

RIGHT HON. SIR WILFRID LAURIER WAS NOT ASKED TO CO-OPERATE IN VOLUNTARY RECRUITING.

The Right Honourable Sir Wilfrid Laurier replies to the statement made at Sydney, N.S., on the evening of Saturday, November 17th, by the Right Hon. Sir Robert Borden, when he stated that "on two occasions he had asked the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier to co-operate with him in regard to recruiting."

The matter being drawn to the attention of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, he directs that the following reply be made:—

Ottawa, November 21st, 1917.

"I have noticed in the press a statement made at Sydney, N.S., on Saturday Evening, November 17th, by the Right Hon. Sir Robert Borden to the effect that on two different occasions he had requested me to co-operate with him in connection with voluntary recruiting, and that I had refused. I wish to state in reply that I have no knowledge whatever of these invitations. I remember quite well that at the outbreak of war I directed a communication, of which the following is a copy, to Sir Robert Borden:

"Dear Sir Robert Borden:—

There is every probability that the War will be of long duration, and I understand that the Government is already contemplating the organization of a second contingent. May I suggest that as our population is composed of various ethnical elements it might be well to recognize the fact and to allow the formation of units out of these several elements.

"The War Office at all times has taken advantage of the force of race sentiment in the formation of the army. At all times it has counted purely Scotch regiments as well as purely Irish regiments, and we understand that Lord Kitchener has just authorized the recruiting of an exclusively Welsh force. The aim I have in view is in reference to the formation of a French-Canadian regiment. You are probably aware that a movement is on foot in Montreal and Quebec for the purpose of raising such a regiment.

"There is every reason to believe that if the formation of a French-Canadian unit were authorized, there would be a generous response.

"I offer these observations with the sole object of helping in the cause which we have all so much at heart. If you think well of my suggestion I will be happy to assist in any way that may be deemed advisable, and I will hold myself ready to meet you at your conference for a mutual exchange of views, both as to the object itself and the best means of attainment."

Yours sincerely,

WILFRID LAURIER.

"While the proposals made in this communication were approved of by Sir Robert Borden, I cannot say that I have any recollection whatever of being asked to co-operate with the carrying out of them. It is true that in the Fall of 1916 I was asked to co-operate in the selection of a Parliamentary committee to serve under the National Service Board. The reasons why I declined are well known to everybody and I think events have proven that my action was justified in the matter. Further than that, no appeals were made to me, by Sir Robert Borden, or through me to any members of my party, to assist in the voluntary recruiting system of this country."

(Sgd.) WILFRID LAURIER.

NEWS PRINT AND HOW THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED THE PRICE.

Some months ago the newsprint manufacturers contemplated raising the price of news print about two hundred per cent. When this information reached the newspapers they went in a body to the Finance Minister. He listened to their side of the question and arranged a meeting between the paper-makers and its users, this meeting being held in his office in Ottawa. The newspapers were willing to have some addition made to the price of news print, but nothing approaching the price the manufacturers demanded.

The meeting ended by Sir Thomas threatening that if they did not sell news print at the price he was fixing he would prevent the export of all paper and pulp to the United States. This brought the paper makers to time and Sir Thomas appointed a commission to investigate the news print situation and report. This is the way

the matter stands now.

In other words he has his thumb on the safety valve which he can remove when he sees fit, and when he does half the papers in Canada will cease publication. Those that remain will have to be sold at double the price they are sold at to-day. This would cut their circulation probably fifty or sixty per cent and would reduce the amount received for advertising to the same extent. Thus the present government have brought the greatest of pressures—a most dangerous one for the country—to bear on the press of the Dominion.

One could not help noticing daily, for months past, the enormous advertisements the government they are also giving out to the press. Their newspaper advertising expenses running up into hundreds of thousands.

Is this not at least an attempt to threaten or cajole the newspapers of the Dominion?