

personal and confidential information, I may say that the Chief of the General Staff reports that we are hardly able to keep pace with the organization and equipment of recruits now being enlisted in various parts of the country. That, however, is no reason why any effort should be relaxed, and we hope that all efforts hitherto made will be continued, as later on the needs may be greater than the response then forthcoming.

On Saturday, Monday and Tuesday I saw, in all, some twenty thousand men who have enlisted and who are in training for overseas service. Their physique, their spirit and their bearing were all that could be desired. Their training seems also to have proceeded very satisfactorily.

Faithfully yours,
(Sgd.) R. L. Borden.

On the 10th of the following May, (this letter was written in the September preceding) a delegation, I think of the National Service League of Canada, an organization which had devoted its efforts to assist and promote recruiting, came to see me in Ottawa, and I repeated to them substantially the view which I had expressed in the letter to Colonel Mulloy, and I have a statement from one gentleman present at that interview confirming my recollection of what took place at that time.

It would not, therefore, be possible that I could have directed my hon. friend in the previous March to slow up recruiting. Doubtless he made the statement in good faith; I am not imputing any blame to him in that respect.

With respect to certain correspondence which has been referred to by the ex-Minister of Militia and Defence, the letter dated June 9, 1916 and the reply to it were marked confidential. I wrote to my hon. friend saying that I did not think it proper to read my letter without reading his reply which was marked confidential; and asking if he would give me permission to read it. He was good enough to say at once that he had not the slightest objection to my reading his letter. The two letters are as follows:

Ottawa, Ont., June 9, 1916.

Confidential.

Dear General Hughes,

The question of raising new regiments was not only discussed in Council but in the House of Commons and general approval was given to the proposal that as far as possible units already authorized should be completed before authority was given for new regiments. There was special criticism of a policy by which half a dozen regiments are being recruited at the same time in one community.

It is remarkable that General Hodgins did not communicate to you the policy which I announced to the Militia Council early in May; and that on the other hand he gave me no intimation whatever that you were authorizing new

[Sir Robert Borden.]

regiments from time to time in ignorance of what I had declared.

The situation is so embarrassing that I am passing an Order in Council to-day to remedy it for the future.

Yours faithfully,
(Sgd.) R. L. Borden.

To which the ex-minister replied on June 27, 1916, as follows:

On C.P.R. train going west, June 27, 1916.
Confidential.

Re new Battalions.

Dear Sir Robert,

Yours of June 9th just came before me on my trip west. I am very much surprised at the letter and its contents.

I did not know of the discussion in Council or in the House of Commons, but you will permit me to differ entirely from the conclusions arrived at. I know of no one community where half a dozen different regiments are being recruited at the same time, but it appears certain that the gentlemen who have been doing the criticising have no conception of how recruiting should be carried on. It is absolutely necessary, in large centres, that two or three regiments should be going on at the same time, each appealing to a different community.

I have been pursuing the policy of recruiting which has been unsurpassed in history, without friction excepting from selfish agitators each looking at his own personal ends, rather than the needs of the Empire.

I do not know what your Order in Council may be like but I certainly think I was entitled to see a copy thereof before it was passed.

This, therefore, accounts for the great falling off in recruiting.

However, I will speak to you about the matter the first time I see you.

Faithfully,
(Sgd.) Sam Hughes.

The Order in Council to which allusion is there made has already been laid upon the Table, but it may be desirable that I should read it to the committee. An Order in Council was passed on January 12, 1916, by which the total authorized military forces of Canada were increased to 500,000 men. The Order in Council of June 10, 1916 is as follows:

The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a report by the Prime Minister, dated the 8th January, 1916, with respect to the steps which have been taken under the Order in Council (P.C. 36) approved 12th January, 1916, copy of which is attached, by which authority was granted for increasing the Canadian Expeditionary Forces to five hundred thousand officers and men, including those raised for garrison and guard duties in Canada.

The Prime Minister observes that it is expedient that the steps taken from time to time to raise the forces authorized by the said Order in Council, should be brought to the attention of the Advisers of Your Royal Highness in each instance and that this can most conveniently be accomplished by providing that such units as are to be raised in the future must first be authorized by Your Royal Highness in Council.