

CANADA HESITATES OVER WIDER DRAFT

Delays Action on Full Man and
Woman Power Use—Public
Held Eager for Shift

CONSCRIPTION GAINS NOTED

Some Liberals Now Back Move
—Opposition Chief Urges
Unity Cabinet to End Rifts

By P. J. PHILIP

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OTTAWA, Jan. 10—For reasons so far not explained the government is still delaying its decision to take advantage of the tide of popular feeling in favor of a total war effort and announce its plans for all-out mobilization of man and woman power.

There may be good reasons and no criticism can be fairly leveled against Canada for not having done all that the circumstances of the war have as yet demanded. She has supplied men and munitions and food to the full measure of the need. In some departments, especially in the production of air crews, she has done far beyond any country of equal population.

There are now over a hundred thousand men in the Canadian Flying Corps, in addition to all the British, Australian and New Zealand pilots, observers and gunners who have been trained here. Canadian armaments production, already high, is being stepped up, according to Supply Minister C. D. Howe's statements, to meet the new demands the war in the Pacific is making. Canadian soldiers in Britain, impatient for action, are clamoring to get into the specially trained "Commando" detachments that are being organized to raid the enemy coasts.

It has been obvious for many months, however, that if the country is to be put, as it demands, on a total war basis there must be more complete organization of its man and woman power.

Becoming a Political Issue

The government has recognized this need and is known to be working out different solutions to assure that the Army and Navy, the air

force, munitions production and the farmers will be supplied with the maximum number of men and women available. It has, however, hesitated to announce its plans, with the result that the whole question is fast becoming a political rather than a national issue.

Several of its own Liberal supporters during the past few weeks have become impatient and have begun agitating for conscription for overseas service. Their number is not large, but it is significant in view of the public trend.

The Conservative Opposition under its new leader, the former Premier Arthur Meighen, has begun putting on pressure for a place in the government and for a program of national service that it can support. In a broadcast program speech last night Mr. Meighen declared:

"We are not organized politically as we should be and as a consequence of an unsuitable political set-up we are not organized militarily as we should be. We are divided and shackled and have not made the progress we should have made. The spectacle of a single group clinging to exclusive control in the midst of a holocaust which envelopes the world is discreditable to Canada and is not a subject of pride to serious men and women."

Beside that statement should be placed another made last night by Adelard Godbout, Liberal Premier of Quebec Province, who, speaking for French Canadians, said:

"We think we should do everything in our power to win the war and if I thought that conscription would be the last means of winning the war I would be for conscription right away."

The two obstacles to an outright total effort are, first, the promises made at the last election that there would be no conscription for overseas service without a previous consultation of the people, and, second, the existence of a small active minority, not confined to the Province of Quebec, that exploits the conscription issue for its own political purposes.

Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King has repeatedly declared that he would never impose conscription without a popular consultation, and it has been suggested that a referendum should be held. That proposal has roused opposition from Premier Mitchell Hepburn of Ontario, who, among others, argues that the government ought to face its responsibility frankly.

Public Opinion Confused

Among all these different currents and suggestions public opinion, which seems prepared to accept whatever decision is made with the same determination as it has shown in its voluntary prosecution of the war, is confused and puzzled. It is asking for leadership and for decision, to which it would, it is said, respond with the same unanimity as the people of the United States have responded.

The government, however, seems to prefer to wait for the opening of the new session of Parliament on Jan. 22 and perhaps, some suggest, until it sees the result of the four by-elections which will be held during the first weeks of February. Two newly appointed Cabinet Ministers, Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labor, and Louis St. Laurent, Minister of Justice, are standing for election, as is also Mr. Meighen, the Conservative leader who is opposed by a Co-operate Commonwealth Federation candidate.

These elections, it is thought, will show how opinion is moving, but others argue that it would be wiser for the government to take the initiative and announce its plans which, if they go far enough, would unquestionably have public support.

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