

A National Debt

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In the previous articles dealing with this subject, we have endeavored to emphasize the **inconsistency** of our, so-called, **national patriotism** with the return we give—or rather, fail to give,—our national heroes in the hour of death and adversity; though the nation owes them a debt of gratitude which at least should be reflected in the nations care of them after death.

We realized unfortunately, that our parliamentary legislators—in general—are imbued with the primary conviction that their duty is to appropriate the nation's Budget on a material basis, or in other words, that they must receive tangible value for the coin of the realm expended, **sentiment** does not enter into their calculations for one moment where they are called upon to deal with the **cost** of a scheme—which philosophically or idealistically—means the life or death of the nation.

The conclusion we deduce then, is, that on the outbreak of war a purely **materialistic** government appeals to the **sentiment** of the people, whose sentiment is proven by the response with their lives, to be met in the end with—what?—gratitude?—or ingratitude?

This "National Debt" is entirely a matter of "national sentiment" and only in so far as the nation shows its sincere appreciation of that national attribute, may we expect our representations on this subject to bear results, and prove that:

"For those who lie within a soldiers grave

The Empire's sons, the valiant and the brave
Who gave their lives, the Empire's life to save

Good Lord, we praise Thee."

It is in no spirit of egotism we submit, that perhaps this particular subject has never before been brought so forcibly to the attention of the Government as it has through the untiring efforts of the "Last Post" Fund during the past ten years, and it is therefore premature and unfair to assume that the Government has turned a deaf ear to our petitions; in fact, the reverse is the truth, for on all occasions our representations have been received with the greatest courtesy and sympathy, though **nothing has resulted to date.**

"The Die is now cast," however, for the great war we have just passed through has served to show that even if the world is at peace for the next fifty years, all along that trail we shall have Heroes of the Marne, Ypres, Fes-tubert, Gallipoli, and other famous engagements dropping off in the various vicissitudes of life and its failures, and who at least are entitled to "six feet of earth" in the last extremity.

The question then faces us, of how to deal with this problem from a sentimental, economical, and practical standpoint?

To champion a cause and criticize others for failure to deal with it adequately, without having a clear-cut and logical solution of the problem to offer as an alternative, would indeed be a poor recommendation of that cause;—therefore fully appreciating the fact, the "Last Post" Fund after careful study and ten years practical experience and demonstration without Government assistance, submitted to the Prime Minister of the Dominion on August 9th, 1917, the draft of a scheme that will not only deal with the requirements of the Dominion of Canada, but in its ultimate development may become reciprocally inter-Imperial through "the Empire on which the sun never sets."

In all probability the visible termination of the war was awaited by those entrusted with consideration of the scheme submitted, but on Saturday, November 16th, 1918, the Government, represented through Major-Gen. J. Lyons Biggar, and Colonel Hugh Clarke, M.P. (Parliamentary representative of the Invalided Soldiers' Commission) met the "Last Post" Fund's Executive in conference at the Windsor Hotel, Montreal, and discussed the draft of the scheme submitted by the "Last Post" Fund, which we give hereunder and which is, of course, subject to modification:—

Canadian Burial and Memorial Scheme. Subject to Modification.

The following is suggested by the "Last Post" I. N. & M. C. Fund:

That the existing Trustees and Executive Officers be appointed as a Special Commission with full powers to

evolve the undermentioned scheme,

Or as an alternative,—

A voluntary Commission of one representative from each of the Provinces of the Dominion be appointed in the capacity of an Advisory Council and a permanent Government Department be created, to be known as:—

"THE LAST POST"

or

"DEPARTMENT OF NAVAL AND MILITARY
OBITUARIES"

such a Department to co-operate with the Department of Militia and Defence and co-ordinate with the "Invalided Soldiers' Commission" and other Departments.

The permanent staff to be:—

1. An Organizer and Director of Military Obituaries, who would be responsible for the organization, supervision and regulations governing the Department, as also the draft and consummation of all contracts.
2. An Archivist and Recorder, who would be responsible for recording all deaths of the C. E. F. and other sailors or soldiers during the subsequent to this war, both in Canada and those of the C. E. F. overseas. He would also gather and formulate reports on all data obtainable relative to military obituary, ancient and modern.
3. A Landscape Artist and Superintendent of Military Cemeteries, who would suggest sites for Military Cemeteries and plots, as well as supervise the layout and maintenance of the same.

Procedure of Organization.

The present Provincial scheme in operation by the "Last Post" Fund, with modifications, to be extended throughout the Dominion and executed through the office of the D. A. A. G. in each Military District, the Federal and Provincial Governments to co-operate in assuming the financial responsibility.

District Branches of the Great War Veterans' Association, British Army and Navy Veterans' Association and others to be encouraged to form "Last Post" Chapters in their districts, to organize annual "Decoration Day" functions, attend Military funerals and offer suggestions that will tend to commemorate the valor of our National Heroes—"Lest we Forget."

Provision.

The Government to assume responsibility for the burial of any enlisted or **honorably discharged** officer or man on request and proof of eligibility, whether of the Canadian or other forces of the British Empire.

Allowances to be asked (exclusive of transportation and church fees):

Officers	\$100.00
N.C.O.'s and enlisted men	65.00
Discharged	65.00

Full military honors provided for in K. R. & O. to be accorded all men with the active forces and wherever possible and consistent for discharged men.

The foregoing allowances are exclusive of the Cemetery arrangements which will be as follows:

In National Cemeteries or Plots:—

Officers.—A single grave in which (if married) his wife may be buried on decease.

Married men.—A single grave on the same conditions as above.

In the case of officers and men who are married and have families (if requested) an extra grave should be reserved alongside.

Single men.—In single graves or, if deemed advisable, may be buried on the "community" principle, two or three in a grave, except where the laws of sanitation necessitate otherwise, or

It might be advisable in view of the above National provision, that where relatives desired to make all burial arrangements themselves in civil cemeteries, the Government should make half the respective funeral allowances, plus \$15.00 for Cemetery charges.

No scheme of Monuments or Memorials, other than the National flag, in the Cemeteries and Plots should be adopted until public interest has been created by public competition of ideas, which could then be submitted to competent authority.