

The War Needs of Canada

IX.

THE NEED FOR GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF MUNITIONS PLANTS.

By Benjamin Apthorp Gould.

The facts that the contracts for Canadian-made munitions are not being largely renewed upon their completion may render it unnecessary to consider the question of government control at any great length. According to the best information I can get, it seems improbable that very great quantities of munitions will be henceforward shipped from Canada, and it is usually thought that the reason for this is that the British plants are now capable of turning out the necessary quantities at a cost certainly no greater than that of munitions produced in Canada. It is clearly much to the benefit of the Imperial Government if possible to have the work on the shells, which constitutes their chief cost, done at home rather than here, because if a vessel carrying munitions is sunk by a submarine the loss in case the cargo consists only of raw material for shells is but a fraction of that where the cargo is made up of completed shells. Nevertheless, it may be useful to consider what has been done in the past, together with its present effect upon the efficiency of the country.

At the beginning of the war the need for munitions was so great that the questions of cost were entirely unimportant in comparison with prompt delivery. As a consequence, some of the earlier contracts were at prices which permitted of exorbitant profits, and those factories which were operated with wisdom and efficiency earned entirely disproportionate returns upon their investments. They also had such need for operators that they paid wages such as have never before been heard of in Canada, and they were none the less able to make very large profits. The practical results of contracts made by the old shell committee were such as to create an intense feeling against the owners of munitions plants as profiteers of the worst kind. There was at least one instance of a manufacturer turning back to the government a huge sum of money which he had earned and which he declared that as a patriotic citizen he did not feel justified in retaining. The example of this man was not, however, followed to any large extent.

The present Imperial Munitions Board has gone into the matter of Canadian production of munitions on a much more businesslike basis, and

has, I am informed, fixed prices which will return a fair profit to the manufacturer providing his plant is efficiently organized. The exorbitant profits of earlier days have been done away with, and the possibility of profit by plants not suited to the production of munitions or under incapable management has been eliminated. In figuring the cost of production the Imperial Munitions Board has, however, been compelled to take into consideration wages almost as high as those paid at the beginning. It is admittedly one of the most difficult things in economics to reduce wages which have been unduly high, especially at a time when there is a shortage of labor, and consequently the cost of munitions to the Imperial Government has been, and is now, much greater than would have been the case if wages had not originally been boosted to unheard of heights. I personally know of cases after cases where young and inexperienced girls working in munition plants have earned from twenty-five to forty dollars a week. However, much we may admire the spirit which has made girls of good family, who have never before done any work willing to give up their pleasure and to labor in munition plants, none the less we cannot fail to see the economic harm which is done to the country by the payment of such wages.

Much more serious, however, than the immediate cost of such wages has been the harm done to other industries by stripping them bare of workers who have sought the higher wages obtainable in munitions. The practical break-down of the railway system a year ago was in a great measure attributed to the fact that the skilled mechanics necessary to keep the locomotives in proper running condition were not obtainable, as they had in great part gone into munition work where the return for their labor was two or three times as great as it would have been in the railway round-houses. This is only an instance of the way in which the high wages paid to munition workers has affected the other industries of the country.

Almost the same criticisms which have been made in reference to the production of munitions may also with justice be made in regard to other industries which have sprung up since 1914 to take care of other war requirements of the country.

These industries are a result of the war, and a clear distinction should be made between them and those industries which were already in existence and which have merely continued or extended their previous operations. It is in regard to the new industries that the accusations of profiteering can be most fairly made, and it is as to them that any excess profits tax should be made to bear most heavily. The old industries can in most cases be prevented from making undue profits by a proper regulation of prices.

Even should the amount of munitions to be produced in Canada be henceforth comparatively small, there is the prospect that the plants which have hitherto been producing them will be kept very busy in other war work. It is probable that every well equipped machine-shop will be able to obtain contracts for making parts for marine engines to the full extent of its capacity, and that the necessity for government control of prices payable both for the finished product and for wages will be as important as ever. The workman engaged in producing the requirements of war should no more be permitted to receive exorbitant wages than should the contractor who supplies them be allowed to get exorbitant profits. One form of profiteering is in theory as bad as the other, and in the aggregate there may be little difference between the cost of taking to the tax payers if the various labor unions are able to establish union rates of wages which they consider just, there is no reason why the government in times like these cannot do the same, and fix a standardized scale of pay. The government can actually do this by going far to reduce the cost of living to the workman, and the workman has no just cause for complaint if his pay is made proportionate to his service and to the cost of living on a scale no lower than that to which he has been accustomed.

More especially, if under the selective draft the skilled workman is relieved from the obligation of military service, he should not be permitted to take advantage of this exemption by the exploitation of his skill at the cost of the country, which has given him his special privileges. I believe he is entirely proper to make his exemption conditional upon his willingness to work wherever and at the wage the government may require.

tanously with advances on the other two lines. The British Government had decided that substantial steps should be taken as soon as possible. He had steadfastly refused to anticipate the home Government's decision.

The Viceroy said that recruiting for labor corps had been a great deal. He also spoke of the continued loyal and consistent and generous services of the ruling princes of India. The Indian war loan, he said, now exceeded £32,000,000. The Home Government had, he announced, agreed to the coinage of sovereigns at the Bombay mint during the war.

FULL RIGHTS FOR ALL WOMEN, IS SLOGAN
Government Franchise Bill is Condemned by Equal Suffrage League.

Montreal, Sept. 10.—A deputation of the Equal Suffrage League, waited upon the Executive Council of the People's Power League to ask their co-operation in a campaign to bring about if possible, the defeat of the Franchise Bill brought in by the Dominion Government. It was unanimously resolved to prosecute a vigorous effort to represent to the House of Commons the serious injustice that will be perpetrated if the bill in question becomes law.

The resolution submitted by the Equal Suffrage League deprecated the idea of differentiating between one form of national service and other forms of service equally honorable and equally indispensable to a successful prosecution of the war, and that for the first time in this country a bill has been introduced which ignores workers for the Red Cross, Red Cross Nurses, Patriotic Fund Committees, Halpian and other war relief funds, also the tens of thousands of women engaged in munition factories, who are denied the vote. The British House of Commons and the United States have made no such distinctions in their recent franchise legislation.

It was resolved, "That this meeting employ the advisers of the Crown to withdraw their Franchise Bill and draft immediately a measure that will invest women with the same political rights and privileges as are shared by men, with power to fill any office at the constitutional disposal of the Crown."

Frank Thompson of Meaford, a returned soldier undergoing hospital treatment at Hamilton, died as a result of his injuries received in a collision between an automobile and a B. & H. electric car at the funeral of Sgt.-Maj. Coots. It is better to do a foolish act of charity occasionally than to consult the folly of an uncharitable life.



CANADA

Military Service Act, 1917

Explanatory Announcement by the Minister of Justice

THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT has received the assent of the Governor-General and is now part of the law of the land. It will be enforced accordingly, and the patriotism and good sense of the people can be relied upon to support it. Resistance to its enforcement, however, by word or act must and will be repressed as resistance to any other law in force must be.

Reinforcements under the Military Service Act immediately required

It is the intention of the Government immediately to exercise the power which the Act confers and to call out men for military service in order to provide reinforcements for the Canadian Forces. This is necessary since the military authorities report that the reserves available or in sight for reinforcement will shortly be exhausted unless this step be taken.

First call limited to men between 20 and 34 who were unmarried or widowers without children on July 6, 1917

The present call will be limited to men not in the schedule of exemptions who were unmarried or widowers without children on July 6, 1917, are at least twenty years of age, and were born on or since 1st January, 1883. Of this Class all those will be entitled to conditional exemption whose services in their present occupations, agricultural, industrial or other, are essential in the national interest, and whose business or domestic responsibilities are such that serious hardship would ensue if their services be required. Conscientious scruples based upon a prohibition of combatant service by the articles of faith of the religious denomination to which men belong will also be respected. The men first required to serve will consequently be those who can be called upon with the least disturbance of the economic and social life of the country.

Civil Tribunals to deal with exemptions

Questions of exemption will be determined, not by the military authorities or by the Government, but by civil tribunals composed of representative men who are familiar with local conditions in the communities in which they serve, who will generally have personal knowledge of the economic and family reasons which those whose cases come before them have had for not volunteering their services and who will be able sympathetically to estimate the weight and importance of such reasons. Provincial Appellate Tribunals constituted from the existing judiciary of the respective provinces will be provided to correct mistakes made by Local Tribunals, and a Central Appeal Tribunal for the whole of Canada, selected from among the present Judges of the Supreme Court of Canada, will be constituted in order that identical principles may be applied throughout the country. In this way every man may rest assured of the fair and full consideration of his circumstances and the national requirements both civil and military.

Proclamation will announce the day

A proclamation will issue calling out the bachelors and widowers referred to and fixing a day on or before which every man must report for service to the military authorities unless he has before that day made an application for exemption.

How to apply for exemption

Applications for exemption may be made by written notice on forms which will be available at every post office, and will be transmitted free of postage. They will not, however, be required to be made in this way, but may be presented by the applicants in person to the exemption tribunals. The cases of those who have given written notice in advance will take precedence, and appearance in person will therefore be likely to involve considerably more inconvenience and delay to the men concerned, so that it is recommended that advantage be generally taken of the facilities for written application.

Exemption Tribunals in all parts of Canada

The local exemption tribunals will be constituted with the least delay possible, consistent with the selection of representative individuals to compose them, and the instruction of the members in their duties. There will be more than one thousand of such tribunals throughout Canada, each consisting of two members, one of whom will be nominated by a Joint Committee of Parliament, and the other by one of the Judges of the existing Courts. Every effort will be made by the wide distribution of tribunals, and by provision where necessary for their sitting in more than one place, to minimize the inconvenience to which men will be put in obtaining the disposition of their cases.

A Registrar will be appointed in each Province, who will be named in the proclamation and to whom enquiries may be addressed. Each Provincial Registrar will transmit to the appropriate tribunal the applications for exemption which have been submitted in advance of the sittings, and men who have sent these in will not be required to attend the tribunals until notified to do so. Other applicants should attend personally on the tribunal without notice.

How to report for service

Men who do not desire to claim exemption will report to the military authorities for service either by mail or in person at any time after the issue of the proclamation. Forms of report by mail will be found in all post offices, and, like applications for exemption, will be transmitted free of postage.

Early report advantageous

No man who reports for service will, although he may be medically examined and passed as fit, be required to go into camp or join a battalion until after a day fixed by the proclamation sufficiently late to permit of the disposition by the local tribunals of most, if not all, of the applications for exemption which may come before them. Thus no advantage will be gained by delaying or disadvantage incurred by prompt report for service on the part of those who do not intend to apply for exemption.

Facilities for immediate medical examination

Immediately upon the issue of the proclamation, medical boards will sit at every mobilization centre for the examination of men who report for service or who, subject to their right within the time limited to apply for exemption, desire to have their physical fitness determined in order to allay any doubt as to their physical condition, or to know definitely and in advance whether there is a possibility of their services being required. Certificates of physical unfitness issued by these Medical Boards will be accepted without any further investigation by exemption tribunals when they sit. Men found physically fit who have not reported for service may nevertheless apply for exemption on any of the prescribed grounds, including even their physical condition if dissatisfied with the Medical Board's conclusion.

Notice to join the colors

As reinforcements are required, notice to report at the nearest mobilization centre will be given from time to time to the men found liable and passed as fit for service. Disobedience of such notice will render the offender liable to punishment, but punishment for failure to report for military service, or to report subsequently for duty when called upon, will be imposed ordinarily by the civil magistrates; offenders, however, will remain liable for the performance of their military duties notwithstanding any civil punishment which may be imposed and will be liable to military punishment in cases in which civil proceedings are not taken.

Watch for the Proclamation

Notice of the day appointed for the making of a claim for exemption or for report for military service will be published as widely as possible, but, as no personal notice can be given until the individuals called out have so reported themselves or claimed exemption, men possibly concerned are warned to inform themselves with regard to the day fixed, since neglect may involve the loss by them of important privileges and rights.

CHAS. J. DOHERTY,
Minister of Justice.

Ottawa, September 11, 1917.

SAVED LITTLE GIRL'S LIFE

A DROWNING ACCIDENT ALMOST OCCURRED AT LANSDOWNE

Burial of the Late Miss Margaret Slack—Wedding Ceremonies—Dr. Campbell Leaves a Residence.

Lansdowne, Sept. 8.—Mrs. Gordon Landon's little niece, Bertie had a very narrow escape from drowning on Tuesday, while bathing. She could not swim and would have lost her life only for the bravery of another little girl who rescued her.

The funeral of Miss Margaret Slack, who lost her life while bathing near Verona was held on Thursday afternoon to the Union church. The funeral was largely attended, the sermon being very impressive.

The marriage took place on Sept. 5th of Thomas Shield, son of Joseph Shields to Miss Leta Grey, daughter of John Grey of Halshead Bay. The ceremony was performed by Rev. I. N. Beckstedt.

The marriage also took place on Wednesday of Milton Burns, son of Edward Burns of Warburton, to Miss Annie Webster, daughter of Nelson Webster of Tilley. The ceremony was performed at Escott, by Rev. Mr. Leech of that place.

Mrs. H. E. Nunn and children have returned from visiting friends in Ottawa and Quebec. Mrs. James Graham was taken to Kingston General Hospital on Wednesday.

The funeral of the late Mrs. George Goodall took place last Friday. The remains were interred in Union cemetery.

D. G. Copeland has returned home from Kingston General Hospital. School re-opened on Tuesday with the same teachers. Mrs. E. R. Bruley, who has been ill, is recovering.

Rev. Richard Steacy who recently returned from overseas is visiting his brother, Robert Steacy of Warburton. Miss Long of Shannonville is a week-end guest of Rev. Mr. and

Mrs. Winter. Miss Lillie Harmer was taken to Brookville General Hospital on Sunday last.

Dr. Campbell has leased the residence of Mrs. Norman Webster and intends moving in very soon. Mrs. Webster will occupy the other residence north of the bank and Mr. Morvey and family will take possession of the house to be vacated by Dr. Campbell.

Joseph Steacy of Hamilton is visiting relatives. Mrs. J. J. Nunn and her son, J. E. Nunn of Landis, Sask., and Mrs. and Mrs. Harry Nunn. Miss Beattie Foley of Tilley is appointed teacher of Greenfield school.

INDIAN WAR LOAN NOW EXCEEDS \$150,000,000

The Viceroy of India Makes Many Announcements in Opening Council.

Simla, India, Sept. 10 (via Reuters' Ottawa Agency).—Lord Chelmsford, in opening the Legislative Council, made the longest and most important speech ever delivered by a Viceroy on a similar occasion. He said that a school for the sons of Indian officers was contemplated, and stated that the British Government had accepted in the main the proposals for granting commissions in the army to Indians. The problem, he said, bristled with difficulties.

Regarding constitutional reforms, he said that the Government of India considered the announcement of the British Government as practically indistinguishable from its policy. Three roads led to this goal. The first was in the domain of the local self-government of a village or town by a municipal council; the second in the responsible employment of Indians under the Government, and the third in the domain of Legislative Councils along which line advance must be made simul-



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