

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER



CANADA

Personal

Confidential

Ottawa, April 21, 1942

C. Mortimer Bezeau, Esq.,
Kitchener,
Ontario.

My dear Bezeau:

I have received this morning, and read with much interest, your personal letter of the 18th instant.

Your difficulty regarding the plebiscite is one which presents itself to many. You take it that a "yes" vote will strengthen the hands of the government's political opponents and that if more men are required than are offering themselves the remedy would not be found in conscription. Also, that ^{it could with} ~~the~~ truth can be said that Canada has not carried the full share of this war both in men and materials, and, you enquire, where are the ships to transport the men? You give additional reasons why conscription for overseas should not be resorted to, even after the government possesses the power.

The point I would like to make is that I and my colleagues are, and will continue to be, not less anxious than you yourself are to avoid resort to conscription for military service overseas. What, perhaps, is not as clear to you as it is to us is the extent to which Canada's war effort, however total it may be in reality, is being prejudiced in the minds of our own people and in the minds of the United Nations, the United States in particular, through appearing not to be a total effort, simply because the power, on the part of the government, to send additional men overseas does not exist.

Please note too that "overseas" has come to mean, in the minds of many, "outside of Canada." Today we have a situation where, for the defence of Canada on our Pacific Coast, we shall need American troops and planes and ships. Not to be able to send troops and