

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1916

SERIOUS ASSERTIONS BY HUGHES IN LETTERS TO SIR ROBT. BORDEN

**Says Canadian Second Divisions Held
Back Four Months By Hagglng Over
Motor Trucks — Petty Intrigues and
Other Matters**

Ottawa, Nov. 14.—The following is the letter written to the prime minister by General Hughes on November 1, which prompted the premier to call for the resignation of his minister of militia.

November 1, 1916.
Dear Sir Robert,—In reply to your memorandum of October 31, permit me in brief to summarize:

I do recall my visit to Great Britain in the autumn of 1914. I did expect, both under the statutory law of Britain and under the law of common courtesy, that I would have been permitted to exercise some "control and direction" over our gallant Canadian boys, in the way of organization.

But there had evidently been some communication to the effect that "control and direction" of this magnificent force, should be under the British government direct. The then Mr. George Perley, acting high commissioner, implied such in the following words: "You do not pretend surely to have anything to do with the Canadian soldiers in Britain."

Further, Sir Robert, I spoke to you on my return and told you the circumstances both then and subsequently. You, yourself, know that, last year, you took occasion to speak to Sir George Perley concerning the matter. The treatment he accorded me after this was the only respectable or courteous treatment he ever gave me.

Regarding the consultative sub-militia council: It has only been tentatively formed. My way of doing things is to obtain results, not necessarily the creation of bodies organized by order-in-council. As everyone knows what may seem workable in theory does not so turn out in practice. On my arrival in England this year, I was met by your cablegram of July 31, which you quote.

During the month of August I visited every camp in England, France and Belgium and consulted in detail with all the leading officers of the Canadian force. I went further and asked for suggestions from leading officers in every force.

Not content with this, however, I decided to try the thing out in practice and in an informal way and before embodying anything in order-in-council would find any weak points in the system which might arise and could add any improvements necessary.

Every officer concerned was distinctly notified of this that no question of rank, or pay or precedence or anything else, other than trial organization was contemplated. As a result, before I left England we had made many improvements.

Permit me to draw your attention to nearly every commission which has been formed. THEY LOOK BEAUTIFUL ON PAPER, BUT FEW, IF ANY, ONE OF THEM, HAVE BEEN ANYTHING LIKE PERFECT IN PRACTICE. THE HOSPITALS COMMISSION, THE PENSIONS BOARD AND THE NATIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION ALL SEEMED LOYAL WHEN SENT OUT BUT EVERY ONE CONCERNED WITH THEM KNOWS OF THE ABSURDITIES THEREIN CONTAINED.

Permit me further to draw your attention to the fact that the British constitution does not exist on paper; no order-in-council is behind it.

FURTHER, HAD I VENTURED TO CONDUCT THIS FORCE ON THE BASIS OF FORMAL ORDERS-IN-COUNCIL, THE FIRST DIVISION WOULD NOT HAVE LEFT VALCARTIER YET, AND YOU KNOW YOURSELF HOW, BY TECHNICALITIES, THE SECOND DIVISION WAS HELD UP FOR FOUR MONTHS THROUGH LITTLE PETTY HAGGLING ON THE QUESTION OF MOTOR TRUCKS, ETC.

The second line of your memorandum says: "So far as I am aware you exercised the same control and direction over the forces in Great Britain during the first year as subsequently."

Sir Robert, no one knows better than you that this statement is incorrect. This last year, with the full concurrence of the war office, our management and direction have been given every consideration and by their request.

One other point and I am through: It might be implied from your memorandum that my failing to secure authority by order-in-council for this sub-militia council impelled you to the course you are now pursuing regarding Sir George Perley. May I be permitted to say that both you and I know to the contrary. I knew early in August that Sir George Perley had planned something along these very lines. You have, also, admitted that as early as the first week of September you had this matter under consideration. I understood that it was under consideration by you and Perley earlier. You incidentally remarked yesterday that you had not consulted any of your colleagues. Of course, when I drew your attention to the statement, you corrected yourself.

Faithfully,
(Signed) SAM HUGHES.
The Right Honorable Sir Robert L. Borden, G. C. M. G., Prime Minister of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

PREMIER'S REQUEST FOR RESIGNATION.
Over a week later, after Sir Sam's hunting trip and his Toronto speeches, Premier Borden requested the resignation of Sir Sam Hughes in the following terms:

Ottawa, Nov. 9, 1916.
Dear General Hughes,—During your absence I have given very careful consideration to your letter of the 1st instant, and I must express my deep regret that you saw fit to address to me, as head of the government, a communication of that nature. As you are to return tomorrow, it is my duty at once to announce to you my conclusion.

Under conditions which at times were very trying and which gave me great concern, I have done my utmost to support you in the administration of your department. This has been very difficult by reason of your strong tendency to assume powers which you do not possess and which can only be exercised by the governor-in-council.

My time and energies, although urgently needed for much more important duties, have been very frequently employed in removing difficulties thus unnecessarily created.

You seemed actuated by a desire, and even an intention, to administer your department as if it were a distinct and separate government in itself. On many occasions and without much result, I have cautioned you against this course, which has frequently led to well-founded protests from your colleagues, as well as being detrimental to the public interest.

I do not intend to dwell upon the instances, some of which are still under consideration, in which you have acted without authority or consultation in matters more or less important. Of these, the latest is the establishment of a militia sub-council in Great Britain, including the appointment of its personnel. I conveyed to you on the 31st of July a clear intimation that upon so important a proposal, involving considerations of the gravest moment, the cabinet must be consulted before action was taken. All the members of the government have full and direct responsibility in respect of the very important matters which the proposed council would advise upon and direct.

The intimation which was given to you in my telegram of July 31 should not have been necessary. As soon as it was received, you proceeded to disregard it. Some portions of your letter are expressive of the attitude which I have described and to which you evidently intend to adhere. Such an attitude is wholly inconsistent with and subversive of the principle of joint responsibility upon which constitutional government is based.

But more than that, your letter is couched in such terms that I cannot overlook or excuse it. I take strong exception, not only to statements which it contains, but to its general character and tone. You must surely realize that I cannot retain, in the government, a colleague who has addressed to me such a communication. I regret that you have imposed upon me the disagreeable duty of requesting your resignation as minister of militia and defence.

Faithfully yours,
(Signed) R. L. BORDEN.
To Lieutenant-General Sir Sam Hughes, K. C. B., Ottawa (Ont.).
THE REAL THUNDER IN THIS.
Sir Sam got this letter on his return to the capital on Saturday last.

His letter of resignation, delivered to the premier yesterday follows:

Ottawa, Nov. 11.

Dear Sir Robert,—Your letter of Nov. 9 is at hand and it affords me much satisfaction to now tender you my resignation; indeed, my letter of Nov. 1 rendered it impossible for me to remain your colleague unless you concurred in its correctness.

For a long time I have retained the portfolio of militia only that I might the better help the soldiers in training and at the front to do the best I could towards winning the war, which is all that mattered. I have closed my eyes to the petty intrigues and ambitions about me. It is my intention still to devote my energies to the interests of those who have done so much to maintain the great cause of human liberty.

It is not necessary to analyze in detail all disappointing matters in my association with you. You state in the second paragraph of your letter of Nov. 9, "I have done my utmost to support you in the administration of your department."

THIS IS PLEASING NEWS TO ME, BUT I LEARN IT NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Your statement that I had a "Strong tendency to assume powers which you do not possess and which can only be exercised by the governor-in-council," is also news to me. True, from the opening of Valcartier camp such things were done with your full knowledge and authority. Upon my representations to you that the formation of the force would be seriously delayed were every petty detail to be brought before privy council, you acquiesced in my recommendation that we should proceed without orders-in-council in matters of urgency and that they should be passed afterwards. This was done and has never been deviated from. War cannot be successfully waged on the tactics of a law suit.

Your statement that "My time and energies, although urgently needed for much more important duties have been very frequently employed in removing difficulties thus unnecessarily created" is also news to me. Why was I not informed of it?

IF YOU MEAN THAT YOUR TIME WAS GIVEN UP TO LISTENING TO THE COMPLAINTS OF DISAPPOINTED OR OVERSTRUNG PEOPLE—I CAN UNDERSTAND IT. In war time in all countries, criticism of all measures abounds. In the eyes of some, everything done is "wrong." I, too, had more than my fair share of uninformed criticism, even from well meaning friends.

Your statement further that "You seemed actuated by a desire and even an intention to administer your department as if it were a distinct and separate government in itself" is also news to me. It is true that I did not always attend council to see my recommendations through; I was engaged in other work, but if you will permit me to make a comparison I have yet to learn where, once, the finance minister of Canada brought before council any proposed loan for the dominion of Canada, or any single important act concerning the administration of his department. The same observations apply to the minister of trade and commerce.

MOREOVER, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO RECALL WHERE YOU HAVE ACTIVELY SUPPORTED ME IN THE PASSAGE OF ANY ORDER-IN-COUNCIL, CONCERNING THE UPGRADE OF THE MILITIA, WHEN OPPOSED BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET USUALLY ANTAGONISTIC TO ANYTHING PROPOSED BY ME. AS YOU ARE AWARE, IT TOOK UP FOUR MONTHS IN THE MIDST OF THIS GREAT WAR TO FIGHT THROUGH THE PRINCIPLES OF PURCHASING, FOR THE SECOND DIVISION, TRUCKS AT THE LOWEST WHOLESALE PRICES INSTEAD OF ALLOWING LARGE COMMISSIONS TO LOCAL AGENTS WHO WOULD HAVE NOTHING WHATEVER TO DO WITH SECURING THE ORDER. Your next paragraph is that "On many occasions, but without much result, I have cautioned you against this course, which has frequently led to well founded protests from your colleagues."

You will pardon me, but I can recall but one instance, namely, secret service. I DO REMEMBER YOU ASKED ME, ON ONE OCCASION, TO SUBMIT ORDERS-IN-COUNCIL WHERE POSSIBLE, BEFORE INCURRING LARGE EXPENDITURES, BUT THE REASON YOU ASSIGNED WAS NOT PROTESTS FROM MY COLLEAGUES, OVER MY ACTION, BUT THAT IT WAS TO SET AN EXAMPLE SO AS TO ASSIST YOU TO CONTROL OTHERS, YOU INSTANCED THE "POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT AND THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, WHERE PROJECTS HAD BEEN UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT AUTHORITY BY ORDER-IN-COUNCIL AND, I REMEMBER DISTINCTLY, YOU STATED THAT SOME BOATS HAD BEEN PURCHASED, AND OTHER LARGE EXPENDITURES INCURRED WITHOUT YOUR KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT IT, AND WITHOUT ANY ORDER-IN-COUNCIL."

Your next instance is concerning the proposed sub-militia council in England. On November 1 I wrote you in reply to your letter of October 31, giving a full statement.

SIR ROBERT, I HAVE KNOWN AND EXPERIENCED, FOR A LONG TIME, THE MEDDLING AND INTRIGUE WHICH HAS BEEN GOING ON.

More than a year ago I understand, you had it in contemplation to get Sir George Perley in control in England. I was assured in April last that the plans which you have now carried out, were under contemplation. I was further assured, the first week of August of this year, that the plans were practically completed.

However, as you had not spoken to me about it as in honor bound, I did not overtly state the story. True to your suggestion and to our understanding regarding the formation of the proposed sub-militia council, and wishing to make it as perfect as possible, I pursued the course outlined in my letter of November 1. The organization had to be put into shape and tested out. That had not been completed when I left England. Therefore your position on this is untenable.

I HAD OBSERVED YOUR EVERY WISH. FURTHER, YOU WERE NOTIFIED AND EVERYONE CONNECTED WITH THE PROPOSED SUB-MILITIA COUNCIL WAS DEFINITELY NOTIFIED, NOT ONCE BUT REPEATEDLY THAT THE WHOLE PROPOSITION WAS TENTATIVE AND CERTAINLY WOULD BE CHANGED AS CIRCUMSTANCES DEVELOPED. This will be borne out by every one associated with the proposed sub-militia council. I am free to admit, however, that the question of a separate minister of militia in England never once presented itself to my imagination. There is no more need for a separate minister for the forces in England than there is for those at Camp Borden, Camp Hughes or any other large camp in the country.

You state "I conveyed to you on the 31st July a clear intimation that upon so important a proposal involving considerations of the gravest moment, the cabinet must be consulted before action was taken. All the members of the government have full and direct responsibility in respect to the very important matters which the proposed council would advise upon and direct. The intimation which was given to you in my telegram of July 31 should not have been necessary. As soon as it was received you proceeded to disregard it."

The first sentences of this quotation are absolutely true, and IT IS MY BELIEF THAT HAD YOU BEEN ACTUATED BY THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE FORCE, INSTEAD OF FAVORITISM, THAT CABLEGRAM WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN DESPATCHED.

Your second statement is that "As soon as it was received you proceeded to disregard it."

I think you must now be convinced this is a grave error on your part. You were notified the very first instant any temporary conclusion was arrived at. I am not aware that "the principle of joint responsibility upon which constitutional government is based" requires that anyone should be privileged, even unintentionally, to misrepresent facts concerning another. Therefore, my letter of November 1, may, while absolutely true, seem, in this regard, emphatic.

You take exception to the general character and tone of that letter. WELL, SIR ROBERT, EACH ONE'S MANNER IS HIS OWN. IT MIGHT BE WELL IF WE COULD ALL POSSESS YOUR SOFT MANNERISM, BUT I AM VERY MUCH AFRAID, JUDGING BY ALL PERIODS OF HISTORY, THAT HUMAN LIBERTY AND HUMAN PROGRESS WOULD NOT MAKE MUCH ADVANCE, AS THEY NEVER HAVE MADE MUCH ADVANCE, UNDER SUCH DIPLOMATIC FORMS AND UTTERANCES.

I have perused my letter of November 1 very carefully and I have also perused yours of October 31. Your actions and manner to me at any period in the past, excepting when you would be in trouble in the opposition days and since, while, as a rule, courteous, have never been apparently frank or loyal.

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Even in the early opposition days when a very few of us repeatedly stood by you and overcame the agitation against you, we were rewarded totally by seeing you prefer those who had been untrue to you.

As I said in the early part of this letter, I have, for a long time remained minister of militia as scores of my intimate friends know, upon their request, to remain in office in order to better help to uphold and to protect the interests of our soldiers overseas. As you know my great desire has been to see that Canadian soldiers enjoyed a status as such.

In conclusion, Sir Robert, let me say I have always been frank and honorable with you. When rumors would reach me of your supposed plans of retiring from politics and of your going to the high commissionership or to be chief justice of Canada, or to be on the judicial committee of the privy council as colonial representative or any other statement seriously affecting you or your political honor, which bound you to the party, and made it imperative that you should not use your position to forward your own personal ends, I have promptly consulted you and you have, as promptly, given your explanation or denials.

Recently, I heard on excellent authority, that you had it in contemplation for some time to retire to the supreme court of Canada by arrangement with the present incumbent of the chief justiceship and hand over the prime ministership to another, under whom it is well known I would not serve. Surely you could not be a party to any such manipulation, but would face the electors and stand or fall by the result.

I therefore most unhesitatingly tender you my resignation to take effect so soon as I can remove my belongings from the department, of which I shall give you prompt notice. For the future, permit me to say, that it shall afford me pleasure to support every act, every proposition, coming from where it may, which will tend towards the successful protection and welfare of the soldiers who are so manfully sacrificing themselves in the great cause of human liberty.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) SAM HUGHES.
To The Right Honorable Sir Robert Borden, G. C. M. G.,
Prime Minister of Canada, Ottawa.

The Lord Mayor of London states that the council of the Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund have resolved to found scholarships which will enable young Britons destined for a commercial career to travel, study and gain business experience in the countries of the Allies—France, Russia, Italy, Japan, Belgium, Roumania, Portugal and Serbia.

In an article on Lieutenant M. J. J. in the Somme, the Paris Figaro says "Many Tommies dabbling to the attack fell just in front of him. He wound up the film to the end, and then said, 'I would not have missed this film for anything in the world, but I really hope that I shall not have to go through anything as bad as this again.'"

Admiral Sir John Jellicoe has become vice-president of the Royal Navy Scripture Readers' Society.

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