

Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, on the 12th January, 1914:

The Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence,
The Deputy Minister of the Naval Service,
The Deputy Minister of Justice,
The Deputy Minister of Customs,
The Deputy Postmaster General,
The Deputy Minister of Railways and Canals,
The Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries,
with Major Gordon Hall, director of military operations (representing the Department of Militia and Defence), and Lieutenant R. M. Stephens, director of gunnery (representing the Department of the Naval Service), as joint secretaries.

At this meeting it was decided that the secretaries should acquaint each member of the conference of the various contingencies which might arise in the event of which the co-operation of his department would be required; thus enabling him to decide what steps would be necessary to give effect to the decisions of the conference, and to detail an officer of his department to confer with the secretaries in the actual compilation of the War Book.

Meetings of sub-committees were subsequently held from time to time, at which the necessary action to be taken by the various departments in the event of certain contingencies arising was carefully considered and determined. Each department then proceeded to develop its own line of action in detail, the whole being subsequently co-ordinated and incorporated in one scheme, indicating the course to be followed by the Government as a whole on an emergency arising. This scheme was then submitted to and approved by the Prime Minister.

The taking of these precautionary measures proved most fortunate, as on the receipt of intelligence during the last few weeks of the serious situation in Europe, this Government found itself in a position to take, without the slightest delay, such action as the exigencies of the moment demanded, concurrently with His Majesty's Government and with the sister dominions of the Empire.

17th August, 1914.

I cannot overestimate the great advantage to the country which resulted from having these matters considered, determined and arranged in advance in conjunction with the Imperial Government. The arrangements which were instantly necessary, and to which I shall allude more in detail in a moment, were made without the slightest confusion. All communications from the Imperial authorities were acted upon promptly and with, as I say, an entire absence of confusion. Every detail had been previously worked out with precision, and I am informed by the chairman of the conference that especially are the thanks of the people of this country due to Major Gordon Hall and Mr. Stephens, upon whom a very large part of the work in making these arrangements necessarily devolved.

In connection with the outbreak of hostilities, the Government has been obliged to take some extraordinary steps, and certain of these steps will require ratification by

[Sir Robert Borden.]

Parliament. We realized, and I hope every member of this House and all the people of this country will realize, that there was a tremendous responsibility upon us, and I can assure all the members of the House that in so far as we took any action which might require the ratification and approval of Parliament we took it only because we believed that in the exercise of our duty we were bound to do so before Parliament could possibly assemble. On the very day before the war broke out we purchased two submarines, having first consulted with the Admiralty. Crews have been procured for both, and I believe the officer in command on the Pacific coast at the present time is an expert in such matters, and that the crews are already competent to make these submarines useful for the defence of our coasts and of our shipping if occasion should require. The *Rainbow*, already in commission, was furnished with the necessary ammunition and stores, and her crew was supplemented by a number of naval volunteers. I think that great praise is due to those in command of her for the courageous act which they undertook in going south in face of two modern German cruisers to assist in bringing back the small boats *Algerine* and *Shearwater* which were then in the south. The *Niobe* has also been put in commission as she possesses some fighting strength, and she will be manned in part by the crews of the *Shearwater* and the *Algerine* and in part by British naval reservists. All of these boats have been placed under the direction of the Admiralty by virtue of the authority contained in that behalf in the Naval Service Act, 1910.

The correspondence which has passed between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United Kingdom, and also the correspondence which has taken place between Mr. Perley and myself, as well as the Orders in Council, have been laid on the table. I may say that, on returning to Ottawa on the morning of August 1, I consulted with such of my colleagues as were in Ottawa at that time, and I sent two telegrams both of which have since been made public, one yesterday and one on a previous occasion. The first telegram I sent on August 1 is as follows:

Aug. 1, 1914.

Secret. In view of the impending danger of war involving the empire my advisers are anxiously considering the most effective means of rendering every possible aid and they will welcome any suggestions and advice which Imperial naval and military authorities may deem it expedient to offer. They are confident that a considerable force would be available for service abroad. A question has been