 more men was "all one can send under Lord Derby scheme if it was applied." He noted that those at the Winnipeg Convention

1. Op.cit.

2. Kemp to Borden, Jan. 3, 1918, Borden Papers, OC 419, no.43932-3.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA - ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

"who wanted conscription hadn't considered the economic drain on the country"¹.

In face of all these factors which motivated against conscription to gain the 500,000 man army, was Borden logical, even wise in resorting to conscription to reach his half million quota? Obviously not when the results of his plan are considered, for the cold fact remained that, despite the great numbers of men he claimed were available, he failed and failed miserably to produce anything near his objective. But more obviously was he not justified in resorting to conscription when the price paid for this measure is considered.

To begin with while there exists not merely the suspicion of political expediency behind the measure, that not even the stoutest defender of the Military Service Act can deny, its method of introduction, the devices used to return the Government to power, leaves little or nothing about the measure itself to commend it as a measure designed to help the war effort.

In 1917 the Borden chances of return to power were slim due to an undeniable record of scandals and mismanagement. Had Borden really wanted a systematic manpower policy, 1915 at the latest was the time for it. Why 1917 after three years of war when nearly all the Allied belligerents had it excepting a few like Australia whose enlistments didn't need to be spurred on? Its introduction on the eve of an

1. G.E. McGrossen to Murphy, Sept. 21, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.712, no.197157-65.

election plus the incorporation of Opposition members into the Cabinet swung the Borden Government back into power and gave the Premier a fantastic majority. The methods used to ensure the return to office of the Government were worthy of any Prussian autocracy, not those of a democracy. The justification was that it was necessary to return the party pledged to conscription, as a war time necessity. Why was the same approach not adopted in Australia? The rejection there of conscription was not considered a reflection on that country let alone treasonable. Obviously the Government feared a referendum on conscription, as admitted by many supporters of the Bill within Parliament. Logically then, defeat would face the party introducing conscription, in the subsequent election. Hence the scandalous methods employed to ensure the return of the Union Government.

What of the Bill itself? "Freely denounced as an engine of oppression, the Military Service law, in point of fact, contained so many safeguards against oppression that it had been made to no small degree inoperative"¹. This is the verdict of Sir Charles Lucas in his second volume of The Empire at War. Lucas went on to criticize the Order in Council which cancelled exemptions under the Act in the case of young men from the ages of 20 to 22, a measure that drew the wrath of the Canadian farmer. "Yet it was a high-handed proceeding, after a single debate and resolution in the

1. Lucas, Empire at War, II, 57.

House of Commons, to amend or override an Act of Parliament by an Order in Council issued under the War Measures Act¹.

Opposition to this measure came from two legal sources.

The legality of the procedure was tested in the law courts. It was held by the Court of the Province of Alberta that the Order in Council of the 20th of April was ultra vires, that an Order in Council could not supersede an Act of Parliament; a similar view was taken by the Superior Court at Montreal. But Borden and his colleagues were not to be frightened. A further Order in Council was issued on the 5th of July, providing that the Order of the 20th of April should have effect notwithstanding the adverse judicial decisions and eventually an appeal having been made to the Supreme Court of Canada, in July in that Court four judges out of six upheld the Government².

From this development, the legal experts of Canada showed a decided lack of unanimity on the legality of the Order in Council cancelling these exemptions.

Justification for conscription would be forthcoming if the evidence existed to show it was purely a military measure. But the hostility it aroused, the expediency involved in its inception and passage, plus the delay in carrying out its measures, as well as the duplicity concerning cancellation of the farm exemptions alone would have seriously undermined justification for conscription. The ineffectiveness of its operation plus the obvious failure of the Bill to produce any really tangible results, in face of the storm it aroused and legacy of bitterness it produced, destroyed any real justification for the Military Service Act.

1. Op.cit.
2. Ibid. 58.

When Canada returned to the normalcy of the post-war 1920's the wartime party of Borden suffered a disastrous and what proved to be a long term defeat, a defeat not usually associated with governments whose wartime record appeals to the majority of the electors.

CHAPTER FIVE

MILITARY INFLUENCES ON CONSCRIPTION.

In assessing the amount of purely military influence upon conscription one distinction must be made, viz: that demands for reinforcements to replace casualties were one sort of influence but were not necessarily coupled with a corresponding demand for conscription. The actual means of getting reinforcements in 1917 were not the responsibility of military men but remained the problem of the Borden civilian administration. It will be shown shortly just how much pressure was exerted by the overseas command to have reinforcements raised by compulsion.

Throughout the available records¹, little information exists, probably due to the fact that in the crucial three months preceding the announcement of compulsory service in May, 1917, Borden was in England and was able to receive relatively first hand reports on the need for more men. His proximity to the front increased this "on the spot" survey. Thus, much information existed but was logically transferred verbally. Had Borden been in Canada, the obvious conclusion would be that the communiques to him on this subject would be recorded.

1. At the time of writing, The Currie Papers and the Correspondence of the Governor General were not accessible to the author. A request to Mr. Henry Borden, for permission to use Sir Robert Borden's Diaries, was refused.

Due to the severity of the fighting that marked the late spring period of 1917 it is obvious that Canada could not supply enough men to keep up the staggering pace set by the demands of war upon Canadian manhood. That is another way of saying that Canada's enlistments did fall short of the number needed to equate the casualties, let alone exceed them. While domestic conditions made it most difficult, even impossible for Borden to raise his half million force, from the purely military point of view a fifth division could not be maintained simply because the first four divisions demanded fresh reinforcements which they couldn't get. Hence the fifth, formed in reserve, would have to be used to supply the existing four. It never dawned on Borden to be content with keeping up the supply for four divisions. Granted this would have proved difficult to do even this, as he gloomily predicted in May but the obvious solution lay in the fact that the Canadian Army had done as much as most Allied armies and in some cases much more. They had borne the brunt of several savage battles. In view of the fact that French troops and British troops were being sent to do harvest work while Borden was conscripting, it is feasible that a curtailment of Canada's overseas army would not have seriously affected the Allied war effort.

It was quite obvious from another point of view, that the military situation was not as serious for the Allies as that of the Continental Powers. Germany had made a peace

offer on January 20, 1917¹. Austria had made an offer of peace on December 5, 1916² using Prince Sixte de Bourbon as the mediator to President Poincare of France³. Austria made an offer of a separate peace on May, 4, 1917⁴. On the Allied side, Italy sounded out the possibility of peace during March 1917⁵.

A correspondent from Toronto remarked on these negotiations to Laurier.

Canada should have no part in a European war of attrition. The time for Conscription is now past. Our liberties are in no way endangered for the enemy has already offered peace on an ante-bellum basis and has asserted that he has no desire for conquered territory.

The same writer then went on to attack the justification for conscription.

Should the scheme (conscription) be conducted on a fair and impartial basis there might be some justification for it but when it is proposed by a government that is notorious for its patronage and partisanship it might also be stated that it was a political scheme to strip the country of the younger members of the Liberal party and precipitate a general election⁶.

Wm. Houston of The Globe held a similar viewpoint on the lateness of the conscription scheme. "I (...) take comparatively little interest in conscription because the war is obviously hastening to its close, and the conscription

1. H. Temperley (ed.), A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, London, Froude, 1920, 167.
2. G. de Manteyer (ed.), Austria's Peace Offer, 1916-1917, London, Constable, 1921, 39.
3. Ibid. 35.
4. Ibid. 131.
5. Ibid. 133.
6. R.T. Birks to Laurier, May 19, 1917, Laurier Papers, v. 708, no. 195634-5.

men can't possibly be in the trenches before the early summer of 1918¹.

Le Devoir (May 29, 1917) supported the theory that conscription was too late from the military point of view pointing out that Canada had done enough already.

But what were the enlistment-casualty figures for the first half of 1917?

The enlistments and wastage of the year 1917 by months were: January - enlistments 9,194; wastage, 4,396; February - 6,809 and 21,955; March - 6,640 and 6,161; April - 5,330 and 10,894; May - 6,407 and 13,457².

In January Perley recorded the fact that it would not be wise to send the Fifth Division to France "as it is evident that we would not be able to supply sufficient reinforcements to keep five Divisions up to strength during the balance of this year, and even without sending over a 5th Division, we may have some difficulty for the present four divisions"³.

Again, in February Perley wrote to the War Office. "The surplus infantry at present in France will not be sufficient to make good the estimated casualties"⁴.

1. W. Houston to Laurier, July 15, 1917, Laurier Papers, v.710, no.196276-80.
2. Hopkins, Canada at War, 84.
3. Memorandum of Perley on meeting with Secretary, War Office, Jan. 12, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
4. Perley to Secretary, War Office, Feb. 23, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.

In March Perley again wrote the War Office that "even with 5th Division to draw on, Canada couldn't make good casualties" from four divisions "let alone" five divisions¹.

Borden himself was fully aware of the dwindling number of troops available. While overseas he kept in communication with Canada to find out the recruiting picture. In April he wrote to Kemp.

It is believed that Germany stakes everything on this summer's operations and the demand for men is therefore very urgent. What success are you having for proposal for home defense force and how is recruiting progressing for expeditionary force?²

Kemp replied that "general feeling large number of recruits will not be forthcoming"³, under the voluntary system of recruiting.

At the end of April, Kemp sent further information to Borden on the dwindling number of recruits showing up under the Home Defense scheme, adding recruiting by "voluntary methods almost at end. Sentiment in favour some form of compulsion growing"⁴.

Throughout the correspondence between the War Office and Perley in which the War Office urged more troops be sent overseas from Canada, a correspondence conducted between the end of 1916 and March 1917⁵, Perley gave no hint that he

-
1. Perley to Secretary, War Office, Mar. 2, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
 2. Borden to Kemp, April 15, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 317(2), no.35469.
 3. Kemp to Borden, April 10, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 317(2), no.35477.
 4. Kemp to Borden, April 30, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 317(2), no.35563.
 5. See Chapter Four, Part III.

personally was under any pressure for conscription from the various Canadian military commanders overseas. The Borden and Perley correspondence with Kemp while Borden was overseas between February and May 1917, gave no hint of any demand for conscription by the Canadian military officials overseas. The demand for more troops to supply reinforcements did exist but no evidence is found to substantiate the theory that pressure by high ranking officers overseas influenced Borden to institute conscription.

A prominent military man, Colonel J.G. Rattray, Commander of the 6th Canadian Reserve Brigade at Bramshott, England, gave a good illustration of the type of demand for more men forthcoming from such a source. He stated that unless the Fifth Division "is called on" Reserve Battalion 15 "cannot supply necessary reinforcements"¹.

This typified many of the military men of the period, viz: demanding more men but not putting any great pressure for conscription.

But some military men did desire conscription and these were found in Canada. For example, Lt. Col. Guthrie, Second Contingent veteran, demanded conscription in an address to the Empire Club in Toronto late in 1916². Regarding a meeting of the Divisional Officers commanding the Military Districts of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes The Globe

-
1. J.G. Rattray to C. Sifton, April 17, 1917, Sifton Papers, v.206, no.1817-9.
 2. Reported in The Toronto Daily Star, Nov. 3, 1916, p.1, col.2.

(Nov. 10, 1916, p.3, col.1) gave an interesting report.

It is understood that a number of the Military men are urging some form of modified conscription in order to effectively secure the enlistment of the thousands of slackers who should be made available for military service.

The Globe (Jan. 16, 1917, p.7, col.6) commented on a proposed meeting of the Militia Commanders of the Toronto Military District to be held under the auspices of General Logie. "Many of the commanders regard all voluntary methods of recruiting as things of the past, and there is a strong movement to press the Government to bring the Militia Act into force."

When this private meeting was eventually held, it occurred late in January and had two guests, viz: Major-General W.G. Gwatkin, Chief of General Staff, Canadian Army and Major-General W.F. Hodgins, Adjutant General, Canadian Army. The Globe (Jan. 25, 1917, p.1, col.5) made a lengthy comment of the proceedings after interviewing a man described as "a prominent officer of the overseas forces."

The unanimous absolute opinion of everybody was that voluntary enlistment has ceased and that the only thing to do is to enforce the Militia Act. That was unanimous. They got an expression of opinion from every officer present. The conference asked that an Order in Council be passed by the Dominion Government enforcing the Militia Act and providing for the mobilization and training of the militia for active service.

The paper added that the two high ranking visitors were surprised at the "unanimity of opinion in favor of enforcing the Militia Act."

There was no doubt about Major-General Gwatkin favoring compulsory service. In a Memorandum he considered the

problem of recruiting,^{noting}

with the double object of avoiding the possibility of panic and of obtaining recruits for the C.E.F., it is proposed this year to train the Militia, or a portion of it. . . But the Minister says that compulsion is not to be applied. Then what is to be done?¹

Later, he gave the answer to this problem himself.

"Some form of compulsion is the only remedy; and it should be applied forthwith"².

Thus the Chief of the Canadian General Staff gave evidence that he personally favored compulsion in some form and it is interesting to note how he moved from a state of pondering recruiting in January to a position favoring conscription in late April, less than three weeks before Borden gave his announcement of compulsion on May 18.

Lieutenant Colonel Cooper, Commander of the 198th Battalion, (The Buffs) also spoke out in favor of some form of compulsion, in an address to the Toronto Club. After debating the virtues of the Militia Act or a new conscription measure he noted: "Yet whatever system is adopted the sooner it is done the better it will be for the future of Canada as well as ourselves"³.

General Lessard also spoke in favor of conscription at a meeting in Sherbrooke. "After all Conscription is the best thing, the best safeguard"⁴.

1. Gwatkin to Vice-President, Militia Council, Jan. 6, 1917, H.Q. 1982-1-71, v.1.
2. Memorandum of Gwatkin, Apr. 26, 1917, G.A.Q. 10-47c.
3. Quoted in The Globe, Feb. 13, 1917, p.7, col.3.
4. Quoted in clipping of unknown paper, T.P.L. Scrapbook XXI, circa May 20, 1917.

In analyzing the theory that the overseas military officials put pressure on Borden for conscription, an important point is often overlooked. Up to the announcement of compulsory service no public utterance is recorded to show that General Currie, Commander of the Canadian Corps, or its Divisional Commanders, put pressure on Borden to implement conscription. Whatever their personal views on the matter, the fact remains that the available evidence does not indicate any pressure upon Borden prior to his announcement of compulsory service. Had there been any pressure it would be logical to assume that the evidence would be recorded and if not recorded, at least publicly utilized by the Prime Minister to bolster his argument for conscription.

Colonel Urquhart in his biography¹ of Sir Arthur Currie treats of the conscription aspect and notes the following: "As a matter of fact at heart he did favour conscription"². But while discussing this aspect of the General's career, Colonel Urquhart does not show that Currie had urged conscription upon Borden.

An interesting and curious directive dated June 18, 1917 was sent by Borden to Perley. In it, Borden noted to Perley that Currie should demand conscription³. On the same date he wrote another message to Perley.

-
1. Col. Urquhart had access to the Currie Papers which are now in the Public Archives of Canada.
 2. H. Urquhart, Arthur Currie, Toronto, Dent, 1950, 188.
 3. Borden to Perley June 18, 1917, Perley Papers, no.258.

As soon as Currie is appointed I shall send message of congratulation to him. It would be well in his reply he should make it clear the need for reinforcements to maintain the Canadian Army Corps at full strength. Liberal Press of Quebec are suggesting with great vehemence that no further reinforcements are required¹.

On June 23, 1917, Borden instructed Perley to get a list of figures on the reinforcements needed. This he claimed was necessary because of the six months hoist proposal which proposed "that enforcement of Military Service Act should be delayed for period of six months during which earnest and united effort shall be made by all parties to induce adequate enlistment"².

Next day General Currie was made the Commander of the Canadian Corps. While in London he issued the following statement:

My own personal conviction is that the only solution of the problem of Canadian recruiting is conscription. I believe the many difficulties which now threaten the adoption of such a policy would disappear before prompt bold action. My experience in France have shown me, as a soldier, the necessity of conscription if we desire to maintain at full strength our fighting divisions to the end of the War³.

Then at a Win-the-War Convention held in Toronto on August 2-3, Currie sent his greetings to it, and gave his full support for conscription. The letter was sent to Mr. Rowell, who read it to the delegates.

-
1. Borden to Perley, June 18, 1917, Perley Papers, no.285.
 2. Borden to Perley, June 23, 1917, Overseas Ministry Files, f.339.
 3. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 520.

UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA -- ÉCOLE DES GRADUÉS

We are all anxiously looking to Canada to see what the result of the conscription proposals of Sir Robert Borden will be. I am very glad you have given your support and influence to the cause of conscription.... We are winning this war ... and it would seem as if the heroic sacrifices of the Canadians would be forgotten if the troops in the field are not kept at full fighting strength. I attribute a great deal of our success to our fighting organization. If our units are not kept up to strength that organization breaks down, and success cannot be expected in the same measure. Furthermore, if our units are kept at full strength, the morale of our troops remains very high; whereas if units are allowed to become weak in numbers the morale suffers accordingly.

I pray you will not relax your efforts in seeing that everything is done by Canada to furnish the necessary drafts of officers and men. The troops here expect it - let them not be disappointed"¹.

The Convention, in appreciation of this interest, sent him the resolution that "Conscription be at once employed to reinforce our brave soldiers battling on the field of honour"².

Currie continued his support by sending a telegram to the "Win-the-War League", a telegram dated August 11, 1917. This telegram is interesting because it shows the mounting support given by Currie for conscription, a support that steadily increased from the time Borden suggested Currie speak on the matter.

Greetings of Win-the-War convention held at Toronto are much appreciated by all ranks Canada Corps. We sincerely sympathize with your endeavours to arouse our countrymen to necessity of remaining united and firm in their determination to furnish troops in the field all necessary support. We deeply implore fact that wisdom of doing so has become a subject for debate and controversy by those at home, and we have hoped that example of what

1. Quoted in The Globe, Aug. 3, 1917, p.1, col.7.

2. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 568.

corps have been able to accomplish, by united efforts of men who have already sacrificed so much, would serve to inspire rival political factions to sacrifice their political prejudices in this hour of their country's peril. If support is now withheld or even delayed, it means that additional burden will have to be borne by men already doing the seemingly impossible. The fight must go on until final and complete victory is attained. From agony of battlefield goes forth prayer that our homeland does not desert us in hour of our need and of our approaching triumph¹.

On the same date another telegram was received, this one from Stewart Lyon, the Editor of The Globe, who wrote: "There is urgent need (...) to unite for immediate enforcement of compulsory service measure"². Lyon was the only accredited correspondent (at Canadian Headquarters) of the Canadian Press³.

Rowell, writing to Currie in September, 1917, thanked the General for his help.

I was very glad to receive your letter of the 28th of June, and to hear of the exceedingly fine work of the Corps under your command; and also to have your statement on the need for reinforcements and the importance of conscription to our men at the front.

I was glad to receive your cable authorizing me to use the portion of your letter relating to conscription, which I did at the "Win-the-War" Convention here. Your statement made a deep impression on the audience⁴.

In August Currie criticized the bickering between factions in Canada and this brought about a statement by Frank Oliver who, in speaking at a Liberal Convention at

1. Quoted in The Globe, Aug. 14, 1917, p.1, col.6.

2. Ibid. p.1, col.1.

3. The editorial in The Globe, Aug. 14, 1917, made this claim.

4. Rowell to Currie, Sept. 6, 1917, Rowell Papers, v.3, no.1641-2.

Red Deer, Alberta in September, noted: "When we have a political general in command of our forces I want to be assured that our battles are not being fought for political effect"¹.

This remark by Oliver plus rumours of General Currie's retirement "aroused much comment but were generally accepted as ebullitions of an election campaign - especially as Sir Arthur did not hesitate to urge public support for the Union Government because of its Conscription attitude"².

The correspondence between Borden and Perley indicates that while Currie favored conscription, he gave public utterance to it only after Borden had requested he issue a demand for reinforcements. Only then did Currie publicly support conscription. Why did not Currie give a statement on his own initiative?

One possible reason lies in the age-old reluctance of the highest military officials to intrude into the realm of their civilian superiors.

Conscription was a raging political issue in Canada by June. Before that time, it was a topic many responsible officials avoided simply because the Borden Government did not discuss the topic except when forced to do so. Obviously then, once conscription broke as a vast public debate, when compulsory service was announced, officers were quite free to speak their mind. For example, Colonel Rattray had

1. Quoted in C.A.R., 1917, 521.
2. C.A.R., 1917, 521.

written Clifford Sifton in April, merely lamenting the lack of reinforcements¹. But in July he wrote again. "But it is absolutely necessary to have conscription"². Among military men in general overseas, public opinion was badly divided. For example the Borden Papers contain warnings to Borden that the soldiers overseas would likely vote against conscription. One correspondent, Mr. McCurdy, told Borden to "influence soldiers overseas or they will vote as in civilian life"³. Another correspondent, Captain G. Logan, Adjutant of the 7th Reserve Battalion, in a letter to Perley, analyzed the outlook of the men in his own unit.

I find that there is a tendency among the ranks in this battalion to oppose conscription. In censoring letters I find that 70% of the men advise their relatives in Canada to vote against conscription. In searching for a reason I find that the men are "fed up" and do not want their relatives to come out. Again, I find that in a great many cases, the brothers of these here are the sole support of the family in Canada. I would suggest that the Party at once start a campaign of education among the men here. If possible, make it a National question and the distribution of a pamphlet setting forth in a short concise form what "conscription" is would be a great benefit⁴.

That fear existed as to the lack of support for conscription was shown by the fact that Perley strongly advised Borden to get "constituencies to write to loyal members

-
1. J.G. Rattray to C. Sifton, April 17, 1917, Sifton Papers, v.206, no.161817-9.
 2. J.G. Rattray to C. Sifton, July 13, 1917, Sifton Papers, v.206, no.161826-7.
 3. McCurdy to Borden, Oct. 1917, Borden Papers, OC 370 (1), no.41103.
 4. Logan to Perley, Oct. 7, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 370 (1), no.41082.

overseas. No organization permitted in France. Even if allowed an organized campaign overseas would offend friendly Liberals"¹. As early as August 9, 1917, Mr. Hazen wrote to Perley concerning Captain Logan and a Major G. McLean, 5th Mounted rifles. "These men were both political organizers and are admirably adapted to the work that is necessary. Will you be good enough to see that they are retained in England until the Election is over"².

Concerning this proposed scheme Captain Logan wrote Perley:

I would strongly urge that I not be retained in England, but allow me to proceed to the 38th Battalion as I have an opportunity of promotion in a short time after getting there; on the other hand, my services along the lines suggested by Mr. Hazen could be very well carried out in France³.

Obviously then Borden was not assured of the overseas vote. The official publication of the Canadian War Records Office in London, The Canadian Daily Record, under the heading of "What Canada is Saying" section, usually gave an objective report on the conscription issue. But when it did cease to be objective it leaned towards The Military Service Act in its presentation of the news⁴. One issue (July 13, 1917, p.3, col.1) drew special attention to the penalties

-
1. Perley to Borden, Sept. 14, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 370 (1), no.41070-2.
 2. Hazen to Perley, Aug. 9, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 370 (1), no.41077.
 3. Logan to Perley, Sept. 7, 1917, Borden Papers, OC 370 (1), no.41078.
 4. Sir Max Aitken, (Lord Beaverbrook) had been in charge of the War Records Office in London since January, 1916.

involved for those who opposed the bill. Again (July 6, 1917, p.2, col.1) it quoted Canadian papers favorable to conscription. This paper tended to give a fuller presentation of the Parliamentary speeches of the pro-conscription element but in its over all presentation was objective, always prefacing its "What Canada is Saying" section with the following statement. "The Canadian Daily Record does not necessarily associate itself with the views expressed in these extracts"¹.

The Canadian armed forces overseas did not give any evidence of any appreciable amount of pressure for conscription and the individual documents portraying opinion, indicated, at best, a divided point of view. Again, it is logical to assume that among the troops of all ranks, were men of pro-Liberal views and as such would not be amenable to the Conservative Party, let alone conscription. This fear was well illustrated in a communication sent by Meighen to Rogers in 1915, showing that the Conservatives feared some Liberals in the Army ranks.

It will be very dangerous to leave Col. Bigger in charge of transport where he is now. He could, and they say would use it to our tremendous disadvantage in taking votes in Canada. He would know and practically he alone as to the exact date of moving soldiers from concentration camps and would make this known to Liberals and they would be able to get their vote taken and ours would find themselves suddenly too late. (...) He might be placed in charge of preparations at Valcartier or something like that².

-
1. The Canadian Daily Record, July 6, 1917, p.2, col.1.
 2. Meighen to Rogers, April 26, 1915, Borden Papers, OC 180 (1), no.14001-2.

Later in 1917, Beaverbrook wrote to Borden advising on the type of election machinery to be utilized.

Macrae says following Winnipeg meeting friends here think overseas forces should have direct representation on basis of one member for each six thousand men overseas which is equivalent to thirty thousand population basis at home. Overseas members to be elected at large. One slate for each party. Soldiers to vote for or against Government only but not for individual nominee thus electing complete slate. Our proposal would give approximately forty-five members¹, all of whom would be for Government and conscription¹.

Borden indicated his anxiousness to influence the overseas vote when he wrote to Perley in August, 1917, seeking the name of the English paper with the largest circulation among the Canadian forces in France and England. His plan was to send a writer to write up reports on the Military Service Act².

Thus it is seen that Borden and his colleagues were worried as to the possibility of the soldiers' vote going against the Government. The Military Voters Act, 1917 was so flexible that there was no safeguard as to determining just how fairly the vote was taken. Skelton attacked the whole system upon which this Act operated, noting "in the case of the soldiers' vote (...) flagrant manipulation and wholesale jobbery, the ballots being assigned to close constituencies regardless of the men's real residence"³.

In assessing the role played by military influences upon the coming of conscription, certain main conclusions are obvious.

1. Beaverbrook to Borden, Aug. 17, 1917, Borden Papers OC 180 (2), no.14236.
2. Borden to Perley, Aug. 2, 1917, Perley Papers, no.266.
3. Skelton, Laurier, II, 542.

While Canada had suffered heavy casualties and was having trouble in maintaining her four divisions at full strength, it appears that even these demands of war did not weigh heavily upon Borden. His manpower system was sporadic, disorganized and even chaotic. The war was almost over before he considered drafting men and even these failed to materialize to any great degree. Had Borden been cognizant of the fact that the war effort itself demanded more men, then why did he allow his voluntary recruiting system to crumble, and why did he wait until 1917 to do anything about it? 1916 saw the recruits dwindling. But 1917 saw the election year and it was only on the eve of the election that Borden sprung his Conscription measure, a measure that very handily split the Opposition and facilitated the return of Borden to power. In view of the grand contribution of Canada to the Allied effort, plus the fact that peace offers were broached, coupled with the fact that French and British troops were harvesting during 1917, it is obvious to conclude that conscription was not induced to any great degree by the exigencies of the war itself. The political expediency involved in conscription confirms this.

In regard to the second type of military influence on conscription, viz: the demand for conscription by military officers of high rank, the evidence suggests that the only urging along these lines came from Army officers in Canada. The evidence examined indicates too that the overseas military officials did not influence Borden for conscription.

True, demands were made for more men, but this is not to say those demands were accompanied by, or synonymous with, demands for conscription. Currie openly supported conscription after it was announced.

While the war itself indirectly contributed to conscription by creating demand for more reinforcements, a demand that was at best belatedly recognized by Borden in a fashion that would suggest the demand was recognized and acted upon only when it was politically expedient to do so, it was obvious that the military men overseas did not pressure Borden into conscription. At best the men of all ranks were divided but the key figures, the higher commanding ranks, were silent on the issue.

CONCLUSIONS

In assessing the various influences behind conscription and Union Government it is well to realize that some influences pertained solely to one or the other of these separate themes, while some pertained to both.

Regarding conscription, the first influence to be considered, Imperialism, was a major one. Borden at heart was an Imperialist. This was shown by his pre-War utterances which indicated he desired favorable trade concessions for Great Britain within the Empire. But, more importantly, Borden was a firm believer in Canada contributing to Empire defence and supporting the Mother Country in time of war. This was shown by his approving a Canadian navy in 1909 (which he wanted placed under Imperial control in time of war) followed by his attempt in 1913 to contribute \$35,000,000. to improve the naval forces of the Empire.

Consequently when hostilities broke out Borden's initial effort was on a grand scale. Then in 1916 he announced his plan of 500,000 men for the army. This was a magnificent goal for Canada considering her small population, a population divided into many divergent racial groups. Such a goal was entirely consistent with Borden's role as an Imperial statesman. But another form of Imperialism was at work. Beginning late in 1916 and down to the period of early 1917, the War Office made continuous demands for men, including a sixth division from Canada. It is quite true that

these demands were not coupled with pressure for conscription, but the demands for men were made (for infantry and specialist troops, e.g. railway and forestry troops) and to be supplied, these men would have to be conscripted if not enrolled voluntarily.

Canada's entry into the Imperial War Cabinet and the subsequent prestige this apparently gave to Borden, was accompanied by a corresponding increase in Canada's responsibility to the general Imperial War effort. This responsibility was inevitably reflected in an obligation to supply more men, since Canada's elevation to a role of relative equality with Great Britain removed her from the status of colony to that of partner. Again, for the three months preceding May and conscription, Borden was in England "feasting at the tables of the Great." This alone would place him at a disadvantage because he could not shirk the inevitable consequence of such a prominent role, viz: the obligation to supply more men.

Considering the fact that the number of recruits had dwindled enormously between 1915 and the spring of 1917 with no hope for an increase, all these Imperial influences, whether emanating from Borden or from England, created a demand for an increased enrolment of Canadian soldiers. Since voluntaryism couldn't do it, the only alternative was conscription. It was the considered opinion of many experts and large groups of the public, that Canada had done enough by 1917. Considering this point, plus the drain on labor and agriculture, plus the hostility to further war effort by many

groups across the entire country, it is obvious that Borden would have to conscript in order to fulfil his goal of 500,000 men, a goal consistent with his reasoning as an Imperialist statesman bent on all out aid to the Empire, and also consistent with meeting the War Office demands.

There was much Imperialist thinking rampant in Canada during the War, reflected in the Round Table movement plus that interesting form of subtle influence, viz: the amazing increase in titles granted Borden and the charmed few in Canadian public life. Such favors obviously were to be repaid.

Hence from the very start of the War, Borden played the role not of a Canadian, (as did Laurier) but that of a man who put the Empire first, his own country second. This is not to criticize Borden's role as an Imperialist, if he is judged on that basis, but it does indicate that his singular inability to think as a Canadian placed him at a serious disadvantage: he could not comprehend the attitude of those who differed with him regarding Canada's obligations to Great Britain and thus did not appreciate the fact that the opponents to conscriptions were thinking as Canadians, and not as Imperialist thinkers.

Thus Imperialist influences played a strong role in bringing about conscription.

But despite Borden's apparent inability to think as a Canadian, he nevertheless knew Canadian politics quite thoroughly and it was in this localized sphere that the

second great influence behind conscription (and also Union Government) came to the fore: the influence of a large section of the Liberal Party both Federal and Provincial.

Up until May 1917, no effort had been made by Borden to allow the Opposition to join a coalition Government, (as had been done in England). Again, the scandals that beset the Government, plus the inexcusable recruiting blunders, had not only made the Government unpopular with a large section of the Canadian public, but made it almost a certainty that the Government would be defeated in a general election. Moreover the drop in recruiting was evident by the beginning of 1916 and painfully obvious by the spring of 1917. Yet, Borden did not spring his conscription bill until May of 1917. Why the delay when conscription was already in use in England and in the United States? The answer lay in the timing of the measure.

While Laurier was opposed to conscription, as was Quebec, certain Liberals in Ontario, such as Rowell and Willison, were quite favorable to it. Thus there grew up a core of Liberals, either in the Commons or on Provincial levels, who favored conscription. But many of these Liberals favored a coalition also. Thus these two ideas became inseparately implanted in the minds of men like Rowell and Willison. At first however, prior to the coalition proposal, in June, the Liberal sentiment favoring coalition was like a rudderless ship, disorganized, reticent, but growing stronger each day. But some Liberals were avowedly conscriptionist in

their utterances. Then came May, 1917. Borden introduced his plan for compulsion, and then offered to form a coalition Government. Knowing that Laurier couldn't accept, Borden placed Laurier into refusing both coalition and conscription because the basis for coalition was to support the conscription bill. This manoeuvre brought the skirmishing out into the open. The Liberal party split on coalition, and fell apart over the Military Service bill.

How did this profit the Borden Government? It broke the Liberal Party as a national entity and weakened its chances of winning the next election. This was done in two ways. Firstly, by making coalition contingent upon the acceptance of conscription, and knowing Laurier could not accept coalition on these grounds, Borden placed Laurier in the position of having refused to co-operate with the Government for the purpose of helping to win the war by utilizing the full political resources of the country. Again, it left the Liberals as the only national party opposed to conscription. Since many individual Liberals were not opposed to conscription, it left this latter group with only one alternative, to desert their leader.

Secondly, these bolting Liberals could not hope to win a national election as a separate group. Their only alternative was to join forces with the Government. However there were many of these Liberals such as Rowell, Clifford Sifton and Willison, who were anxious to join a coalition movement. This left Laurier with a doubtful Maritimes, a hostile Ontario

and a divided West. Laurier could rely on Quebec support but not the Western Liberal group who were led by Clifford Sifton and the Manitoba Free Press, into a complete stampede out of Liberal ranks after the Winnipeg Convention in August. The second group out West, the Grain Growers, threw in their support with the bolting Liberals. A large faction, the foreign element, recognized as pro-Laurier, were neatly disfranchised by most unjust franchise changes. On top of this came the newly franchised women, bound to support the Government. The cycle was complete, the return of Union Government was assured, the doom of Laurier and his followers was accomplished. The soldiers' vote was almost unnecessary to complete the rout.

It could be argued that Borden did not use coalition and conscription as an act of expediency. Granting this point, then why did he wait until 1917 to stage these events? Apart from the evidence thus presented, this point stands out: coalition and conscription would have assured a maximum effort if applied early in the war. But Borden waited, not until 1915 when recruiting slowed, nor 1916 when it had stopped, but until 1917 when his extension of Parliament was running out. Evidence shows he could have gotten another extension from the Imperial authorities, but he chose to place the onus for a Wartime election completely upon the shoulders of the Opposition. Of one point he was careful: he neatly arranged the timing of this latter strategy after the Liberal Party was already cracking up over the offer of

coalition and the passage of the conscription measure.

Had Borden actually been motivated solely by the genuine impulse of furthering the war effort, why did he wait so late to offer coalition and effect conscription? Because it conveniently eased him back into power, plus his coalition cabinet, a cabinet fully endorsing his policies.

One point must be clarified. If conscription was designed to produce troops for the war, why was it not applied when it would be effective, when recruiting slowed? Why wait until 1917? The only answer was that coalition and conscription were inseparably bound up with the fate of the Borden administration, and expediency played the greatest role in effecting conscription, not just its introduction but the timing of its introduction. Even when the conscription bill became law it was very slow in being applied and would suggest that conscription had served its chief purpose, that of a piece of political expediency, on being placed on the Statutes. The half-hearted application of conscription plus its meagre results more than substantiates this. It must be realized that Borden had sufficient majority in Commons to effect conscription without needing a coalition to bring it about.

It should be emphasized that the chief drive for coalition came largely from Liberal ranks, not from Conservative. The Conservative Party was loath to share its power with Liberal Party members and it was only after the 'conscription' Liberals had left the ranks of the Liberal Party that they

were welcomed into the Conservative camp. In fairness to some of the conscription Liberals, they opposed coalition and refused to join the Cabinet. Men like Carvell and Calder in Commons were staunch supporters of coalition but the chief drive came from Liberals of Provincial stature such as A.L. Sifton, Rowell, Willison and John Dafoe. Thus Union Government was impossible without the aid of this minority but powerful Liberal group. It is noticeable that while this group sparked coalition most of them also got Cabinet positions, which indicated that their political principles were well buttressed by ambition, an ambition that was adroitly exploited by Borden.

Thus coalition and Union Government were built to an important degree upon the political expedient of using those Liberals who deserted Laurier on the matter of conscription. Thus Borden combined his role as an Imperialist statesman with that of a Canadian political opportunist.

Another influence on conscription often considered most important, military influences, actually played a somewhat unusual role. Certainly demands for more men were forthcoming from overseas Commanders, but these were made for the purpose of filling up the ranks of the projected fifth division. This was to be expected since the Borden goal of 500,000 men entailed a fifth division. Again, the War Office demands for the use of the Fifth Division, and even the formation of a sixth, intensified the demand for more reinforcements. This type of military influence was undeniably

present, and permeated much of the correspondence between Perley and Kemp, and between these men and Borden. But one point does emerge: these demands for reinforcements were simply demands for reinforcements, not demands for conscription as a means of getting reinforcements. There is no evidence to show any specific demands for conscription from overseas Commanders. However, at home, men like Major General Gwatkin, General Mewburn of the Canadian General Staff, local Divisional Military Commanders, plus recruiting officers and Militia Unit Commanders, were vociferous in their demands for the enforcement of the Militia Act or the institution of some separate form of compulsory enlistment.

General Currie came out publicly in support of conscription after it was announced and at the instigation of Borden. He was not heard from prior to the period in which conscription became a Government policy. Had any pressure for conscription come from Currie it is logical it would have appeared prior to this time. There is no evidence that he put pressure upon Borden to have conscription implemented.

The military pressure for more men was simply the normal type of thing forthcoming from Commanders whose troops were suffering excessive casualties due to the abnormal number of savage battles into which they were sent (by virtue of their superb fighting qualities). Allowing for the fact that Canada's casualties were high, Borden was intent on a fifth division. Since he could not raise this by the voluntary method he resorted to conscription. It seemed unusual for

him to do this in view of one interesting aspect of the War, viz: French and British troops, seasoned veterans, were being sent to do farm work to aid in the harvest while Borden was intent on drafting soldiers for the front, men at best, green in experience and reluctant to bear arms. All this would suggest that Borden was allowing the Canadian Army to be used in excess of what was normal for a country of small population and limited economy. It was normal practice to supply reinforcements but Borden didn't consider the alternative position of having Canada supply the food necessary for the Allies. This would have kept the battle hardened veterans of the French and British Armies in the war where their effectiveness would be greater, greater than being replaced by inexperienced troops. This reasoning on the part of Borden would suggest once again that his Imperialist outlook exceeded his Canadian vision.

Thus military influences played their role, but not a dominant role, in bringing about conscription because the requests for reinforcements (by overseas Commanders) were for troops, not conscription. Allowing for the premise that Canada's need of men was a factor in bringing about conscription, the fact remains that this influence was not as influential as it first appeared because the lateness of the measure, (peace overtures were rampant), the ineffectiveness of its enforcement and results, all indicated that while conscription was designed to get more men, it was inextricably intertwined with getting the Government back into power. Thus it must be

realized that its expedient role in politics destroyed the validity of the argument that conscription was designed solely to get more recruits.

Two more influences remain to be considered. These were the influences of the press and public opinion upon conscription and Union Government.

In assessing the role of the press on conscription (and Union Government) some unusual trends came to light. With reference to conscription the first impetus for it came during 1916 from the Liberal papers, The Morning Leader, Regina, The Toronto Daily Star, The Globe and The Daily Telegraph and The Sun. These papers continued their support for conscription during 1917 and were joined by other Liberal journals, including The Island Patriot, The London Advertiser, The Victoria Daily Times. After the announcement of conscription, the leading Liberal papers gave support to it but the bulk of those journals supporting conscription desired the Militia Act be enforced. Certainly the one outstanding fact that emerges from newspaper support of conscription was that this support came the earliest and the most consistent from Liberal papers, notably The Toronto Daily Star and The Globe.

On the matter of conscription, the Conservative press presented a much different picture. Most of the Tory journals ignored the conscription issue largely due to the fact that any demand on their part for conscription would in effect be a reflection on the manpower policy of the Government since such demands would imply recruiting was not being handled

properly. The only Conservative paper to demand conscription early in the War was The Quebec Chronicle in 1914. Most Conservative journals avoided it during 1915 and 1916 but in 1917 support for conscription came from The Quebec Chronicle, The Gazette, Montreal, L'Evenement, Le Patrie, The Montreal Daily Star, The Toronto World, The Mail and Empire, The Evening Telegram, The Victoria Daily Times, The Calgary Herald, The Winnipeg Telegram and the Vancouver Province.

Thus when it came to newspaper support for conscription the most consistent demand came from The Toronto Daily Star and The Globe and other leading Liberal papers. Most Conservative journals favored it by the spring of 1917.

In relation to newspaper support for coalition, the Conservative papers were frankly hostile to it up to the coalition offer of 1917 and after this point many continued their frank hostility or at best exhibited a most suspicious attitude to the Liberals entering Cabinet.

Such journals as The Quebec Chronicle, The Gazette, Montreal, The Montreal Daily Star, The Toronto World, The Mail and Empire, The Toronto Evening Telegram, The Ottawa Journal-Press were opposed or at best lukewarm to coalition.

However, after the coalition offer in May 1917, The Quebec Chronicle and The Montreal Daily Star favored it openly. By the end of the summer, most Conservative papers gave coalition some sort of support since Borden's attempts to form a coalition were becoming public knowledge. The Evening Telegram and The London^{Free} Press, plus The Ottawa Journal-Press

offered no support for coalition.

Among the Liberal papers, the following papers supported coalition before 1917: The Ottawa Free Press, The Toronto Daily Star, the Manitoba Free Press, The London Advertiser. During 1917, the greatest Liberal support for coalition came from The Toronto Daily Star, The Globe, the Manitoba Free Press, The Evening Bulletin. Liberal Papers opposed to coalition included The Daily Telegraph and The Sun, The Morning Leader, The Island Patriot.

Thus in reviewing newspaper support for conscription it was seen that the Liberal press came out for it first, followed by the Conservative, prior to June 1917. After June, most newspapers in Canada supported conscription, whether Liberal or Conservative.

In regard to coalition the press of both parties was split. The Liberal journals led the demand for coalition, but the eastern journals of this party were opposed to it. The Globe and The Toronto Daily Star came out strongest for it. The Tory press was hostile to coalition as a group up until June, 1917, and after this was lukewarm to it, with many disliking the idea in principle but giving it begrudging support.

The Nationalist press in Quebec opposed conscription and coalition, ultimately swinging behind Laurier during the summer and fall of 1917.

Borden then relied primarily upon leading Liberal papers for support of both conscription and Union Government.

This was important because it gave him support of the Liberal press in Ontario and the West, the two areas which helped most to bring his Union Government into power.

Public opinion on the two themes of conscription and Union Government was very badly divided, and most difficult for any politician to assess.

Support for conscription came largely from English speaking sections, was centred in Ontario and the West, and more often found in the towns and cities. It came largely from Empire Clubs, Boards of Trade, Church groups, Civic bodies, veterans groups, business men, women's groups, Win-the-War groups, volunteer recruiting leagues. It grew more intense just prior to the announcement of conscription but did not vary in its origin. Labor opposed conscription largely on the grounds that it did not provide for conscription of wealth. Quebec opposed conscription as did the foreign element out West, while farmers were unfavorable to it.

While the pro-conscription element was organized, vociferous, possessed of funds to carry on its publicity, the anti-conscription element was scattered, unorganized, not heard from and subjected to pressure at meetings or denied the right of assembly. Proof that Borden did not feel he had too much public support for conscription lay in the fact he found it necessary to disfranchise thousands of the foreigners out West. Certainly on a basis of public opinion, it was obvious Borden saw a badly divided country, with only a minority, both Conservative and Liberal, openly and vociferously favoring

conscription.

As to public opinion for coalition, support for it came largely from the same sources but did not arise until 1917, unlike conscription support which was strong in 1916. Support for Union Government, (unlike that for conscription) was more widespread, stronger and better organized. Labor as a group did not oppose it as it had opposed conscription, while business interests came out strongly for Union Government.

Borden had a much stronger public support for coalition by mid-1917 than he had for conscription, and this support was more easily recognized and more reliable than that for conscription.

In short, public support for coalition was much stronger than the demands for conscription, and it thus played a greater influential role than did public demand for conscription.

In assessing the relative importance of all these various influences on conscription and Union Government it is difficult to name one as the most outstanding influence but certainly some far exceeded others in their relative degree of importance.

With regard to conscription, Imperial influences of one type or another formed a great driving force, but were equalled by the influence of using conscription as an expedient measure to split the Liberal party and ensure the election of the Conservative Party. Militarism did not play

the influential role it would be expected to play, since the expediency angle rather negates militarism as a prime influence. Public opinion did not play an important role, except to indicate divided support, at best, for Borden. Newspaper support was stronger, much stronger, than was public opinion, and this support came largely from Liberal papers.

With regard to coalition, the greatest single influence was the willingness of certain Liberals to join the Borden Government or support it, at least, thus splitting the Liberal Party and ensuring the return of the Union Government. Thus the expediency aspect of coalition was proven. Newspaper support for coalition was weaker than its corresponding support for conscription. Liberal and Conservative papers were divided over coalition, with Conservative support at best, lukewarm, while certain journals of both camps remained suspicious or hostile to the idea. Newspaper support for coalition did not play as decisive a role as it did for conscription, but certainly the desire of leading Liberal journals for coalition was most significant.

Public opinion as an influence on coalition was limited to areas, types and organizations reflecting thinking that was largely English speaking, urban, Ontario and Western. While public support was strong in intensity it was not by any means unanimous and, as in the case of public support for conscription, its assessment did not necessarily assure Borden of a majority support.

In conclusion, it is obvious that due to the lateness

of the conscription measure, its political expediency, the ineffectiveness of its application and results, plus the bitterness it aroused, little justification for the measure can be found.

ABSTRACT OF

Borden: Conscription and Union Government¹.

In this thesis the problem was to determine the actual influences that led to conscription and Union Government, and then to assess the relative importance of each of these influences.

Chapter One deals with the basic views held by Borden on Canada's relationship to the Mother Country in the fields of politics, trade and defence. It confines itself to the pre-War period and sets the stage for the unfolding of the body of the thesis.

Chapter Two covers the war period from 1914 down to late 1917 and discusses the political influences on conscription and Union Government. The early part of the Chapter reviews the war down to 1916 on a yearly basis, describing Canada's war effort and recruiting, and analyzes the reasons why recruiting slowed down to a virtual stop by the beginning of 1917. Also given is an analysis of French Canadian thought on recruiting and the war. The remainder of the Chapter records the appearance of demands for conscription, followed by a description of the role played by certain Liberals in voting for conscription and co-operating in the ultimate formation of Union Government.

1. Ph.D. Thesis presented by James A. Crowley, in 1958, to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa, 1958, 401 pages.

Chapter Three relates the influence of newspaper and public opinion on conscription and Union Government. Recorded are selections from editorials of the journals of both the Liberal and Conservative supporters. The opinions analyzed, whether from newspapers, individuals, organizations or groups, were selected from across the entire country in order to present as accurate a sampling as possible.

Chapter Four deals with Imperial influences on conscription and shows how conscription was in keeping with the pre-War outlook of Borden as an Imperialist statesman. Also shown are such influences as Canada's new status as a member of the Imperial War Cabinet, demands for reinforcements by the War Office, plus the activity of the Round Table movement. This Chapter also records an analysis of the degree of justification for Borden's conscription.

Chapter Five describes the degree to which military influences affected conscription. Discussed are the roles of Canadian military officials in Canada and overseas, including General Currie.

The Conclusions portion deals with a summary of the various influences affecting the two themes of conscription and Union Government. Regarding conscription, Imperialism plus the activities of certain Liberals, played the greatest role. Newspaper support, significantly Liberal, was very strong but public opinion was badly divided. As to Union Government the greatest influence behind it was Liberal support, capably utilized by Borden to split the Opposition,

and ensure the election of the Union Government. Newspaper and public opinion played equal but secondary roles in this matter.

The general conclusion reached, on the evidence of the influences revealed, was that conscription was far from being proved justifiable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources : Manuscript Sources.

Papers

Borden Papers¹ : (P.A.C.)

Borden Papers : (University of Toronto, Microfilm copy, pages not numbered entirely).

Dafoe Papers : (P.A.C.)

Foster Papers : (P.A.C.)

G.A.Q. 10-47C, General Staff, Administration, and Quartermaster-general file: (Army Historical Section, National Defence Head Quarters).

H.Q. 1982-1-71, v.I, Headquarters Block of Files : (Army Historical Section, National Defence Head Quarters).

Contains some material relative to Major-General Gwatkin, C.G.S., and conscription. Of value as a reference into high level military thinking on conscription.

Laurier Papers : (P.A.C.)

Overseas Ministry Files, Folio 339 : (P.A.C.)

Extremely valuable for its record of figures on reinforcements needed during 1916-17. It records also the requests for reinforcements, from Canada, by the War Office.

Perley Papers : (P.A.C.)

Rowell Papers : (P.A.C.)

Sifton Papers : (P.A.C.)

Willison Papers : (P.A.C.)

1. Mr. Henry Borden, possessor of the Borden Diaries, declined to make them available to the author for research purposes.

B. Primary Sources : Printed Sources.

Government Publications

Canada, Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons, 1902-1917.

Canada, Official Report of the Debates of the Senate of Canada, 1915, 1917.

Canada, Statutes of Canada, 1904, 1910, 1917.

Imperial War Conference, London, 1917, Extracts of Proceedings and Papers laid before the Conference, Ottawa: J. de L. Tache, 1917.

Correspondence

Hughes, Sir Sam, Correspondence of Gen. Sir S. Hughes, ex Minister of Militia, and Rt. Hon. Sir Robt. Borden at time Sir Sam resigned, Ottawa, Canada, Central Liberal Information Office, 1916, 16 p.

These letters trace the steps leading up to Hughes' resignation, showing Hughes criticism of Canada's War effort and hints by Hughes of the end of the voluntary enlistment system.

Monographs

Borden, Henry (ed.), Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs, Toronto: Macmillan, 1938, xvii, 542, xvii, 1044.

Of value as a personal first hand account of Borden's career, rich in details on the background of incidents and personalities, plus many letters and telegrams.

Pamphlets

Borden, R.L., Manifeste au Peuple Canadien, Ottawa, Union Government and Publicity Bureau, 1917, 7 p.

An important speech, in which Borden defends conscription, asks for support from the troops and the public for Union Government.

Borden, R.L., England and the United States - Speeches delivered between July and December, 1915, N.P., N.d., 31 p.

These speeches have one thing in common, the emphasis on the high morale of Canadian and Allied troops. Significant, however, is the note of optimism regarding Canada's war effort in 1915. This apparently augured well for the future. Of value as an insight into the 1915 period in Canada's war effort.

Borden, R.L., Appeal for National Service: N.p., N.d., 3 p.

Of value as an insight into the necessity of National Service according to Borden.

Borden, R.L., Canadian Clubs - Speeches delivered at Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, Winnipeg, December, 1914. N.p., N.d., 31 p.

These speeches justify the defense of the Empire by Canada, by showing that German militarism was to blame for the war. Thus Canada and the Empire had no choice but to battle for survival. Borden thus justifies too, the various aspects of Canada's war effort. Of value as an appeal to the people for a greater War effort.

Borden, R.L., Formation and Personnel of the Union Government. N.p., N.d., 3 p.

Of value as a record of the formation and members of the Union Government giving their duties and plans of the Government.

Borden, R.L., The Naval Question, 3rd February, 1910, N.p., N.d., 15 p.

Here Borden relays to the public the Admiralty's wish that Canadian naval contributions be specific (as to ship, etc.) and be placed under the Royal Navy in wartime. He calls for a unified Empire defence, not a local Canadian Navy, ineffective and alone during wartime. Of value as a key to Borden's views on the naval issue.

Bourassa, H., The Duty of Canada at the present hour, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1914, 44 p.

Bourassa claims that Canada's war effort had reached the limit of its potentiality for war production and could do no more. He reviews the output of factories, agriculture and compares it to other Allied Nations.

Bourassa, H., Conscription; Montreal, Le Devoir, 1917.
 (English translation of his La Conscription). (Summary
 of articles published in Le Devoir from May 28 to June
 6, 1917, published in pamphlet form, June 9, 1917),
 46 p.

Here Bourassa attacks Conscription as unnecessary due to fact that Canada had already done enough; the shortage of soldiers was blamed not on lack of recruits but the sloppy methods of recruiting; Bourassa condemns Borden's breaking his pledge not to have conscription; finally Bourassa calls on the French race to assert its rights regardless of Borden's intentions and settle the whole issue by a national referendum. A good summation of Bourassa's views.

Bourassa, H., Le Devoir et la guerre, le conflit des races, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1916, 45 p.

Here Bourassa reviews historically the racial conflict in Canada and shows how various groups have attacked French rights from George Brown to Mgr. Fallon. He reviews the Article XVII controversy on education and claims it is the opening "wedge" in a national weakening of French Canadian nationalism and rights. A valuable insight into Bourassa's views on the language issue.

Bourassa, H., L'emprunt de la "Victoire" la surenchère du "bluff", Montreal, Le Devoir, 1917, 8 p.

Bourassa claims that the European Allies could finish off the war without further Canadian aid only they prolong it for financial gain (manufacturers and financiers). He decries Conscription in Canada. A good example of one of his own theories.

Bourassa, H., The Foreign Policy of Great Britain, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1915, 55 p.

In a very detailed study the author claims that the British entry into the war was not to protect Belgian neutrality but rather to crack the German Imperial navy, the only real threat to Britain's supremacy of "the seas." A good insight into Bourassa's viewpoint on British Imperialism.

Bourassa, H., Hier, aujourd'hui, demain; problèmes nationaux, Montreal, N.p., 1916, 178 p.

Bourassa reviews the historic loyalty of French Canadians but points out that by 1916 Canada's war effort is strained to the limit. A good example of one of his main viewpoints.

Bourassa, H., L'intervention américaine: ses motifs, son objet, ses conséquences, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1917, 51 p.

Bourassa speculates on the effect of American intervention in the war. He claims it obviates the necessity of conscription in Canada and predicts gloomily that it will lead to a fusion of all the races in North America. An example of another argument against conscription.

Bourassa, H., La Langue Française au Canada (ses droits, sa nécessité, ses avantages), Montreal, Le Devoir, 1915, 52 p.

In this bitterly worded speech, Bourassa denounces the decision to drop French in the schools in Ontario (carried out under Article XVII). Bourassa employs the historical, moral and cultural and practical argument to prove the right of French speaking people in Canada to have their language taught in the schools in Ontario. A strong indictment of Article XVII.

Bourassa, H., Les Langues et les Nationalités au Canada, Montreal, 1916, N.p.

Bourassa complains that the Boches of Ontario and Manitoba not Hun of Germany are real enemies of the French.

Bourassa, H., Le problème de l'Empire, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1916 44 p.

Here Bourassa deplors the subjection of the colonies to British rule and calls for a more aggressive nationalist position. He feels Canada must become more of a colony or else get independence.

Bourassa, H., Win the War and lose Canada, Le Devoir, Montreal, 1917, 14 p.

In a strong attack Bourassa condemns the Canadian entry into the war as the action of a British satellite. He condemns conscription as a cause of national disunion. A good summation of his views on conscription.

C. Secondary Sources.

Monographs

Armstrong, E., The Crisis of Quebec, 1914-18, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1937, xii, 270 p.

A sympathetic and detailed account of the period 1914-18,

analyzing Quebec's reaction to the war, explaining in rational, objective fashion why Quebec resented conscription and its method. The attitude of Ontario is also analyzed. A most excellent treatise by a fair minded observer of the facts.

Borden, R.L., *The War and the Future*, being a narrative compiled from speeches delivered at various periods of the war in Canada, the United States and Great Britain, (Compiler, Peter Hurd), London, Hodder, 1917, xxiv, 164 p.

These excerpts are compiled to trace Canada's role in the Great War, giving the background to the war; the steps taken by Canada on entering the war; visit to the front; and a short sketch of the significance of the Imperial War Cabinet. The latter is of merit because Borden shows fully the import of the formation of such a group.

Bourassa, H., *Que devons-nous à l'Angleterre?*, Montreal, N.p., 1915, 420 p.

Bourassa stoutly attacks any more aid to Britain by denouncing the war as European Imperialism, implying Canada will get no thanks for her efforts and stating that Canada's war effort is at its maximum. Of value as illustrating the Nationalist position.

Dafoe, J.W., *Laurier: a study in Canadian politics*, Toronto, Allen, 1922, 182 p.

Contains a sympathetic account of Laurier's stewardship, showing his activities through the South African War and the Conscription issue. Of value because it relates the problem of Laurier as a National leader and as a son of French Canada.

David, L.O., *Laurier; Sa vie: ses oeuvres*, Beauceville, L'Eclaireur Limitée, 1919, 268 p.

A friendly coverage of Laurier's influence on Canadian life with a clear coverage of the racial and religious background to Laurier's rise to power, of value as a biography of Laurier.

De Celles, A.D., *Laurier et son temps*, Montreal, Librairie Beauchemin Ltée., 1920, 228 p.

A good political biography of a great Canadian emphasizing his role, in the Imperial Conferences, as an exponent of Canadianism. Of value as an insight into the opposition leader during part of World War I. Of value as an insight into the wartime Laurier.

Desjardins, L.G., England, Canada and the Great War, Quebec Chronicle Print, 1918, xvi, 422 p.

Of value as an approach to the War by a French Canadian military figure. An attack on Bourassa's position, an attempt (by a former Canadian Army officer) to justify England's role in Canadian affairs and a statement of loyalty to the Crown on behalf of French Canada.

Hopkins, J.C., Canada at War, Toronto, Canadian Annual Review Co., 1919, viii, 448 p.

A general review of the Canadian war effort. Of value for its factual presentation.

Hopkins, J.C., Province of Ontario in the War, Toronto, Warwick Bros. and Rutter Ltd., 1919, vii, 126 p.

A good reference book, of factual value, regarding Ontario's war effort, 1914-18.

Hopkins, J.C., The Story of Canada, Toronto, Winston, 1922, 788 p.

In a sympathetic understanding of Quebec's reaction to the War of 1914-18, the author emphasizes the lack of appreciation of the Imperial cause. Of value as an insight into "Ontario" thought at the time.

Lower, A.R., Canada, Nation and Neighbour, Toronto, Ryerson, 1952, vii, 202 p.

An attempt to show how effective the Boer War and World Wars I and II have been in arousing a separatist movement in French Canada. The author's main treatise is to show that while French nationalism was awakened by these events, most French Canadians preferred a national unity to a separate French state on the St. Lawrence. Of value as a keen analyses by a contemporary Canadian historian.

Lower, A.R., Colony to Nation, Toronto, Longmans Green, 1947, xiii, 600 p.

A sharp incisive treatment of Canadian History, an objective, impartial attack on the jingoists and Imperialist methods. Of value as a fair analysis by a living Canadian historian.

Lucas, Sir C., (ed)., The Empire at War, Oxford, Humphrey Milford, 5 vols. 1921-26, vol VII, 1923, x, 508 p.

This volume is valuable because it gives a good coverage of the enlistment figures in the Canadian Army throughout the War years.

McInnis, E., Canada; A Political and Social History, N.Y., Rinehart, 1947, xv, 574 p.

This is a general treatment of Canadian history but of value in picturing the Government's stupidity in handling recruiting.

Preston, W.T., My Generation of Politics and Politicians, Toronto, Rose, 1927, 462 p.

Of value as a good factual insight into the Borden administration, scandals, recruiting and patronage.

Rumilly, Robt., Henri Bourassa, La vie publique d'un grand Canadien, Montreal, Editions Chantecler ltee., 1953, 791 p.

A good coverage of Bourassa's career is given here and has value as an analysis of Bourassa's reasoning over the Boer War, a Canadian Navy and his break with Laurier.

Rumilly, R., Sir Wilfred Laurier, Montreal, Valiquette, Histoire de la Province de Québec, 1940-56, 29 vols., vol. VIII, 211 p.

A coverage of the early period of Laurier's career and a good insight into Laurier's stand on the Manitoba School question. Of value as a key to his later outlook during the War.

Skelton, O., The Day of Sir Wilfred Laurier, Toronto, Brook, 1916, Chronicles of Canada Series, 1914-16, 32 vols., vol. VIII, 342 p.

Of value as an insight into the reasoning of Laurier during the Boer War and on the question of the Canadian Navy.

Skelton, O., The Life and Letters of Sir Wilfred Laurier, Toronto, Gundy, 1921, 2 vols., vol. II, 576 p.

Of great value as a biography of Laurier, showing his career during the War. A penetrating analysis of the conscription and Union Government issues is given here.

Willison, J.S., Sir Wilfred Laurier, London, Oxford, 1926, Makers of Canada Series, 1926, 25 vols., vol. XI, vii, 981 p.

A defense of Laurier's position on conscription by one of his oldest political associates. Of value as an insight into Laurier and the period 1916.

Wade, M., *The French Canadian Outlook*, N.Y., Viking, 1946,
192 p.

An interesting coverage of the period 1915-17 by an
American Historian. A good attempt to analyze French
Canadian thought during the War.

Newspapers

Charlottetown

The Island Patriot, 1914-17.

Edmonton

Evening Bulletin, 1914-17.

Halifax

The Morning Chronicle, 1914-17.

London

The London Free Press, 1914-17.
The London Advertiser, 1914-17.

Montreal

Le Devoir, 1914-17.
The Gazette, 1914-17.
The Montreal Daily Star, 1914-17.
La Presse, 1914-17.

Ottawa

The Ottawa Journal-Press, 1914-17.
The Ottawa Citizen, 1914-17.

Quebec

The Quebec Chronicle, 1914-17.

Regina

The Morning Leader, 1914-17.

St. John

The Daily Telegraph and The Sun, 1914-17.

Toronto

The Evening Telegram
 The Globe, 1902, 1909, 1914-17.
 The Mail and Empire, 1914-17.
 The Toronto Daily News, 1914-17.
 The Toronto Daily Star, 1914-17.
 The Toronto Star Weekly, 1914-17.
 The Toronto World, 1914-17.

Victoria

The Daily Colonist, 1914-17.
 Victoria Daily Times, 1914-17.

Winnipeg

Manitoba Free Press, 1914-17.
 The Winnipeg Telegram, 1914-17.

Pamphlets

Ainey, Joseph, Canadian Labour and Conscription, Montreal,
 Le Devoir, 1917, 8 p.

An attack on conscription, of value as the point of view
 of a labor official.

Borden, R.L., The Naval Question, N.p., 1910, 30 p.

Here Borden eloquently pleads for a Canadian Navy,
 separate in peacetime but joined with the Royal Navy in
 wartime. A good summary of his views on the Naval issue.

Borden, R.L., Political Dishonesty, April 15, 1915, Ottawa,
 Canadian Federal Press Agency, 1915, 34 p.

Here Borden tries to reassure the Canadian public that
 graft charges re purchase of horses, shells, trucks and
 shoes, will be investigated and the findings made public.
 Of value as a gauge to public opinion.

Borden, R.L., A Speech at Quebec, December 7, 1916, N.p., 1916,
 5 p.

Here Borden reviews the extent of German savagery and
 makes a plea for a concerted effort to save civilization.
 This speech is of special value because it is directed
 directly at the French thinking groups in Quebec.

Borden, R.L., Splendid Record of the Borden Government. Statesmanlike speech at Halifax, Sept. 16, 1913. Naval Policy clearly defined as one of co-operation, not of contribution. Ottawa Liberal-Conservative Party of Canada, 1913, Ottawa, Federal Press Agency, N.d., 29 p.

Here Borden condemns Laurier's "separated" attitude on Imperial affairs re Canada's role. This attack is based on Laurier's separate Navy plan, a plan Borden condemned as impractical, ungracious and an adjunct of Canadian neutrality in time of war.

Borden, R.L., The Vigorous and Progressive Western Policy of the Borden Government, Speech delivered Halifax, Sept. 16, 1913, Federal Press Agency, Ottawa, Canada, 19 p.

Here in 1913 Borden recounts the Conservative record of public works and new laws in Western Canada. This is important because it indicates a possible reason for his support in Western Canada during the formation of the Union Government.

Borden, R.L., Winning the War, the Supreme Issue Confronting the Nation, 1918, N.p., 6 p.

Of value because it clarifies Borden's justification for conscription viz: that the Germans forced it upon Canada.

Bourassa, H., La Conférence impériale et le rôle de M. Laurier, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1911, 80 p.

Of value as an insight into Laurier's role in Imperial Conferences, and a basis for understanding the later Laurier.

Bourassa, H., Imperial Relations, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1913, 24 p.

Of value as illustration of Bourassa's attitude on British foreign policy, which he claims could easily involve Canada in a war.

Bourassa, H., Le projet de loi navale, sa nature, ses conséquences, Montreal, N.p., 1910, 37 p.

Of value as an insight into Bourassa's fear that a Canadian Navy would get involved in Britain's wars.

Bourassa, H., The story of the Nationalist-Conservative Alliance, as told by the Nationalist leader, an inside history of interest to every Canadian, Ottawa, Central Office of the Canadian Liberal Party, 1913, 8 p.

Here Bourassa reiterates the cardinal objectives of the Nationalist movement and shows its inherent differences to Toryism. He proves that the Tory-Nationalist Alliance of 1911 was but to unseat the Laurier Government. He shows that although the Conservatives had other plans re Naval affairs they and the Nationalists were interested in a similar objective viz: the defeat of the Laurier government. A valuable insight into this topic.

Bourassa, H., Why the Navy Act should be repealed; Imperial problems, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1912, 62 p.

Here Bourassa argues against a Canadian navy because (1) it would help England in wartime in a war over which Canadians have no control, (2) it is too heavy a burden for a young Canada to adopt. He decries the German scare as a baseless fear, thus throwing out the chief argument for a Canadian Navy. A valuable treatise.

Caron, Hon. J.E., Conscription and Agriculture, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1917, 10 p.

Of value because it gives the Nationalist answer to the charge that Quebec had few recruits. The answer lay in the agricultural basis of the Quebec economy.

Fisher, Hon. Sydney, Conscription and True Liberalism, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1917, 7 p.

Of value as the views of a former Minister of Agriculture who opposes conscription on the grounds it is unpopular, and is being ushered in by a government elected on other issues. He desires a referendum.

Fortier, A., The Economics of War, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1917, 5 p.

This attacks conscription as the final blow to Canadian economy. Of value as a Nationalist interpretation of the economic result of conscription.

Lamarche, P.E., The Free American and the Canadian Flunkey, Montreal, Le Devoir, 1917, 8 p.

Here the author condemns the U.S. opinion which attacks the Canadian War effort. It is of value because it shows the Nationalist position to be united in the opinion that

Canada had done enough for the War and had already done more for the War than Great Britain.

Montpetit, E., Canada's Economic Destruction; Montreal, Le Devoir, 1917, 15 p.

Here the author condemns conscription on the grounds it will break Canada's economy by stripping her factories and fields of workers. He points out that Canada already had more men in war activities than any other Allied nation.

Quarterlies, Annual Publications

Canadian Annual Review, 1914, Toronto, Annual Review Publishing Co., 1915, 863 p.

Of factual value concerning the war attitude of Quebec.

Canadian Annual Review, 1915, Toronto, Annual Review Publishing Co., 1916, 880 p.

Of value as a detailed insight into the Bilingual Question and Quebec, the activities of the Militia Department, Borden Speeches, etc.

Canadian Annual Review, 1916, Toronto, Annual Review Publishing Co., 1917, 929 p.

Of value as a reference to Borden's war policy and speeches during the year 1916.

Canadian Annual Review, 1917, Toronto, Annual Review Publishing Co., 1918, 949 p.

Of value as a detailed report on the attitude of Quebec politicians, hierarchy and Nationalists on the issue of conscription.

Canadian Annual Review, 1918, Toronto, Annual Review Publishing Co., 1919, 879 p.

Of value as a detailed account of the reaction to the Military Service Act in Quebec and the riots of April 3-5, 1918.

Dewey, A.G., "Canada's Part in the Brittanic Question", C.H.R., VIII, no.4, Dec. 1927, pp. 284-301. Quarterly.

A good background into Laurier's attitude on Imperialism, indicating the force of Nationalism behind Laurier.

Howard, F.H., "Sir Robert Borden and Canada's External Policy, 1911-1920", C.H.A., Annual Report, 1941, pp. 65-82.

An excellent analysis of the role played by Borden with relation to the first Canadian Navy and Canada's entry into the Imperial War Cabinet.

Vince, D.M., "The Acting Overseas Sub-Militia Council and the Resignation of Sir Sam Hughes", C.H.R., XXXI, no.1, Mar. 1950, pp. 1-24. Quarterly.

RESUME OF: BORDEN: CONSCRIPTION AND UNION GOVERNMENT

In this thesis the problem was to distinguish the influences behind conscription and the formation of Union Government, and to assess the relative importance of these individual influences.

On the matter of conscription one aspect played an outstanding role. This consisted of various types of Imperial influences. To begin with Borden's pre-war views on Imperial defence and trade marked him as an ardent Imperialist at heart. Again, his attitude on Imperial defence (e.g. Canadian Navy, Naval Aid Bill) made it clear that he would support England if the latter became involved in a war. Thus the goal of 500,000 men set by Borden during the War, was entirely consistent with Borden the pre-war Imperialist. Again, the War Office made persistent and strong demands for a sixth division (when Borden wanted a fifth) as well as specialized troops such as forestry, railway and medical units. Furthermore Borden spent some time in England prior to May 1917 and was associating with members of the Imperial Government, particularly in his role as a member of the Imperial War Cabinet. Canada's elevation to this Imperial War Cabinet was marked by a corresponding increase in Canada's obligations in the war (e.g. more troops) since this new status removed Canada from Colonial status. Other minor Imperial influences were at work too, including the Round Table movement (including Liberals and Conservatives) which supported conscription.

Another influence at work upon conscription was a purely military one. Since Canada's casualties were almost abnormally high (due to the great number of engagements involving the highly rated Canadian troops) it was obvious that to keep up four divisions, or even five, Canada had to resort to conscription. It must be pointed out that the figure of 500,000 would do this but such a goal would be a fantastic drain on Canadian manpower. Borden's bungling of recruiting spoiled his chance of getting 500,000 volunteers. Hence he resorted to conscription, despite the extremely high goal he had set. Canadian military officials at home (certain members of the Canadian General Staff, Militia and Military divisional Commanders) urged conscription. But overseas officials, according to available evidence, didn't pressure Borden into conscription. Currie was silent on this issue, speaking for it only after it was announced, and then on the instigation of Borden.

-
1. Ph.D. Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa by James A. Crowley, Toronto, 1958.

A third influence on conscription (and also an influence on Union Government) was political expediency. Had Borden wanted a systematic manpower scheme such as conscription it was strange he waited not until 1916 (when recruiting had literally stopped) but until May of 1917. The answer lay in the fact that by 1917 Borden had to (1) call an election (since the one year extension of 1916 was running out), or (2) ask for another extension of Parliament (which evidence shows the Imperial authorities were willing to grant). But Borden feared an election because the record of his wartime Government was so poor in many respects that he was by no means assured of returning to power. He needed a rallying cry for an election. Conscription provided it for him. By May of 1917 many Liberals were willing to support conscription and on the Party level, several Liberals were willing to join a coalition. Thus Borden offered coalition to Laurier. Borden knew (as did the public) that Laurier could not accept coalition since the offer included a subsequent backing of conscription by the Coalition Government and Laurier could not accept conscription. Laurier's refusal of the offer left his Party open to the charge of not supporting an all-out war effort. The Liberal Party cracked noticeably over the issue of conscription. The Liberal Party under Laurier were left with support from Quebec and the "foreign" element out West. The ambitions of certain Liberals in Ontario and the West, for a Coalition Cabinet, broke the Liberal Party as a national entity. It came about this way. When Borden adroitly manoeuvred his wartime election, it was done in such a way as to place the onus of such a move upon the Liberal Party. Then, when he ushered in his franchising of those women (who were logically pro-conscription) and his disfranchising of many of the "foreigners" out West (who were practically all pro-Laurier and anti-conscription) he forced the Western Liberal group (who had deserted Laurier after the Winnipeg Convention) to meet him (Borden) on his own terms and support Union Government. They had no choice to do this because alone they could not win an election as a group and of course their desertion of the National Liberal Party under Laurier was final. Thus without the support of the Liberals who favored conscription and among these, the ambitious cabinet-seeking Lib who kept the idea of coalition alive after June 1917, Borden could not have used conscription to form his Union Government, and thus effect a return to power. The political expediency of conscription cannot be doubted.

Two other influences affected conscription, viz: newspaper and public opinion, and these influences were inextricably associated with Union Government.

As to newspaper influence on conscription, it came primarily from two Liberal journals, The Globe and The Toronto Daily Star, prior to the announcement of compulsion in May, 1917. Conservative journals on the whole did not

support it up to May because the demand for it would have implied a criticism of the Government's manpower policy. Most Liberal journals, Liberal and all the Conservative papers, urged conscription after May 1917. The enforcement of the Militia Act was demanded by most papers rather than the passage of new legislation. On Union Government, the Conservative journals almost unanimously opposed it prior to the June Coalition offer and after this time showed hostility or at best lukewarm support of Union Government. Prior to June The Globe, and The Toronto Daily Star favored coalition but after June most Liberal papers favored a coalition. The most significant aspect of newspaper support on conscription was the support of the two Liberal papers (The Globe and The Toronto Daily Star). The support of these two papers, and the Manitoba Free Press, all Liberal was the significant aspect of newspaper support for Union Government.

In regards to public opinion on conscription, a strong minority favored it from 1916 on, and this consisted of English speaking groups, in Ontario and the West, drawn from Church groups, Empire and Canadian Clubs, certain Liberals, and the cities. Little or no support for it came from farmers, Eastern Canada, and Quebec, and organized labor. Bordens resorting to franchise changes indicated he had no dependable support from the public on this issue. Among the public, the same groups supported coalition, and were better organized on this issue but less hostility towards it was shown by the opponents of conscription.

In retrospect, political expediency and Imperial influences were major influences on conscription, with military influences playing a somewhat secondary role (in certain aspects). Newspaper support was divided but public support was very weak. On Union Government political expediency and the co-operation of certain Liberals was the prime factor. Newspaper and public opinion played secondary roles.

In conclusion it is obvious that due to the lateness of conscription, its ineffectiveness, and the obvious expediency of the measure, coupled with the bitterness it aroused, little justification for the measure can be found.

ERRATA

Page 16: line 34: here and in subsequent references, the correct spelling of Laurier's Christian name is Wilfrid.

Page 90: line 18 reads -
Conclusions implicitement contenues dans le principe fonda-

Page 91: line 2 reads -
"Prussian"¹. He referred to "Prussian Boches and Ontario

Page 95: line 9 reads -
Olivar Asselin in several pamphlets defending the

Page 128: line 32 reads -
Borden further reiterated his position by stressing the

Page 153: line 9 reads -
the public made. The bill was to be proclaimed and enforced, but

Page 201: line 12 reads -
ferred with Arthur Sifton (Liberal Premier of Al-

Page 201: line 17 reads -
Dafoe and Hudson (Attorney-General of Manitoba) arrived for a

Page 202: line 4 reads -
berta, Hudson, Attorney-General of Manitoba, and Calder of Saskatche-

Page 202: line 9 reads -
one being a Provincial Premier, and most of them eventually

Page 207: line 19 reads -
approved by three Western figures, C. R. Mitchell (Alberta),

Page 215: line 25 reads -
ference with Liberals from Alberta, Saskatchewan

Page 216: lines 20 and 21 read respectively -
Dafoe suggested a plan to Mitchell, Bell and Hudson
a plan that was actually attempted at the Convention

Page 217: line 6 reads -
that Mitchell, Bell, and Hudson favored a resolution on be-

Page 217: line 16 reads -
Saskatchewan, only Premier Martin, Bell, and Calder, the

Page 392: Bibliography: delete the following entry:
Bourassa, H., Les Langues et les Nationalités au Canada,
Montreal, 1916, N.P.