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The Windsor Draft.

A Statement of the Facts From the Official Records.

In view of the discussion now going on in re the above we have been asked to publish the following statements from the official records.

1. Replies of Standing Committee tabled by Hon. R. K. Bishop in the Legislative Council in reply to questions asked by Hon. J. Harvey, on July 5th in relation to statements made by Hon. P. T. McGowan.

Question 1.—Report upon the circumstances attending the sending forward of Volunteers known as the Windsor Draft, and particularly as to why they were not sent to connect with the S. S. Southland?

The history of the circumstances in connection with the draft of 120 men intended to have been sent by the Southland, and the subsequent addition thereto, which afterwards made up the draft known as the "Windsor Draft," is summarized in the following extracts from the Minutes of the Standing Committee on Military Organization, of the Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, and Notes:

October 4th, 1916.—It was agreed that the Transport Committee be authorized to make arrangements for the despatch of a detachment of troops after consultation with the military authorities.

NOTE.—In accordance with this decision the Transport Committee arranged for a draft of 120 men to go by S. S. Florizel to Halifax, and thence by S. S. Southland to England early in December.

October 31st, 1916.—The Officer Commanding at Headquarters "drew the attention of the Committee to some sickness which prevailed among the men of the Regiment, and it was ordered that the Officer Commanding be empowered to board the men at Donovan's, or elsewhere, as might be required in this connection."

November 22nd, 1916.—The Officer Commanding at Headquarters "reported that measles had broken out among the men under his command. Both Majors Macpherson and Paterson (of the Medical Staff) were of the opinion that it would be risky for the men to go forward at present on account of this outbreak of measles, and they thought it advisable that the proceeding which had already been established, of a delay of three weeks, be adhered to."

November 25th, 1916.—"The Chairman (Sir Joseph Outerbridge) reported that a draft of about 120 men was now ready to go overseas. After some discussion it was decided that the Chairman send a cable to the Agents at Halifax that there was some doubt about the men going next week, and that final arrangements with regard to same would not be made until the 27th inst."

"Major Montgomerie (Officer Commanding at Headquarters) suggested that Major Carty be requested to take command of the draft as far as Halifax, and see that the men were comfortably and safely placed on the S.S. Southland for passage across the Atlantic."

Note.—The reason for the doubt above expressed as to the men going was, that owing to the outbreak of measles referred to in the last Minutes, the Committee would not make a definite decision as to the date of sailing until the Medical Officers decided the number of men which would be available for the draft.

In the meantime His Excellency the Governor had received information to the effect that enemy craft were operating in the Atlantic, and he decided to confer with the Standing Committee. He, therefore, requested the Chairman to call an emergency meeting of the Committee at the C. L. B. Armoury, with him, and the Prime Minister, Sir W. E. Davidson, K.C.M.G., and Intelligence Officer, present, the advisability of sending, or not sending, the draft forward by the Florizel to connect with the S. S. Southland as arranged, in view of the altered conditions.

(The meeting above referred to was held in the C. L. B. Armoury on November 25th, 1916, and the Minutes of same are given in full on the next page.)

The following are the Minutes of the meeting which was held on November 25th, 1916:

STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE PATRIOTIC ASSOCIATION, MEETING, NOV. 25TH, 1916.

The members of the Committee were summoned for the purpose of meeting His Excellency the Governor Sir W. E. Davidson, K.C.M.G., and the Rt. Hon. the Premier, Sir E. P. Morris, P.C., K.C.M.G.

A meeting was held in the C. L. B. Armoury, Harvey Road, at 4 p.m. PRESENT.—His Excellency the Governor, the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Outerbridge, Hon. M. P. Cashin, Messrs. J. A. Clift, T. J. Edens, J. W. N. Johnston, J. McKay, J. Peters, V. P. Burke, Majors Montgomerie, Paterson, Macpherson and Capt. Abraham, Intelligence Officer.

The Governor presided and informed those present that the object of the meeting was to consider the advisability of sending or not sending a draft of men by Florizel to Halifax to connect with the Southland sailing for the Old Country on December 7th, in view of the fact that the Admiralty had given out information that two submarines were on this side of the water.

At the request of His Excellency, Capt. Abraham explained to the meeting the present position with regard to transporting troops on the Atlantic. The Prime Minister was of the opinion that the risk would be somewhat lessened by sending the men by rail to Halifax, and in as much as measles had broken out in the Company, it would perhaps be advisable, he thought, that the men be held longer.

A general discussion then ensued in which all those present took part. In reply to a question, Capt. Abraham further stated that in his opinion the

transport of troops from Halifax at this season of the year was safer from attack by enemy submarines than in the summer.

Mr. MacKay then moved and Hon. M. P. Cashin seconded that we cancel any arrangements made with regard to forwarding the troops by R. M. S. Florizel and that we send them by rail to Halifax to connect with the S. S. Southland sailing on December 7th.

After some further discussion the motion was put to the meeting and lost. It was then agreed that the transportation of the draft under consideration be postponed indefinitely.

On the suggestion of Sir E. P. Morris and Sir Joseph Outerbridge it was decided that His Excellency the Governor be requested to communicate with the Canadian authorities with a view of ascertaining whether it could be arranged that our troops be despatched with the Canadian troops conveyed across the Atlantic in company with them.

The meeting then adjourned sine die. December 8th, and December 15th, 1916.—Telegrams which passed between His Excellency the Governor and the Governor General of Canada bearing upon the transport of troops, were read at these meetings, but as these telegrams are marked "Secret," the Committee has no authority to disclose their contents.

December 29th, 1916.—"In reply to the Hon. M. P. Cashin, Major Montgomerie, (Officer Commanding Headquarters) informed the Committee, "there are at present 300 men available for transport, i.e., provided that 100 men were not retained for Home Defence."

January 5th, 1917.—Cipher telegrams No. 328 to the Governor General of Canada were read at this meeting, but as these telegrams were marked "Secret," the Committee has no authority to disclose their contents. January 12th, 1917.—Cipher telegram No. 337 to Governor General of Canada was read at the meeting of this date, but as the telegram was marked "Secret," the committee has no authority to disclose its contents.

January 19th, 1917.—A Cipher telegram No. 800 from the Governor General of Canada was read at this meeting. After the reading of this telegram it was resolved:

That the Transport Committee be instructed to proceed with the enquiries as to the availability of the transport of a draft at as early a date as possible, and that in view of a decision made at the meeting in the C. L. B. Armoury when the Governor and Prime Minister were present, they be informed of the intentions of the Committee, with the exception of the fact that they have any objections."

January 26th, 1917.—The Chairman reported that he had consulted with the Governor and the Prime Minister with regard to the draft of the Regiment going via Halifax, and that both of them thought the draft should be despatched as soon as possible, via Halifax.

Arrangements were made by Transport Committee for draft to sail by S. S. Florizel, leaving 31st January, to connect with the S. S. Saxonia, leaving Halifax early in February.

January 30th, 1917.—The Chairman explained the object of the meeting, which was to consider the advisability of sending, or not sending, a draft of troops arranged to go by the Florizel might leave by that steamer, in view of the information received by the Admiralty, after general discussion it was decided that the draft leave by the Florizel as arranged, and that the troops await the Halifax arrangements for their transportation from there.

Note.—This meeting was called on account of a dispatch to His Excellency the Governor from the Admiralty, advising that on account of inability to provide a conveyance for the Saxonia the troops were not to be dispatched from Halifax by that steamer.

February 1st, 1917.—Cipher telegram No. 357 to Governor General of Canada. Cipher telegram No. 256 to Secretary of State. Cipher telegram No. 351 from Governor General of Canada. Cipher telegram No. 373 to Secretary of State. Cipher telegram No. 374 from Governor General of Canada; and Cipher telegram No. 359 from Secretary of State, were read at this date.

These telegrams are all marked "Secret," and the Committee has no authority to disclose their contents. At this meeting copy of telegram from Major Montgomerie to the Governor, was read, saying "the troops had arrived at Halifax, all well, at midday February 3rd."

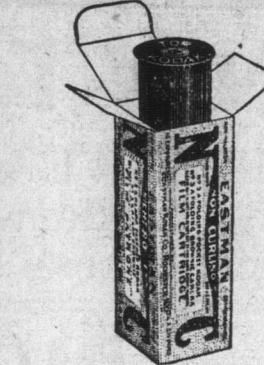
Note.—This draft (afterwards known as the Windsor draft), consisted of 300 men all ranks. The draft intended to be sent by the Southland was 120 all ranks.

It terminates the connection of the Committee with this draft as far as transportation was concerned. Arrangements thereafter were in the hands of the Canadian Government. The troops arrived at Halifax on Feb. 3rd and reached Windsor (a town of about forty-five miles from Halifax) on the same date. Shortly after arrival a number of infectious diseases developed in the Regiment, and though several attempts were made by the Canadian authorities to get the draft away, a clean Bill of Health was not received until the middle of April. The draft sailed from Halifax on April 18th, 1917.

Comments made by Hon. John Harvey in Legislative Council when these replies were tabled.

We have the statement by the President, a statement which is based on private information of his own which may or may not be correct, as to the influence of some individual in connection with the forwarding of the men who were going to join the Southland to sail from Halifax December 7th. Before the question of submarines was ever raised at all we may note from that reply that in October more than one meeting was called in which the medical officers referred at length to the question of infectious diseases, and a doubt whether on that ground alone these men should have been allowed to go. But the committee did not decide on that.

The next thing we find on November 25th, the Colonel of the Regiment acting on information officially received called a meeting of the committee to consider whether the men should then be sent on the ground and he had then at that time the information in regard to the existence of submarines on this side of the water, and all through these minutes no reference is made to the person who is referred to as having influenced the committee



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for personal motives. It is stated that the Prime Minister urged that the draft should not be sent, and the doctors had already urged against it on the ground of measles. A motion was put that the draft be sent forward and was lost. There is nothing whatever on the face of it to show the existence of anything but an honest desire on the part of the committee to do what was right. I do not see anything which would indicate but that the desire of the Committee was to do what was quite right in view of the information by the Governor as to submarines, and that of the doctors as regards measles, and there is nothing to show that the committee was definitely influenced and prejudiced so to speak by one gentleman who had a son going and who I think has several sons in the ranks of the regiment.

Comments made by Hon. R. K. Bishop in the Legislative Council on the same occasion.

I just wish to refer in a brief way to the remarks which have been made by the hon. gentlemen who have just spoken. Regarding the reason for the delay in sending forward the Windsor draft, there was for the consideration of that committee an intimation by the Medical Board that there was disease apparent. There was another strong reason and that was the further intimation that there was to be no convey and that the "Southland" was anything but a fast ship, and further there was the very material reason that at the meeting held the members were informed by Capt. Abraham that the men had just received intimation by the Admiralty that submarines were operating in the North Atlantic and also an armed cruiser. The charge of the Hon. President that that Committee was influenced by one member who had a son going is, I am compelled to repeat, without foundation, as apart from the report of the Committee, I am informed that the

(See 8th page.)

T. J. EDENS.

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N. Y. Corned Beef.
Bananas.
Cal. Oranges.
Plums—Red & Blue.
Grape Fruit.
Cantaloupes.
Cal. Lemons.
Pears.
Tomatoes.
Cucumbers.
New Potatoes.
New Turnips.
New Cabbage.

Notice to Chinese
Laundries.
By Rail to-day:
25 100-lb. kegs
CHINESE STARCH.

Water Glass.
Milk Macaroni.
Pork & Beans, No. 3, tin,
25c.
Tomatoes, No. 3, tin, 20c.

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