

the existing statute and to prepare a new one. When was that? In his recent speech at Halifax, he said:

"Through the summer and autumn of 1916 and the first four months of 1917 recruits came in so slowly, notwithstanding the utmost personal effort of myself and my colleagues, that only one of two alternatives could be adopted"

—and that one was conscription. And he further said that for eighteen months before he introduced his bill (May 18 last)—

"In all parts of this Dominion men of both political parties, men of the loftiest patriotism, and sanest judgment, from time to time had impressed on me warmly the obligation of Canada to throw into this war still greater effort, and the necessity of compulsory military service" (a).

General Mewburn recently said that

"since the Spring of 1916, voluntary enlistments ceased to exist" (b)

SIR ROBERT'S ATTITUDE.—That being the situation, what was Sir Robert's attitude towards it? Let us go back to the beginning of the session of 1916, and read from his speech in the House—

"My Right Honorable friend 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 conscription. I REPEAT THAT ANNOUNCEMENT TO-DAY WITH EMPHASIS."

About the same time, the Minister of the Interior, in the immigration literature which he distributed in the United States, (the "elsewhere") displayed the following:

"**MILITARY SERVICE IN CANADA IS VOLUNTARY.**—No man is compelled to join the army or serve in the trenches. Canada's military forces are composed entirely of volunteers; all men are free to serve, or not to serve, as they themselves decide. **THERE IS NO CONSCRIPTION IN CANADA**" (c).

From that time until the introduction of the conscription bill, no contrary policy was ever indicated. Indeed the only utterance (as far as I am aware) was Sir Robert's reply to a labor deputation 27 December last) in which he said:

(a) *Evening Journal (Ottawa)*, 15th November, 1917.

(b) *Canadian Military Gazette*, 13th Nov., 1917.

(c) *Quoted from Canada West (1916) by Le Devoir*, 3rd Nov., 1917.