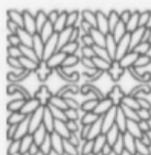


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The Second Year of the War

What it means to the
Canadian Patriotic Fund



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THE SECOND YEAR OF THE WAR

WHAT IT MEANS TO THE CANADIAN
PATRIOTIC FUND.

WE have now entered upon the second year of the war, and the end seems as far off as ever. No one imagined, a year ago, that by September, 1915, Canada would have sent across the Atlantic nearly 100,000 men, with as many more to follow if necessary. The war may yet last a long time. We can permit no "stale mate," no truce that means returning to the relative positions occupied before the war. That would only mean that all of the belligerents would at once commence preparations for another and a greater conflict, and that the children for whose heritage we are fighting today, would, in turn, themselves be called upon to lay down their lives in the next generation.

What the Prime Minister of England said last autumn is as true today as it ever was. This war cannot end until Belgium has been

restored to all that she lost and more; until France has been given boundaries that can be protected against the menace of invasion; until the right of the little nations of Europe to live has been unquestionably established and until Prussianism has been completely crushed. To accomplish these things will require enormous sacrifice. Lord Kitchener says the war can only be ended by trained men, "Men, more men, and yet more men."

The issue today depends upon Britain and the British Empire. We alone, have the reserves that permit of the creation of the preponderating army. The Germans before the war made many predictions. In respect of France and Russia, they were not far astray, but they wholly underestimated the power of the British Empire. The overseas dominions which were contemptuously referred to as a negligible quantity, will probably furnish 300,000 men or more before the end of the war and a large proportion of these will consist of the contingents from Canada.

It is the duty of the Canadian government to arm, train, equip and maintain its expeditionary force. The money for this purpose is raised by taxation equally distributed on the people of Canada. The task of providing for the wives and children of the men who go to the front however has been entirely assured by the generous public, on the ground that he who cannot fight should pay.

For this end was inaugurated the **Canadian Patriotic Fund**. With the month of September, this organization enters upon the work of its second year. On that date about 20,000 families were on its list of beneficiaries, and it required over \$375,000 per month to meet their needs. Although in the early months of the war, subscriptions to the Fund were in excess of the demands made upon it, and a considerable surplus accrued, this latterly has not been the case, for since May these reserves have been subject to an ever increasing drain. During June, July and August, the deficit amounted to \$400,000. If the war continues for another year there will be required during that period not less than five million dollars to care for those entrusted to our care. To be sure, we have no written contract with the soldier that we will continue to provide for his wife and children, but he has gone to the front with implicit faith that we will not repudiate our obligation, and this pledge must not be broken.

Since the outbreak of war, new fields of activity, beyond those originally contemplated, have been opened up. Not only does the Fund care for the wives of British and Canadian soldiers, but also for those of the Allies; Belgian, French, Italian, Russian. All these nations have had reason to feel that Canada recognizes the bond of a common brotherhood in this terrible

struggle; however, the Patriotic Fund has taken the convalescent soldier under its care. That is, when he has a family dependent upon him. A representative of the Fund meets every returned soldier at Quebec, learns of his history and condition, passes him on to the Secretary of the Branch in the town to which he is going, and on his arrival there, the local committee stands by the family until the convalescent is restored to health, and employment for him is secured.

When, a year ago, the Fund made its first appeal to the public, it was on behalf of an idea, and everybody admitted that the duty of caring for the soldiers' dependents was one that could not be overlooked. Today, the Fund appeals on a record. For twelve months its directors have endeavored, as trustees of the people of Canada, to administer the monies so freely given. The Fund now appeals to the public for money to enable the work to be continued along well tried and established lines.

Naturally, when one is asked for a second subscription, if there be any criticism, it is then that it is offered. This has been the experience of the Patriotic Fund. We find it desirable therefore to deal now with some of the criticisms that have been advanced:—

It is sometimes said that the Fund acts

too generously towards the soldiers' dependents. Let us examine this assertion. We would, in the first place, point out that relief is determined by local committees. These are in close contact with the soldiers' dependents and on their recommendation, the amount rewarded to each family is fixed. The head office lays down general rules which are followed for the most part with commendable exactness. Every month a statement is prepared, showing in respect of each family, the amount of assistance given. These "disbursement sheets," as they are called, are checked by the accountant of the Fund at Ottawa, and where the Head office has reason to believe that a local committee is going beyond the authorized scale, that committee is requested to revise its future grants. The Fund is intended only for those who would be in need were it not in existence. Throughout Eastern Canada, the average help to a soldier's wife, with children, amounts to from 50 to 60 cents per day. In the Western Provinces it ranges from 70 to 80 cents per day. This does not seem an extravagant amount, and yet in most instances it represents the difference between a bare existence and a reasonable degree of Comfort. Occasionally the claim is made that the soldier's wife is better off than when her husband was at home. This may be the case and yet not necessarily a matter for regret or reasonable ground for reproof. Prior to the enlistment of her

husband, "Mrs. Bill Smith" and her children may have lived during many a month below the scale of decent subsistence, but when "William Smith" enlists in the Canadian Overseas Contingent, takes his training, and goes to the front to fight the battles of the Empire, we claim his wife is entitled to receive commensurate treatment from the community in which she lives. And further, if we are to ask the Canadian-born artisan, in receipt of good wages, to enlist, we cannot expect him to leave his wife with only a bare subsistence for herself and children.

Hitherto, in deciding what a soldier's family should receive, the Patriotic Fund has not taken into consideration the soldier's assigned pay. We have been criticised for this but there are reasons which to us seem valid for following this course. Many men enlist whose families are in debt, and it is thought wise that the assigned pay should at first go to wipe out these obligations. Then during the long, hard, Canadian winter, an ill-furnished home could hardly be improved or an ill-clad family adequately clothed out of the allowance paid by the Canadian Patriotic Fund, so the soldier's wife is advised to use the assigned pay to furnish the house, and clothe the children. Latterly, our committees have been preaching the doctrine of saving against the day of the soldier's return. When he comes back to •

Canada, his pay will cease. No longer will he have any claim on the government or on the Patriotic Fund. He must henceforth earn his own living. He may not be able to find immediate employment, hence we are now advising his wife, during his absence at the front, to save a part of what he sends her, with a view of tiding the family over this period of rehabilitation. It does not necessarily follow that a frugal soldier's wife, who by denying herself can lay by something against her husband's return, is being too generously treated by the Patriotic Fund.

Sometimes we hear the assertion that the government of Canada should do the work now being carried on by the Canadian Patriotic Fund. Usually, those who advance this idea are not able to suggest how this might be done, nor do they appear to have foreseen the results. The Canadian government cannot discriminate between families. The separation allowance is given, without favor, alike to the wife of the millionaire and to that of the pauper,—the same sum to each. The wife in the former case has no claim because of need, while in the latter case the separation allowance alone is not sufficient to support the family even on the most economical scale. Hence, the Patriotic Fund, acting with discrimination, considering the special circumstances of each case, brings up each family's income to a reasonable level of

subsistence, thus building on the foundation which the government has laid. Further, the Patriotic Fund has been singularly fortunate in securing throughout Canada, the services of a large number of our best business and professional men, who, without remuneration, give time and labor to its administration. It is very questionable whether this magnificent volunteer staff could be replaced by government officials with advantages either on the score of economical and efficient administration, or sympathetic treatment of the soldiers' dependents.

For the most part, the work of the Fund is carried on by voluntary workers. At the head office, and with the larger branches, there is a limited staff for the prosecution of clerical work. No one need fear, however, that his contribution is eaten into by large salaries of a paid staff. Hitherto, the interest allowed by the banks on the reserve deposits in their hands has more than covered all the administrative expenses of the head office and branches, and, even with the new activities to which the Fund is now committed, it seems probable that for the present at least this condition can be maintained.

The record of the past twelve months in patriotic giving is one of which Canada may be justly proud. Upwards of five million dollars have been turned in to the Patriotic

Fund during the first year of the war. There is hardly a community in the Dominion that has not assumed some share in this great undertaking. True, the recognition of the responsibility has varied greatly. Some districts and many individuals have taxed themselves heavily, while others have endeavoured to escape with a minimum contribution. At first, there was a tendency on the part of certain localities to uphold the doctrine of purely local responsibility. "We will look after our own, let others do the same," was their motto. Had this been the general practise throughout Canada, there would have been, before the first year of the war had come to an end, communities in which either the soldiers' dependents would have been compelled to subsist without assistance, or a burden would have been assumed by the people almost beyond their means. For example, the Province of Alberta, from which there have enlisted about 15,000 men, or **one man to every twenty-five inhabitants of the Province**, having to carry a burden of nearly 3,500 soldiers' families, would have had to provide \$75,000 per month to meet their needs, while on other communities, at present more able to bear so heavy a financial load than this loyal Province, would have rested but a light obligation. It has been the privilege of the national Fund, during the past year, to assist communities that were "long on patriotism and short on cash," and we have

been able to do this through the generosity of other communities, whose subscriptions were large, though their enlistments were comparatively few.

Contributions have come from many sources. Municipal and County Councils have generously subscribed in all the provinces. Banks, railway companies, employees of industrial establishments, fraternal societies, religious bodies, athletic associations, and thousands of individuals have helped to swell the Fund. Members of the North West Mounted Police give one day's pay a month. Indians from many a reserve have sent in the proceeds of their grain, their cattle or their fur. Mining towns, and lumber camps, cheese factories and fishing plants, have all figured on the list of subscribers. A general collection, on a given day, was taken up in all the Roman Catholic Churches throughout the Province of Quebec. This Dominion-wide support, so generously accorded in the first year of the war, will probably be exceeded by the generosity that will be shown in the second and severer period of the struggle.

Steps are now about to be undertaken for a fresh appeal to the generous public throughout all Canada. Wherever possible, subscriptions will be sought, payable in monthly instalments, so that the Fund may have a continuous income to the end of the war. So few communities now remain that have not subscribed at least once,

that the Executive Committee feels justified in asking all Canada to give a second time.

Until the youngest among us is grey-headed, and for many long years after, the one outstanding event will be this great war. We may still continue to use the old chronology, but events of modern history will be divided into those before and those after this present year. It has been a great testing time for nations and individuals. The boasted civilization of some countries has been found to be but a thin mask, of others to have shown unexampled heroism. For the British Empire, judged by its enemies to be decadent, money-loving, rent by dissension, it has proven a time of sublime effort. As with nations so is it with individuals. Hereafter the one question that will be asked regarding every man will be this, "How did he stand the test of the great war?" Those who can should go to fight, and those who cannot fight should pay. Those who will do neither are unworthy the liberties they enjoy, for which men by the thousands are dying.

After all, this great cloud has a silver lining. It may lead those of us who inherited privileges we little prized, to hold them hereafter in higher estimation, and to exercise the rights of self-government with greater unselfishness and purer ideals. If this be accomplished, the sacrifices will not have been in vain.

Ottawa, Sept. 1st, 1915.