

SPRIT OF CANADIAN WOMANHOOD IN FIGHT

Women's Conference Opens in Ottawa, Addressed by Government Officials; Appeal to Women to Take Places of Men at Home

Ottawa, March 1.—A frank statement of the war situation was submitted by members of the government this morning at the opening session of the Women's Conference. The women were from every province and representatives of leading women's organizations. They were welcomed by the governor-general and the Duchess of Devonshire. The front row of the front row, Hon. N. W. Rowell, president of the privy council, who spoke on the general situation; Major General Newburn, who spoke on the urgent need for reinforcements at the front; Hon. T. A. Crerar, minister of agriculture, who urged the necessity for greater production; Sir

George Foster, minister of trade and commerce, who spoke on thrift and economy, and Senator Robertson, who outlined the forthcoming registration of manpower.

The Governor-General, in tendering a welcome to the delegates spoke of the work accomplished by women in the Dominion since the war. The spirit of Canadian womanhood, he said, might be truly said to have entered into the tremendous struggle. More and more as time went on, the struggle was becoming a test of endurance. The spirit was here. It was now a question of staying powers. What was essential was co-ordination of every form of activity.

(1) The increasing demands of the war, involved a new tax on the manpower of Canada. One was and the most important way of supplementing the manpower of the country was by the assistance which women could render in taking the place of men.

(2) In view of the full, hearty service which women had rendered the government felt that it could rely on the patriotism and spirit of Canadian women to respond to every demand.

Following the submission of the government's plans, Mr. Rowell went on. It was suggested that the delegates discuss their views among themselves. The government would

then welcome any suggestions they might wish to make.

In regard to the delegation, the government had endeavored to make it as representative as possible.

The conference continues throughout the day, and probably the whole of to-morrow.

LIES ARE BRANDED BY LEGISLATURE

Reflections on Sobriety of Canadian Troops Are Hotly Criticized

CHARGES DISPROVEN

Major Hartt, M.P.P., Gives First-hand Information of Conditions at Front

Toronto, March 1.—Statements made by Capt. George Bailey of the Dominion Alliance convention at Hamilton, Wednesday, in which he cast serious reflections on the sobriety of the Canadian troops, were roundly condemned in the legislature yesterday. The assertions were branded as absolute lies, and the maker of them a blackguard. The Prime Minister regretted that the laws of the Province would not permit the government to deal with Capt. Bailey, but as the officer is only amenable to the military authorities he felt sure proper action would be taken.

Major J. T. Hartt, of East Simcoe who recently visited the front, brought the matter of Capt. Bailey's remarks to the House before the orders of the day were called. The statements as they appeared in the press were absolute lies, said Major Hartt. Drunkenness at the front is so serious a crime that it is punishable with death. Capt. Bailey apparently did not know the conditions, and made his statements on the strength of what he had been told by some other officer.

Conditions As They Are

"Whoever is responsible for these statements should be, and I have no doubt will be, punished," he said. "I have no mother and father as enormous as I am here to-day to disprove these statements. I know whereof I speak. The boys in the army are just as safe as free from drunkenness as the boys are at home at their own firesides. (Applause.) The man certainly must be deranged. He must have lost his head, although I know Massey Hall is getting to be quite a favorite place for hot-heads and men who want to say 'hot things'."

Major Hartt said the civil authorities should take action against the charge and the military authorities would deal with him, as by his utterances he committed a breach of the King's rules and regulations. The member for East Simcoe had no doubt the offending officer would lose his commission, and he thought he was deserving of the severest punishment possible.

Prime Minister's Indictment

"If he came within our law I have no hesitation in saying we would take action against him," declared Sir William Hearst, and mothers of this Province who have sons over there have enough anxiety to bear without their problems and burdens being added to by absolutely false statements. I am not speaking at random when I say those statements were slander."

The Prime Minister said he spent six weeks in England and France and he made it his duty to study the great question.

Proud as he was of the fighting record of the men at the front, he said he was proud of their record for the way they met temptations. The record in England was that the Canadian men were sober and moral, and a Nursing Sister had said to him: "Your Canadians are always gentlemen." Y. M. C. officers in charge of the Maple Leaf Clubs had told him the same thing. Col. Cecil Williams, a Methodist minister who spent some time at the front last year, paid a similar tribute to the men, said Sir William Hearst. The same testimony was borne out in correspondence from members of his own family and other officers in England and France.

Spirited Repudiation

"I regret indeed that any man should have made a statement, and as leader of this House and public man of this country," said Sir William, "I want to repudiate it in the strongest language possible."

"The statement was made in a very public manner," said Mr. William Proudfoot, the Opposition Leader. "What I can't understand is that when the question was brought up at the meeting he relied upon a statement made to him by some other officer. He was not man enough to give out the name of the officer who had made the statement told him (applause) his failure to do that branded his statement as one particularly false and one to which no consideration ought to be given."

An Unfortunate Episode

Mr. Proudfoot was satisfied that the people of the Province would pay no attention to the remarks if it were not that they were branded "Captain." He thought it a misnomer on the part of the Prime Minister to call the officer a gentleman. He preferred to call him a blackguard.

"I withdraw the expression," laughed Sir William.

Canadians at the front, said the Opposition Leader, are treated with respect. A couple of days ago he received a letter from his son, who was a Union government scrutineer, who said that of the 15th battalion not one officer or man came to eat his vote who was under any influence of liquor.

Like all slanderous statements, they are easily made, said Mr. J. C. Elliot of West Middlesex, but they are somewhat difficult to disprove, and they create an impression which it is sometimes impossible to completely obliterate.

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