

Weakness of Borden Policy

"A fundamental objection to the Government's policy of conscription is that it conscripts human life only, and that it does not attempt to conscript wealth, resources or the services of any persons other than those who come within the age limit prescribed by the military service act. This is manifestly unjust.

"The man who is prepared to volunteer his services and to risk his life in his country's defence is entitled to first consideration. Those dependent upon him and who spare him from their midst are the next most deserving of the state's solicitude and care. A policy which will accord first place to the soldier and the sailor in the concern of the state will, I believe, bring forth all the men necessary to fight its battles, without the need of recourse to conscription. If returned to power, I should adopt such a policy.

"My first duty will be to seek out the ablest men of the country, men of organising capacity as well as men representative of all classes in the community and invite them, irrespective of what it may involve in the way of sacrifice of their personal interests, to join with me in the formation of a Cabinet whose first object will be to find these men, money and resources necessary to insure the fullest measure of support to our heroic soldiers at the front, and to enable Canada to continue to the very end to do her splendid part to win the war.

"As to the present military service act, my policy will not be to proceed further under its provisions until the people have an opportunity to pronounce upon it by way of a referendum. I pledged myself to forthwith submit the act to the people, and with my followers to carry out the wishes of the majority of the nation as thus expressed:

Unite Whole Country

"I would at the same time organize and carry out a strong appeal for voluntary recruiting. It is a fact that cannot be denied that the voluntary system, especially in Quebec, did not get a fair trial, and a fair trial would receive from a generous people a ready response which would bring men to the ranks, with good-will and enthusiasm, and which would eliminate from our political life one of its most harrowing problems, as no loyal Canadian can view without the gravest apprehension a dispirited Canada at this critical hour of our history.

"To these views it is no answer to say, as is now often said, that we must have conscription or 'quit.' This statement is falsified by a recent and conclusive example. Australia rejected conscription, and Australia did not 'quit.' Australia is still in the fight under the voluntary system.

Thorough Organization Needed

"Each year has rendered increasingly apparent the necessity of organizing the nation, in order that, so far as may be possible, the resources and population of Canada in their entirety may be made of service in the successful prosecution of the war. To-day, under the exhaustion the war has caused in the old world, Great Britain and her allies are appealing as never before for more food, more ships and more coal. No country has vaster resources than Canada to supply these imperative requirements. What is needed is vigorous efforts to further an unlimited production. To meet this existing need I am prepared in addition to the measures already outlined, to take what further steps may be necessary to increase, double and quadruple the output of all that may be necessary for marching and fighting armies.

"Mr. Crothers, minister of labor, speaking recently at St. Thomas, Ont., declared that if Quebec had done her duty, as the other provinces, we should never have required the military service act.

Where The Blame Lies

"If enlisting in Quebec was not on a par with enlisting in the other provinces, on whom does the responsibility rest? On whom but the Borden Government, whose Quebec members openly, strenuously, and persistently preached the Nationalist doctrine of 'No participation by Canada in Imperial wars, outside her own territory.'