

TORONTO HERALD
NOV 2 1944

TORONTO, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1944

**THE CONSCRIPTION QUESTION
MUST BE SETTLED NOW.**

At long last convinced that the voluntary enlistment system will not provide the reinforcements required by the Canadian overseas army, Defense Minister J. D. Ralston has resigned his portfolio because the cabinet has refused to accept his recommendation that the conscripts be placed on general service. With his knowledge of the army's needs, gathered on his recent visit to the front, Mr. Ralston could take no other course than he has. Last July he told the House of Commons that if the army overseas could not be maintained by volunteers he would have no alternative but to recommend sending the conscripts abroad.

What of his colleagues in the cabinet? Their consciences must tell them that the support of the army and the prosecution of the war is more important than preserving the Liberal party fortunes in Quebec. Will these men listen to their consciences or to the urgings of political expediency? Navy Minister Angus L. Macdonald and Labor Minister Humphrey Mitchell are known to have disliked the policy which sent volunteers abroad and kept conscripts at home. Finance Minister James L. Ilesley surely takes a similar view. Their attitude in this crisis was not known early to-day, but the country will hope that these Ministers will act like men.

But most of all the public will want to know how Prime Minister Mackenzie King can ignore the recommendation of Mr. Ralston who has held the portfolio of National Defense for more than four years. Ralston's resignation can only mean that he has failed to gain the support of the Prime Minister

and a majority of the cabinet. Had Mr. Ralston's recommendation been adopted there would have been no reason for him to resign. It must be regarded as overwhelming evidence that the conscripts are needed for overseas. It must also be accepted as overwhelming evidence that Mr. King has decided it is more important to hold Quebec for the Liberal party than to give the Canadian army the support it needs.

The resignation of Mr. Ralston brings into the open a great issue and if the Government persists in refusing to order the conscripts on general service it can only be settled by an appeal to the public, as we suggested yesterday. John Bracken and the Progressive Conservatives have been saying for months that the "zombie" army should be used to reinforce the troops now overseas. Mr. Ralston's present action has shown they were right. Major Conn Smythe and Premier George Drew can feel gratification that their arguments have forced the issue into the open.

If the Government now continues its policy of holding the conscripts in Canada, the Progressive Conservative party ought to insist that there be an appeal to the people.

Ordinarily, elections should be avoided in wartime if possible, but if it comes down to an issue of full-out prosecution of the war and the support of our fighting men overseas, or letting them down, then a test of public opinion may be not only advisable, but absolutely necessary.

A government which is not prepared to place the war and the reinforcement of the soldiers overseas ahead of its own political ambitions deserves to be driven from office and replaced by an administration that will do its duty without fear or favor.

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resignation