

Nova Scotia, and this offer was accepted by the Military authorities. From this grew the larger ideal of the Nova Scotia Highland Brigade, and on January 26th, 1916, the press announced that the same was authorized with Lieut.-Col. A. H. Borden in command.

A whirlwind campaign was started simultaneously in almost every part of the Province, and a record made, unsurpassed in any part of the Dominion, as the three Regiments—the 185th, 193rd, and 219th, were recruited, all over strength, in three weeks. The history of these regiments is linked with the 85th "Overseas" Battalion, because of the fact that they were all recruited and in a large measure officered by it, and it stands to the credit of this battalion that it more than quadrupled its own numbers, almost wholly by the efforts of its own officers, N.C.O.'s and men.

In this connection nearly every town and hamlet in the Province had been awakened by the appeals in the personal letter written by Col. Borden to the children of Nova Scotia.

"A LETTER TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOLS."

The Armouries,
Halifax, N.S., February 14th, 1916.

Dear Boys and Girls,

I am writing to ask you to help me. Perhaps I had better begin by letting you know who I am and why I need your help. I was once a Nova Scotia school boy; now I am a Nova Scotia soldier and I have been asked by the King to get together in this Province of ours 3,500 men who are willing to become soldiers, and go across the Atlantic with me to help beat the cruel Germans who are trying to destroy our Empire. They must be got quickly, in fact it is necessary that we have these 3,500 men—your fathers and big brothers or any men who are strong and well in your section between the ages of eighteen and forty-five—within a month from the time you receive this letter. Now you will understand that it is very hard to persuade quiet people who chop in the woods, plow in the fields, work in the mines, fish in the sea, or work in shops and offices, to leave the peaceful occupations to go far across the sea to fight the faithless Germans. But if the Nova Scotia men do not cross the sea to fight the Germans in France, the Germans may come to Nova Scotia and take or destroy our farms and houses.

So you see I need your help very badly. You must help me to raise these 3,500 men. You may say to me, "what can boys and girls like us do?" Well, you can carry this letter home and show it to your father and big brothers, and you can ask them to come with me and other grown up Nova Scotia school boys in the defence of Nova Scotia, Canada and the Empire. Also ask them to write to their friends and relatives not now living at home, to return to Nova Scotia and enlist with us in this great cause. Then, on your Nova Scotia Schools Recruiting day, you can sing the songs of Britain with your whole voice and heart and soul. Or if you have a piece to speak about the brave deeds of some brave Canadian boy, you can speak it and be proud that you too are a Canadian. Perhaps you may touch the heart of some grown up boy in your village and be the cause of his joining the Nova Scotia Highlanders.

You must know, boys and girls, that while all seems quiet and peaceful in the little Nova Scotia villages, this is a time of great danger for us all, and that we can only win this awful war which you have heard so much about, if every man, woman, boy, girl, and little child helps. We men must go to fight. You boys and girls must stay at home. If daddy and your big brothers go, you must be very good to mother. If you are boys you must cut the kindlings, keep the wood-box filled, throw down the hay for the cattle, carry water from the spring, and do as much of the work of the men who are away as you are able to do. If you are girls you must help mother with the dishes, learn to sew and darn stockings, and also do as much of the work of the men who are away, as you are able to do. And remember that if you really help at home in these simple duties, that are often so tiresome, you will have helped to win the great war and save the British Empire. Boys and Girls of Nova Scotia, I am depending on you to help fill up the three Nova Scotia Highland Battalions.

(Sgd.) ALLISON H. BORDEN.

A copy of the above letter was sent to every clergyman and teacher in the Province and read by them from their pulpits and in their schools. Patriotic Sermons and public school demonstrations prepared the people for the vigorous recruiting campaign which followed, and the children of to-day will remember during their life time having heard the playing of the bagpipes within the school room, calling their fathers and brothers to arms.

The motto of the Battalion "Siol Na Fear Fearail" The Breed of Manly Men, has also been adopted as the Motto of the Brigade, and soon became known far beyond the bounds of this Province.

Lieut.-Col. N. H. Parsons, second in command when the Battalion was authorized, succeeded Col. Borden as commanding officer, and when the 246th Battalion was authorized, was appointed to command it.

Lieut.-Col. Earle C. Phinney took over the command of the Battalion August 2nd, 1916. Coming into it as Captain and Adjutant, at its inception he was one of the most active and painstaking workers in recruiting both the 85th and the other regiments; being on the staff of the Brigade until some time after it encamped at Aldershot.