

patriotism of the people was aroused, and little persuasion was required to make men put on the King's Uniform. No live organization was affected for recruiting in the Militia Department. The practice was usually to give a Colonel command of a non-existent regiment and to leave him to work out his own recruiting problems, with the assistance of his officers, and in most cases at his own expense. With the exception of a few special recruiting officers, mostly political appointees, no organization existed until recently.

Six months or more ago it became increasingly evident that recruiting was practically at a standstill, and that something must be done to stimulate it, yet the Minister of Militia and the Borden government did nothing, so far as the public could see, to remedy the situation. Hughes instead of staying at home to affect an organization which might accomplish the results he promised (his promise being to raise 1,000,000 men if necessary), hied himself to England where he spent months chiefly occupied, judging by newspaper reports, in advertising himself. Days, weeks and months went by without a move being made. Regiments, some one-third strength, others half strength and some a little more, scattered all over the country were handicapped in their training by waiting to be brought up to full strength; in this way alone there has been an enormous financial loss to the country. Many battalions could have been formed by amalgamation of unfilled battalions, but nothing in that direction was done, economy evidently being a quality more honored in the breach than the observance.

Borden Had No Policy of His Own

Finally Sir Robert Borden took action, and what was it? Did he formulate a policy of his own or of his Cabinet, as he was in duty bound to do? No, he shunted the responsibility by appointing a Board of Directors of National Service to solve the recruiting problems, such board consisting of a chairman and eleven directors, every member of whom, except perhaps one, is a Conservative in politics.

The Borden-Tait Disagreement.

The Chairman of this Board, Sir Thomas Tait, quickly found himself in trouble—strange as it may seem, with the very Government that appointed him. To understand clearly the cause of this trouble one must acquaint himself with the powers of the Board as defined by the Government, which were:—

3. The powers and duties of a Director shall be as follows:—

(a) To make himself acquainted with the nature and importance of the various industries (agriculture, manufacturing, mining, lumbering, fishing and others) which are being carried on in any locality within his district.

(b) For the purpose of obtaining necessary information respecting conditions of industry and of employment from time to time, the Directors or the Board, as the case may be, shall confer with and receive communications from persons engaged in the industries hereinbefore mentioned and from any organization especially interested, such as Agricultural societies, Labor organizations and Manufacturers associations.

(c) For the purpose of maintaining and carrying on all important industries and of affording to the greatest possible number of men the opportunity of military

service, to take such measures as may be expedient to have all available labor in the Dominion utilized to the greatest advantage and with that view to make an estimate of such available labor.

(d) For the like purpose to arrange as far as possible for the employment of women in work within their capacity where additional labor is necessary.

(e) For the purpose of securing the largest available military forces in the present war, to co-operate with and to afford all possible information to the military authorities engaged in recruiting within his district.

(f) To take into consideration the character and importance of the employment in which any persons proposed to be recruited may be engaged; and to notify the Commanding Officer of any Unit which is being recruited in any such locality whether the services of such persons would be of more value to the State in the employment in which they are then engaged than if such persons were enlisted for active service in the military forces of Canada.

Pursuant to these powers Sir Thomas selected as Secretary of the Board, a man, who by reason of his official position had the highest possible qualifications in Canada for the position, namely, Mr. G. M. Murray, Secretary of the Canadian Manufacturers Association. Mr. Murray knows the manufacturing situation in Canada as few men do and consequently his knowledge would be invaluable to the Board. Obviously, therefore, his appointment appeared as an excellent one, but here the Government stepped in and pointed out to Sir Thomas Tait that Murray had criticized them some time ago, as they believed unfairly, and that he must apologize before they would consent to his appointment. Tait appealed to Murray, and the latter duly apologized, but being a man of spirit, he after apologizing, refused to accept the appointment, whereupon Tait feeling humiliated, and no doubt realizing the futility of kicking against the political wall, resigned. In his stead, perhaps the most bitter politician in the Conservative ranks was appointed, in the person of Mr. R. B. Bennett, M.P.

The Suggested Parliamentary Committee

But before resigning Sir Thomas Tait and his Board of Directors adopted the following resolution:

"The Directors of National Service in conference at Ottawa, having regard to the duties imposed on them and to the work which lies before them, are strongly of the opinion that the following recommendations if given effect to by the Government would materially assist in that work:

"That a Parliamentary National Service Committee to be composed of representatives of all the political parties in Parliament be formed at the earliest possible date;

"That such Committee as soon as possible after its formation issue, by proclamation and through the public press and in any other expedient way:

(a) A strong and explicit call to the manhood of Canada of military age and fitness to enlist for Overseas Military and Naval Service.

(b) A similar call to the men and women of Canada individually and through their various organizations to serve the Nation in such capacities