

conscription was inevitable, and the only question would have been as to the method of its introduction—in sudden reversal of previous education, or preceded by deprecatory appeals to a previously misguided public. But, except spectacularly and sentimentally, there was no such necessity. What was wanted, and was begged, from Canada was not men but food.

**“DESERTION.”**—Sir Robert has not scrupled to speak of the permitted diminution of our forces as “desertion” of those who survive—as leaving them to “their fate”; and from many quarters comes the equally foolish statement that diminution means the imposition of correspondingly greater toil. If a full battalion be given certain work, and if after depletion by say fifty per cent, it be required to do an equal amount, then these assertions are well founded. But if duty be assigned (as, of course, it is) upon the basis not of the original, but of the actual strength of the battalion, then they are plainly fallacious. You will not desert your troops if you do your best to support them. And the real question is, in what way can we render the greatest possible assistance?

**APPEALS FOR FOOD.**—Sir Robert would have resented (he tells us) any British suggestion of conscription in Canada. None was offered. He made no objection to the appeals which actually were made—to the appeals of Lord Rhondda (the British food-controller) that we should furnish vastly increased food supplies, or to the very palpable hints that we should send our men to the farms rather than to the trenches. Lord Rhondda has recently said (underlining added:)

“We look to the resources of Canada, and to the indomitable energy of Canadians, for an answer that will shatter Germany’s threat of starvation. In normal times the Mother Country is dependent on your Dominion for a large part of its food supplies. War has increased that dependence to such an extent that it is now vital for the United Kingdom and the Allies in Europe to obtain from Canada foodstuffs in far larger quantities than under peace conditions. That must necessarily entail effort and far-reaching economy, with their attendant sacrifices on the part of Canadians.

I know that, like ourselves at home, the pick of your manhood have gone, and are going to take their splendid share in the front line of battle, and that, therefore, you are faced with the difficulty of a supply of labor. I also realize that an increased export of food supplies must entail diversion of effort from other enterprise, yet I am convinced that the people of Canada will surmount all obstacles, and that the