

Introduction

by Sir John Aird



THE fervour evidenced throughout Canada in the early days of the war was infinitely more than the flag waving and the patriotic exercises of peaceful times; it was a heartfelt desire to be at one with the motherland in sacrifice and in the service of right.

Nowhere in the Dominion was the call of duty more resonantly heard than in the Canadian banks. From our own institution 460 of our best young men went forth in the first year of fighting, and all through the war, when a steady stream of recruits was needed to give Canada's effort in France and Flanders its required strength, the efflux from The Canadian Bank of Commerce continued in full measure until over 1,700 men had enlisted from our service.

This gradual depletion of our staff of men presented a problem hitherto unknown, and in the case of the banks, as in that of all of Canada's organizations of commerce and industry, the women of our kind came to the rescue. Right nobly did they buckle to their tasks, and through their devoted labours our young men were freed for active service, and the business of a nation at war went on.

The idea of permanently recording the war service of the staff of The Canadian Bank of Commerce was conceived by Mr. Charles Lyons Foster, Staff Inspector.