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26 Oct 49

Canadian Public Opinion on the Employment
of the Canadian Army, 1939-1945

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1. The object of the present report is to present an outline of the extent to which the pressure of public opinion and public agitation was an element with which the Canadian Government had to reckon in connection with the employment of the Canadian Army during the Second World War.

2. Even the most rapid survey makes it clear that in developing their plans the Government and service authorities of Canada were obliged to take into account many considerations which were not strictly military. In a country with a completely free press, public opinion has ample opportunities for expression, and no government can disregard it. The Canadian public and the Canadian press have never been particularly well informed on military matters, but this did not prevent discussion of these matters being carried on actively and noisily in 1939-45. The Government could not fail to be sensitive to public opinion and public pressure, and on several occasions its military policies were influenced in some degree by agitations carried on in the newspapers and elsewhere.

3. A complete study of this subject would involve the examination of a vast number of newspaper files, in addition to the records of the debates in Parliament and the correspondence files of ministers and government departments. It has of course not been practicable to examine all the sources for this report, but an attempt has been made to make a comprehensive survey and to summarize the main results very briefly. Quotations have been kept to a minimum, although references are given to enable the reader to follow the subject up in further detail if this should be desirable. A great mass of relevant material, in the form of newspaper clippings and files of summaries of newspaper comment, is available in the Historical Section.

These clippings were originally collected by the Directorate of Military Intelligence but after 23 Mar 43 the service was taken over by the Directorate of Public Relations, which has retained possession of all subsequent clippings. The Historical Section has, however, a complete index which gives their contents in summarized form. In this report the fact is noted in each case if the quotation or reference is drawn from the press index rather than the actual clipping or newspaper file. Considerable use has also been made of photostat copies of selected newspaper clippings marked "O.P.I." (Overseas Press Index), which were sent overseas during the period April 1943 to June 1944. Almost the complete series may be found in C.M.H.Q. file 4/Press/27, now retained by the Historical Section. In C.M.H.Q. files 4/Press Circ/1 and 4/Press Circ/26 and in personal files of General McNaughton, also held by the Historical Section, there are very useful summaries of newspaper comment marked "Minim Press", a term which meant "Ministry of Information Press Commentary." These refer to telegrams sent weekly by the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom in Ottawa to the Dominions Office in London, indicating the reaction of the Canadian press to various world events.

PART I: PUBLIC OPINION BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

4. During the years immediately preceding the outbreak of war in 1939, Canadian public opinion concerning the increasingly perilous world situation was disturbed and confused. The Canadian public, like the people of other western countries, was very reluctant to face the prospect of a Second World War. The War of 1914-19 had been very costly for Canada and had occasioned a domestic controversy, over conscription, which had developed into a most serious threat to the unity of the country and had been a major element in political calculations since 1919. In these circumstances, political leaders were unlikely to advocate, or the public to support, a bold external policy. It is fair to say that isolationism in various forms was active and influential in Canada at this time.

5. Several schools of thought were identifiable during this period. One author wrote in 1938, "Certain fairly well defined groups of opinion can be discerned in Canada, centering around the three possible policies of non-intervention in foreign wars, imperialism or a British front policy, and collective security" (F.R. Scott, Canada Today: A Study of Her National Interests and Policy (Toronto, 1938) p.132). All these varieties of opinion were found within English-speaking Canada, and yet it must be said that the great mass of opinion was largely unformed and did not belong to any of these groups. At the same time, opinion in French-speaking Canada continued to be, as it always had been, strongly coloured with isolationism. Throughout the country, the most definite element in the situation at large was the fear of war. This was not accompanied by any general readiness to accept commitments designed to make war less likely.

6. In these circumstances, the Government adopted the policy of "maintaining national unity" by postponing decisions. The formula employed was that, when the crisis came, "Parliament would decide" what Canada should do.

7. As Hitler pursued his programme of aggression, Canadian opinion passed through a gradual process of hardening parallel to that which took place in the United Kingdom. By the spring of 1939 circumstances justified and supported a rather more definite stand on the part of the government. A series of ministerial statements now made it clear that it recognized that the feeling of the majority of the Canadian people made any neutral policy impracticable. At the same time, the policy of maintaining national unity reappeared in another form, in the declarations of both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition (March, 1939) against conscription for service abroad. These declarations were of course addressed primarily to French Canada, where the conscription issue inevitably arose whenever the possibility of war was mentioned. It may also be noted that on 30 Mar 39 both Government and Opposition leaders in the House of Commons expressed the view that expeditionary forces from the Dominions were unlikely to be required in any future war.

8. On the eve of war, then, the situation was this. The Government and the country may be said to have been resigned to the fact that if Great Britain became involved in war with Nazi Germany, Canada would participate at once. At the same time, both the chief political parties had committed themselves to placing a major limitation upon the Canadian war effort, in the form of a prohibition against conscription for service abroad. This policy, which was not seriously questioned at the

time by any large organized political group,[¶] was adopted in the interest of maintaining the unity of the nation in the anticipated crisis, and whatever the strictly military objections that may be raised against it - and they are powerful - it served this purpose pretty effectively in September 1939.

PART II: THE REACTION OF PUBLIC OPINION AT
THE OUTBREAK OF WAR, SEPTEMBER 1939

9. When war finally came, the first reaction of the country reflected to a very considerable extent the confusion of opinion and the controversies of recent years. The Government, true to its pledges, summoned Parliament, and Canada's declaration of war was postponed until the House of Commons had had an opportunity of expressing its opinion.

10. As might have been expected, in the light of the development which has been described above, the House supported the Government in its policy of "cooperation by Canada at the side of Great Britain". The Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, whose adoption the Government had said it would consider as constituting approval for that policy, was approved without a division, and only four members spoke against it. Of these four, one was the pacifist leader of the C.C.F. Party (whose group did not support him); the other three were all members for Quebec constituencies.

11. Although a large measure of unity had thus been maintained, perusal of the Debates of the Special Session of Parliament which lasted from 7 to 13 September clearly indicates that this unity would have been much less complete but for the reiteration of the pledges against overseas conscription. A potentially serious divergence in opinion on the issues of the war was in fact reflected even in the speeches of the two government members who moved and seconded the Address. The mover, Mr. H.S. Hamilton (Algoma West) made it clear that he was, in effect, in favour of an unrestricted and unlimited war effort. "If a certain type of assistance would be most advantageous now," he said, "changing to a different type of assistance later, then I am for that. And if the assistance which can effect that which I believe to be so vital can best be given on the Atlantic, on the North Sea, on the fields of Europe, I am also for that". The seconder, Mr. J.A. Blanchette (Compton), took a different line, reflecting what was undoubtedly a widespread view in French Canada; he declared himself in favour of "a reasonable and moderate cooperation, consistent with our interests and resources", and definitely not including conscription (Debates, House of Commons, Special War Session, 1939, pp 7, 12).

12. Many references in the Debates of this short session indicate the importance which French-speaking members attached to the avoidance of conscription for overseas service. Some were prepared to go further. At the very outset, Mr. Maxime Raymond (Beauharnois - Laprairie) sought to table "a petition signed by thousand of citizens against participation by Canada in any extra-territorial war" (ibid, p. 6). Mr. Raymond later argued for a policy of neutrality; it could be, he said, "a friendly neutrality toward Great Britain, France and Poland" (ibid, p. 63).

13. In the course of this session, the Government did not announce a definite policy on the employment of the forces.

¶ The Social Credit party did support conscription during the special session of September 1939.

The Prime Minister said in the House of Commons on 8 September, "The question of an expeditionary force or units of service overseas is particularly one of wide reaching significance which will require the fullest examination." The decision to dispatch a division overseas was not announced, and probably not taken, until after Parliament had risen.

14. In these circumstances, public opinion could scarcely crystallize firmly; the House and the country were awaiting the announcement of government policy. Nevertheless, the germ of serious disagreement on the employment of the military forces was apparent in the debates even of this session. Various French-speaking members argued against the dispatch of any expeditionary force; Mr. J.F. Pouliot (Témiscouata) presented a resolution of the municipal council of the parish of St. Hubert which included the statement, "Canada is not in a position, on account of her debt, to send expeditionary forces; the necessity of which, besides, is not obvious" (*ibid.*, p. 155). The C.C.F. group, while, as already noted, not opposing the declaration of war, definitely opposed an expeditionary force. Mr. M.J. Coldwell, on behalf of this group, read a formal statement including this sentence: "Canada should be prepared to defend her own shores, but her assistance should be limited to economic aid and must not include conscription of man power or the sending of any expeditionary force." (*ibid.*, p. 55). On the other hand, certain members of the Conservative opposition including Mr. H.C. Green (Vancouver South) and Mr. T.L. Church (Toronto - Broadview) demanded a more active policy, the latter inquiring, "Why don't you train and equip an expeditionary force here at once?" (*ibid.*, pp 100-01, 122).

15. From the outset the French-Canadian press in no uncertain terms ranged itself against conscription, certain sections going so far as to advocate non-participation in the war. For example, L'Action Catholique (Quebec) of 6 Sep declared "Le Canada aurait pu adopter une neutralité mitigée très favorable à l'Angleterre" and on 11 Sep wrote "Même sans conscription, le Canada peut se tirer très mal de cette guerre". Closely watching the United States and arguing against active military co-operation with London, this paper on 13 Sep warned of the heavy taxation which would result "si on commet l'imprudence de lever des corps expéditionnaires qu'il faut ensuite maintenir au prix de la conscription ou d'un volontariat plus ou moins forcé". Similarly, Le Devoir (Montreal) on 4 Sep defined its position as "une politique d'exclusive défense territoriale et de bienveillante neutralité à l'endroit de l'Angleterre". Although professing no opposition to volunteers joining the British or French forces, on 11 Sep it sounded the warning "Mais le nom du corps expéditionnaire fait tout de suite lever le spectre de la conscription".

16. Although equally averse to conscription, other sections voiced complete approval of the moderate course adopted by the Government. Bitterly opposing Le Devoir on the grounds that neutrality was impossible, Le Canada (Montreal) of 9 Sep proclaimed that Mr. King had dispelled all doubts and felt assured that there would be neither conscription nor a contingent sent to Europe. Likewise, L'Événement Journal (Quebec) on 7 Sep stated "Jamais, croyons-nous, les chefs actuels du gouvernement n'ont annoncé qu'ils voulaient envoyer des troupes en Europe - volontaires ou conscrits". When the party positions were defined, this paper applauded both the Liberals and Conservatives for declaring themselves opposed to conscription and unreservedly condemned the Social Credit movement. Briefly, then, the French-Canadian press favoured at the best a moderate war effort, entirely

voluntary, and showed definite opposition during the first half of September 1939 to any form of expeditionary force which might lead to conscription.

17. Most English-speaking dailies, on the other hand, refrained from expressing strong opinions on military matters until Parliament had spoken. None of them advocated neutrality, although all appreciated the importance of home defence. Some registered protests at the delay in issuing the official proclamation of a state of war after hostilities had already commenced, but it was clearly recognized that constitutional formalities alone were being observed. Their predominant thought was that national unity must be preserved. Consequently, apart from the vigorous campaign for immediate conscription carried on by the Ottawa Citizen, the tendency was to defer this contentious point until convinced of its necessity. The Vancouver Daily Province of 6 Sep noted that the Canadian Corps Association was urging conscription but felt that it would be better to wait. Even the Globe and Mail (Toronto) of 19 Sep advised the same in answer to many letters calling for its adoption at once. This paper, together with the Gazette (Montreal), later placed tremendous pressure upon the Government to introduce conscription for overseas service.

18. When the Prime Minister first revealed the policy of his Government, however, press criticism was relatively mild. Major wartime issues between the Conservatives and Liberals had not yet appeared, while neither the C.C.F. nor the Social Credit parties controlled large newspapers. The Journal (Ottawa) of 9 Sep found no fault with the announcement except that it could have been made a week before with more effect. The Evening Telegram (Toronto) called for action, not words, while the Vancouver Province wished that Mr. King had given "a little more inspiration and future guidance". The Winnipeg Free Press, ardent western champion of Liberalism, remarked on the other hand that he had struck the very chord most noticeable among the people: "a sober, rational note entirely lacking in hysteria". Feeling that the mistake of sending raw levies overseas would not be repeated, this paper nevertheless assumed that a force would go in due course. The Vancouver Province stressed that there was no immediate need for an infantry contingent. Previously the Globe and Mail had written on 7 Sep "it was obvious that our most important early contribution will be in the air" and the Journal on 8 Sep had remarked "This war will probably be won in the air". All these newspapers heartily approved the policy of consultation with the British Government in order to provide the most effective co-operation.

19. There soon appeared, however, indications of general impatience with the confusion arising from the lack of positive action by Ottawa. The Winnipeg Free Press of 12 Sep took the lead in calling upon the Government to define its military plans and make it clear that there would be an all-out effort including the sending of men overseas if necessary. The Globe and Mail that same day spoke of dissatisfaction, even resentment against its attitude on enlistment and demanded that recruiting should go on. Nevertheless, it was not until after Parliament rose on 13 Sep without a clear-cut statement of policy that serious pressure for an expeditionary force developed. The Gazette of 16 Sep quoted from both the above-mentioned editorials and asked the Government to "provide without delay at least the framework of a force, one or perhaps two divisions, that could be rapidly filled in and dispatched overseas with little or no loss of time". All three papers continued to call for definite objectives in recruiting and Ottawa's Journal on 15 and 18 Sep joined in with forceful demands for the training of a potential expeditionary force. It

is important to note that these papers were not asking for troops to be sent overseas at once but merely that plans be announced and a force mobilized to train in readiness for future use abroad if required.

20. The foregoing is enough to make clear the fact that there was a serious division of opinion in the country from the beginning on the employment of Canadian military forces, and to indicate that the Government could expect to be subjected to severe pressure by advocates of the various points of view as the struggle proceeded.

PART III: THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE ARMY, 1939-41

21. On 19 Sep 39 the public was informed of the decision to organize and train a division to be available as an expeditionary force, with a second division to be made ready. While the English-language newspapers greeted the news with enthusiasm, sections of the French-Canadian press gave it much less favourable publicity. L'Action Catholique that same day had just written "nous ne voyons pas même pour l'instant la nécessité des forces expéditionnaires volontaires". Le Canada of 21 Sep drew attention to the fact that the announcement was placed last in a series made by Mr. Ian Mackenzie before he handed over the portfolio of Minister of National Defence to Mr. Norman McLeod Rogers, and several editors attempted to connect it with Cabinet changes. Nevertheless, the new Minister confirmed on 28 Sep that it was intended to send certain technical units and one of these divisions overseas when required, the other to be kept ready. Two days later all newspapers published the names and home locations of units comprising the overseas division, the policy of basing them upon existing militia units meeting with general approval.

THE WAR IN THE DOLDRUMS

22. Although the point that Canada would send troops abroad had been firmly settled, the time of their dispatch was still unknown. Demanding more definite information, the Journal of 4 Oct enquired whether it was practicable to train the divisions in Canada, particularly under winter conditions and without complete motorized equipment. Its editorial went on to urge that the Government name the divisional commanders and indicate the period of training to be carried out in Canada. Two days later official announcement was made that Maj-Gen A.G.L. McNaughton had been appointed "Inspector-General of Units of the 1st Canadian Division", press reports indicating it was the intention he would assume command when they were assembled. There was also some speculation that if other divisions were sent overseas he probably would become Corps Commander. On 14 Oct the Journal predicted that the 1st Division would proceed overseas within 60 days to complete its training abroad in view of the lack of facilities in Canada. General McNaughton's tour across the country to inspect his units was followed with keen interest, but there was no noticeable pressure to hasten their departure nor to send them directly to a battle front.

23. The public at first could not understand the reason for the discharge or transfer to the Canadian Active Service Force of some 3,800 troops who in the first few weeks of the war had been used to protect vulnerable points such as canals and bridges. Militia units affected naturally felt keen disappointment and in a number of cases men had difficulty in regaining their civilian jobs. To combat murmurs that this was an obvious example

of changing policy, the Minister explained that these troops technically had not been mobilized but as a temporary measure had been placed on active service for this specific purpose until the R.C.M.P. were prepared to assume their task. (Montreal Star, 14 Oct, and Toronto Star, 16 Oct 39). In passing, it is interesting to note an earlier criticism of the Dominion Government by the Toronto Telegram of 21 Sep for refusing to supply guards for industrial plants and installations of provincial and municipal concern. The general principle agreed upon before the war, however, was to employ troops to guard only military establishments and exposed coastal areas. Once this became known, demands for Army assistance subsided noticeably.

24. Although the recruiting records of several of the French-Canadian regiments initially mobilized were remarkably good, all parts of the country showed concern when Premier Maurice Duplessis called an election in Quebec on the basis that the Federal Government was over-riding provincial rights in its war measures. This move was seen as a deliberate attempt to isolate French-Canadians at a critical time before the expeditionary force sailed. In the polling on 25 Oct, however, L'Action Nationale dropped from 76 seats to a mere 16 and the Liberals under Adelard Godbout swept to victory with 67 seats. Credit for this success was mainly attributed to Quebec's representatives in the Federal Cabinet, Messrs Ernest Lapointe and C.G. Power, who while campaigning vigorously reiterated that they would never remain in a Government which would impose conscription. Nevertheless, the Journal of 27 Oct went so far as to say that, because Mr. Duplessis had made the conscription issue his battle-cry, the voting had indicated that Quebec would if necessary give it support. Throughout Canada there were expressions of relief that national unity had been preserved.

25. In contrast to the mixed reception given to the modest Army programme, there was an enthusiastic welcome to the simultaneous announcement on 10 Oct 39 by the Secretary of State for Air (Sir Kingsley Wood) in London and Prime Minister King in Ottawa that Canada had been selected as the advanced training centre for airmen of all parts of the Commonwealth. It was estimated that the scheme would eventually produce 25,000 pilots annually, but there was some delay in getting started while Lord Riverdale's mission to instigate preparations in Ottawa spent several weeks quietly ironing out details. The public soon grew a little restive and, as in the case of the Army, called for further information. One Conservative newspaper, which in September had urged Parliament to adjourn in order to allow ministers to get on with their job, by December was saying "many people are beginning to believe that the business of running a war without Parliament being in session is not particularly good business" (Journal, 11 Sep and 16 Dec 39). On 18 December, however, the Prime Minister was able to announce very complete details of the scheme, which occupied the headlines that day. Meanwhile, in a broadcast that very afternoon, Mr. Winston Churchill (then First Lord of the Admiralty) had referred very briefly to the safe arrival of the 1st Canadian Division in Britain. All English and Canadian dailies of 19 Dec consequently featured the story of Canada's soldiers, who thus regained the favour of public attention.

26. This dramatic news of their arrival overseas was, of course, not at all unexpected. A month before the Montreal Star of 18 Nov had reminisced on the sailing of the 1914 contingent. General McNaughton on concluding his inspection tour had

told the press that his division was "being readied without haste but with thoroughness and all possible despatch" (Gazette and Globe and Mail, 20 Nov 39). At the risk of jeopardizing security, the New York Times on 20 Nov had even printed two pictures of tin-hatted troops aboard a transport vessel with the caption "Members of the Princess Patricia Light Infantry leaving Victoria, B.C., for Vancouver to entrain for an East Coast port, where they will sail for France". This may have been part of the "Marseilles rumour" which the War Office intentionally began to circulate but later stopped (See Preliminary Narrative, The History of the Canadian Military Forces Overseas, 1939-1940, Chap 1, paras 89-90 and 97-100).

27. By 2 Jan 40 the entire 1st Canadian Division had been concentrated in England, but many sections of public opinion at home were far from being content. Insisting that one division of 16,000 partially trained troops was not enough, Ottawa's Conservative paper contended that, in proportion to Britain's three and a half million men who had taken up arms or stood ready to do so, Canada should have 800,000. At that time she actually had under 100,000 and was not even appealing for recruits.

And the Canadian people, The Journal suggests further, don't want to be in this war with limited liability. They realize the vital need of air fighters, and will provide them, but we think they realize as well that there is need for land forces, and would like to give their share of them. Above all, the Canadian people don't relish the role of being a sort of Allied Commissariat kitchen for British and Allied soldiers doing their fighting. That is not their tradition.

(Journal, 3 Jan 40)

28. Expecting to learn more of the Government's plans when Parliament reassembled on 25 Jan 40, members were astounded to hear that a general election would be held at once. This political bombshell had been precipitated by a vote of censure initiated by Premier M.F. Hepburn in the Ontario Legislature accusing the Federal Government of having made "so little effort to prosecute Canada's duty in the war in the vigorous manner which the Canadian people desire" (The Times (London), 14 Mar 40). In presenting reasons for hastening the dissolution, the Prime Minister explained that the life of Parliament had almost expired and, as there would probably be a great offensive on the western front in the spring, it was well to get the general election over before the war "began in earnest". (Debates, op cit, 1940, vol I, p. 7)

29. Although beginning in a spirited manner, this wartime election soon became almost apathetic in view of the absence of any real issue, the major contending parties all agreeing that the war must be prosecuted with determination and vigour (The Times (London), 28 Mar 40). The Liberals appealed to the country on the basis of national unity in support of a war policy designed to keep the country one. This programme the Conservatives claimed was half-hearted and could only be made effective by a National Government. Both these principal contenders reiterated opposition to conscription for service abroad on the basis that it would jeopardize national unity. The C.C.F. and New Democracy groups similarly maintained the party positions they had defined during the Special Session of 1939, while outright opposition to participation was confined to a sprinkling of Nationalist anti-war candidates in Quebec and an odd Communist.

30. Early in the election campaign there was a great outcry that inadequate equipment had been sent with the Canadian troops overseas (Journal, 19 and 21 Feb 40). To these charges Col J.L. Ralston (then Minister of Finance) ably replied that the 1st Division had sailed with its full complement of machine guns and field artillery in addition to rifles and personal equipment, that it would have practically all its motor transport before reaching France, and that more modern weapons would be substituted as soon as possible (Gazette, 9 Mar 40). Before the end of February the 110th Army Co-operation Squadron R.C.A.F. reached England, the advanced guard of thousands of airmen to proceed overseas. National Defence Headquarters would not disclose total strengths there, but it was estimated that 6,000 ancillary troops had also been dispatched. Government supporters such as the Winnipeg Free Press (23 Mar 40) were therefore able to contrast very favourably what had been done in the first six months with a similar period in 1914. On the whole the public was satisfied to know that the Canadian division was being thoroughly prepared before being assigned a front-line position.

31. Polling results on 26 Mar gave a sweeping majority to the Liberals, who won 178 seats out of a total of 245, leaving the Conservatives with barely 40 and the C.C.F. and New Democracy with less than ten apiece. According to The Times (London) of 28 Mar the decisive factor probably was that Canadians preferred to continue the war under a Cabinet of men they knew and had seen at work than turn to an anonymous Administration. It was a mandate given at a stage in the so-called "phony war" before the fever had begun to rage and a mild tonic seemed an adequate prescription.

32. The election excitement had barely subsided, however, when the spring military offensive predicted by the Prime Minister burst forth, initiated not by the Allies in France but by the northward thrust of the Germans through Denmark and into Norway on 9 Apr 40. Early rumours that Canadian troops were being sent to oppose them there were mildly discredited by sources in Ottawa, who still foresaw the 1st Division going to France and the 2nd training in Canada (Montreal Star, 16 Apr 40). The Ottawa Journal of 25 Apr, on the other hand, maintained "the enemy could never be beaten at the ca' canny pace of Canada's war effort" and openly asserted there could be no better spearhead than the Canadian division against Germany's occupation army in Norway. In the face of official silence overseas, the London newspapers, the Canadian Press Association, Reuters news agency, and even the B.B.C. repeatedly insisted that at least some Canadians had entered the battle there, despite the denial of Mr. Power (Acting Minister of National Defence). Not until 21 May did Canada learn how near her troops had been to sailing for Trondhjem, the full story being cabled later by the Canadian Press on 12 Jun telling of the chain of mishaps to the designated force commanders.

33. During these momentous days Mr. Rogers was on a visit to Britain and France for consultation regarding the administration and employment of Canadian forces. Appreciating the need for a constant supply of reinforcements if Canada put "three or four divisions into the front line", the Globe and Mail of 29 Apr speculated that before victory came half a million Canadians might go overseas. On the eve of his departure for home, Mr. Rogers failed to indicate whether Canadian troops were destined for France but said they had always served where they could make the greatest possible contribution (Gazette, 9 May 40). Whatever plans he had formulated, however, a drastic change became necessary with the violent ending of the period of the doldrums.

DUNKIRK

34. Hitler's blitzkrieg launched upon the Low Countries on 10 May 40 caused most nations of the world to look with dismay upon their home defences. Canada was not alone in speeding up her war effort and contemplating probable invasion if France and Britain fell. While the battle of Flanders raged, the Ottawa Citizen of 15 May emphasized the might of the German military machine and charged that through a weak armament and munitions programme in the past Canada was "unready to hold any substantial part of the defence lines". Immediately the new Parliament met on 16 May the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. R.B. Hanson (York-Sunbury), criticized both the equipment and the recruiting policy for the forces (Debates, 1940, p. 34). In announcing Government policy, Mr. King stated that a Canadian Corps would be formed in the field, also that the 2nd Division was to be sent overseas and a third division raised for service at home or abroad (ibid, pp 42-47). These measures had in most part been anticipated by the press and met with general approval. Describing them in greater detail during discussion of the War Appropriation Bill, Mr. Rogers on 26 May said that the formation of a Canadian Corps had been under consideration for some time and "was not prompted only by the events of recent weeks" (ibid, p. 97).

35. Among critics who followed him, Major Alan Cockeram (York South) demanded that "neither the first nor the second division should be allowed to enter any zone of battle until the Canadian people and the Department of National Defence are satisfied that sufficient trained reserves are on hand to reinforce them" (ibid, p. 106). Mr. T.L. Church called for mobilization of "all the militia in Canada for all military districts from coast to coast" and the formation of a home guard of returned men (ibid, p. 135). Messrs H.C. Green and G.S. White (Hastings-Peterborough) supported his request, while Mr. J.R. MacNicol (Davenport) said he was far from being satisfied, after eight and a half months of war, with not having a battalion in France, an air squadron at the front. On the other hand, Mr. L. Lacombe (Laval-Two Mountains) still maintained that a financial effort was sufficient, and Mr. J.S. Roy (Gaspé) held that materials rather than men should be sent into battle. Mr. A.R. Adamson (York West) felt that recruiting of a third division was completely inadequate, and he suggested that the special aptitudes of Canadians called for a railway corps and tank corps as well as opportunities to employ hardrock miners and mountain ski troops. During the debate, several speakers requested an extension of the protection offered by the armed forces: Mr. D.G. Ross (St. Paul's) to guard the hydro-electric system in Ontario; Mr. N.J.M. Lockhart (Lincoln) the Welland Canal; Mr. C.E. Johnston (Bow River) the Turner Valley oil fields.

36. On 23 May Mr. Rogers announced that it had been decided to establish a force to be known as "Veterans Home Guards", which would consist initially of 12 companies and be concerned mainly with the protection of military property. The following day the Germans reached Calais and the fighting abroad increased in intensity. Further emergency measures for the immediate expansion of Canada's military and air forces were told to the Commons on 27 May. In addition to the 3rd Division and corps troops, it was proposed to recruit all the rifle battalions of a fourth division. Dr. H.A. Bruce (Parkdale) asked for six divisions instead of four, while Mr. Adamson and Major Cockeram emphasized the importance of tanks. Mr. Rogers explained to the House, however, that Canada had not sent tank battalions overseas because according to the existing establishment, they were neither div-

isional nor corps troops but army troops, and therefore were to be supplied by the British, at least until problems of production in Canada could be worked out. The Canadian Commons passed its \$700,000,000 War Appropriation Bill on 29 May, at the time when the situation abroad looked extremely black. As the Germans hammered the British and French retreating through Dunkirk, the world at large saw, perhaps for the first time, in its true perspective the plight of Britain.

37. Through these days of crisis there was considerable pressure placed upon the Government to recall General McNaughton to take charge of Canada's war effort. The proposal was instigated by the Rev A.H. McGreor, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Bishop's College, whose school General McNaughton had attended (Gazette, 25 and 28 May 40). Dr. Bruce was the chief spokesman in Parliament, while the sportsman Connie Smythe met with an enthusiastic response from the Canadian Corps Association when he forcefully renewed the demand at a mass meeting in Toronto. At this time the Canadian Legion was also active in urging conscription of men, wealth and industry under energetic federal leadership.

38. The Canadian public recognized, however, that there was a big task for General McNaughton in the United Kingdom, where some 335,000 Allied troops rescued through Dunkirk had to be re-equipped and reorganized to defend the motherland. Meanwhile the Canadians were almost the only formed unit there ready to fight, Mr. King disclosing to the House on 4 Jun that they had "on more than one occasion" been under orders to join the B.E.F. and French armies in the battle of Flanders. He went on to say that Canadian troops had already been sent to the West Indies and to hint of "other dispositions requested and being met" (Debates, 1940, vol I, p. 483). Somewhat mystified by the failure of Canadians to reach the front, the general public nevertheless was relieved to learn that no lives had been sacrificed.

39. Evidence of strong public feeling during the critical days of June 1940 was given to Parliament by Mr. J.H. Harris (Danforth), who presented on 6 Jun a petition endorsed by a meeting of upwards of 11,000 Toronto citizens protesting "Canada has not exerted her full strength in man power or material resources" and urging the Government to put forth every possible effort. Among those attending the meeting were aldermen and school trustees, members of the legislature, representatives of Liberal and Conservative associations, service clubs, business men's and ratepayers associations, and certain east end churches. (Ibid, pp 555-56). The following day Mr. Rogers announced recruits would be sought for four forestry companies and four railway construction companies for service overseas, whereupon Mr. Hanson commented, "That is good; we are getting action at last" (ibid, p. 611).

40. Immediately upon learning that Signor Mussolini had openly allied himself against Britain and France, Canada acted promptly in proclaiming a state of war against Italy as from 10 Jun 40. All parties united in passing the Prime Minister's motion to that effect, Mr. Hanson seconding it and Messrs Coldwell and Blackmore speaking in support. Mr. Church alone voiced a protest on the grounds that it savoured of separationism. The House adjourned immediately afterward due to the death that morning of Mr. Rogers in a flying accident. The country as a whole greeted with approval the announcement by the Prime Minister in the Commons on 13 Jun that Col. J.L. Ralston would be the new Minister of National Defence.

41. The new turn the war had taken caused certain members of Parliament to become very apprehensive of attacks by Germans or Italians from across the United States border. Mr. Church on 12 Jun asked not only that the militia be called out to guard public utilities but that there be national service and an immediate national register. He stated that the Canadian Corps Association meeting in Toronto[#] had demanded those steps, and he also made reference to Italian race riots in Toronto.

42. It soon became obvious to all that France was rapidly disintegrating between the blows of the Germans and the Italian menaces. On 14 Jun Mr. King pledged to her Canada's unwavering support by endorsing Mr. Churchill's message to M. Reynaud, but three days later he announced that it had become necessary to withdraw those troops of the 1st Canadian Division which had actually landed in France. On 18 Jun he warned that the British Isles were threatened with invasion "not as a remote possibility but as an impending actuality", and he stated that "additional measures both for the assistance of Britain and for the defence of Canada" were essential. In that connection, he announced, Canadian armed forces were already in Newfoundland, the West Indies and Iceland; recruiting would be intensified; there would be a national registration of man power; and the Government would seek at once "special emergency powers to mobilize all our human and material resources for the defence of Canada". (*Ibid*, p. 854). These proposals were immediately welcomed by the leaders of the Conservative, C.C.F. and Social Credit parties.

43. The debate on the National Resources Mobilization Act, 1940, lasted for three days; discussion centred very largely about clause 3, which prohibited powers to effect compulsory military service from being exercised "outside of Canada and the territorial waters thereof". From the beginning Mr. Church assailed the measure on the grounds that it was inadequate and provided only for home defence; he claimed that Canada should already have an army of 600,000 and should not be waiting for the enemy to strike at her. Mr. Pouliot, on the other hand, said he had consulted his electors and found them in favour of enlistment, some even of conscription, only if for home defence. A strong stand in favour of limited participation was taken by Messrs W. Lacroix (Quebec-Montmorency), Pierre Gauthier (Portneuf), and J.S. Roy. In contrast, full mobilization was demanded by Mr. W.A. Fraser (Northumberland, Ont). The Ministers of Justice and of Public Works, Messrs E. Lapointe and P.J.A. Cardin, both spoke in support of the bill, while the Prime Minister repeatedly emphasized the gravity of the situation abroad. Further opposition was encountered, nevertheless, from Messrs M. Raymond, L. LaCombe, and A.A. Lapointe (Matapedia-Matano), while there was also considerable criticism on economic grounds from C.C.F. and Social Credit members. When Mr. Church objected that recruiting would not be helped by sending contingents to Iceland or Greenland, the Prime Minister replied that he anticipated no difficulty in getting volunteers for Iceland or any other territories adjacent to Canada.

44. The Bill passed on 20 Jun; one day later France accepted the German peace terms and the British Commonwealth was left to fight on alone. At this timely moment Australian and New Zealand troops arrived in Britain and the defenders there were further encouraged by the arrival of the fourth Canadian contingent. No one expected that they would remain there over two years without clashing with the enemy.

See para 37 above.

THE CANADIAN CORPS ON GUARD, 1940-41

45. The press of Canada were greatly pleased with the announcement on 15 Jul 40 that General McNaughton had been promoted to command a new corps consisting of the 1st Canadian Division with its ancillaries and certain British formations. Among other newspapers, the Montreal Star of 15 Jul expressed the hope that when a sufficient number of Canadians reached England they would "relieve British units now in General McNaughton's command, and eventually form a wholly Canadian Corps". Public opinion at that particular time, however, was uncertain whether the overseas force or home defence should have priority.

46. On assuming his new portfolio on 5 Jul, Col Ralston had at once announced a number of sweeping changes at N.D.H.Q. declared by the Winnipeg Free Press of 6 Jul to have been demanded by the public for months. The most important was the return of Maj-Gen H.D.G. Crerar and his appointment almost immediately as Chief of the General Staff, a move which the Leader of the Opposition said had been expected although not quite so soon. General Crerar the next month wrote to General McNaughton as follows:

I found, as I had expected, that the pressure of public opinion to 'get on with the war' had developed to such a height that there was a tendency on the part of the Government in general, and this Department in particular, to go in all directions at highest possible speed. While I am very anxious to put every ounce we can into the prosecution of this war, I am equally keen to see that effort developed in a balanced and co-ordinated manner.

((H.S.) CC7/Crerar/6: Crerar to McNaughton, 8 Aug 40)

47. In Parliament both Messrs Hanson and Coldwell asked for a general discussion of the Government's war effort, particularly how many divisions were to go overseas and what was being done about the defence of the Atlantic coast. The Minister replied by a lengthy statement to the House on 29 Jul in which he announced the formation of an Atlantic Command to include the Canadian forces in Newfoundland and predicted that Canada would shortly have overseas a corps of two complete divisions with ancillary troops. Stating that the 3rd and 4th Divisions would continue to train and be equipped at home, he foresaw no further immediate mobilization of C.A.S.F. units. This speech directly embodied the policy advocated by General Crerar, who remarked in his letter to General McNaughton: "It has been widely acclaimed editorially and, as a result, it would seem that public confidence in the Department is now being created" (*ibid*). Among Conservative papers, The Victoria Colonist of 31 Jul strongly endorsed the promise of offensive action but urged that more than two divisions should be prepared to take part. The Ottawa Journal of 30 Jul also found the plan right in principle but considered it weak in conception because it would not provide more men for the front line overseas. The Vancouver Province that same day emphasized on the other hand that more men should not be called up until equipment became available.

48. After Headquarters of the 2nd Canadian Division had arrived in England early in August 1940, the press in the next few

months gave many hints that the two divisions there would soon be united in a Canadian Corps. The Gazette on 28 Aug spoke of this taking place before the big offensive against Germany and Italy forecast by Mr. Churchill for 1941 or 1942. The Globe and Mail during September repeatedly mentioned the desire for a Canadian Corps abroad to show that the nation was wholly in the war. Continuing his letter to General McNaughton, the C.G.S. wrote on 9 Sep:

On my return, I found that as a result of a rather panicky outlook, the tendency here was to look inward and think in terms of strictly 'continental' defence. I believe that I have been able to correct that defeatist attitude to a considerable extent both in the War Cabinet and publicly and, as a result, during the last month or so the accent has been placed on the 'fortress Island' being our first line of defence rather than the Atlantic seaboard.

(Ibid)

Subsequently, in addressing the Canadian Club of Ottawa on 23 Oct, General Crerar gave public expression to his view that "The major issue confronting Canada in particular and North America in general is to win this war in Europe and so prevent any possibility of this continent finding itself in an isolated and exposed situation" (File CC7/Crerar/6 contains a copy of this address).

49. Establishment of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence in August 1940 had created a much more confident feeling among the Canadian public. The Gazette of 21 Aug linked it with the lease of Atlantic bases to the United States and spoke of "a broad co-operative marshalling of forces against the common enemy"; a week later the same paper under the caption "Defence Board Means Business" wrote that "great expectations" had been created. Closer relations between Japan and Germany having brought fears for the safety of the Pacific Coast as well as the Atlantic, the formation of a Pacific Command was similarly welcomed.

50. Meanwhile, a great deal of reliance was placed upon the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme, Mr. Power having told the Commons on 28 Jul that the United Kingdom stated it regarded this as Canada's greatest contribution. In a broadcast several months later, Mr. Vincent Massey (Canadian High Commissioner in London) said that nothing was more impressive nor likely to be more effective (The Times (London), 19 Nov 40). The Army seemed destined to play a waiting role, although there were numerous hints that consideration was being given to sending Canadians to the Near East and the Toronto Telegram of 2 Nov reported "Canadian troops are said to be straining on the leash".

51. When Parliament reassembled in November 1940, Mr. Hanson enquired what was Canada's attitude towards Mr. Churchill's proposal for an offensive campaign in 1942 or 1943 to free France and the Low Countries and whether there would be sufficient reinforcements and new units to implement this. The Prime Minister replied that at various pre-war conferences it had been agreed that the primary duty of each part of the Commonwealth was to provide for its own defence. Col Ralston suggested that the danger of Britain being invaded was thought to be at an end for the year but might be renewed in the spring; he stated that land operations in the Mediterranean could be expected but his own forecast was that the year 1941 would continue to be largely defensive.

Warning that troops must be thoroughly equipped and have "a very great reserve" before being sent to the Mediterranean, Mr. A.R. Adamson therefore urged Canada to send overseas "a large, well-prepared striking force" (Debates, 1941, vol 1, pp 160 and 162).

52. The news was not at all unexpected when the formation of the Canadian Corps was announced in Canada on Christmas Eve 1940. It was a source of considerable satisfaction, however, to know that the 2nd Division had progressed so far in its training and to learn that with the arrival overseas of the eighth contingent on 25 Dec it was up to strength. Although no foreign assignment had been allotted to the Canadians other than the detachment of Royal Canadian Engineers tunnelling at Gibraltar, it was confidently anticipated that the Corps as a whole would be given a most important role if an invasion of England should be attempted.

53. In a broadcast on 2 Feb the Prime Minister first made public the Army programme for 1941, which called for the dispatch overseas of another infantry division, an armoured division, an army tank brigade and large numbers of corps troops. Together with simultaneous Navy and Air Force expansion, it was praised as an "all-out effort" by Grant Dexter in the Winnipeg Free Press of 12 Feb. An editorial in the same issue, however, criticized the "big army" plan if it meant diverting funds from air training and industrial production. The Gazette of 4 Feb, then campaigning strongly for a coalition government, termed the plans for increased production and simultaneous expansion of the forces "a sprawling programme rather than a planned programme", adding "Incidentally, we are to have a military establishment which we were told not so long ago would not be needed". The announcement nevertheless provided additional arguments to refute charges made against Canada at that time by certain United States newspapers protesting against lend-lease (Globe and Mail, 14 Feb, and Journal, 15 Feb 41). In the Canadian press generally, however, it was somewhat overshadowed by the statement made on 3 Feb concerning the change in compulsory military training from the 30-day basis to four months. Both the Montreal Star of 4 Feb and the Ottawa Journal of 5 Feb hailed this as a wise and courageous step.

54. When Parliament reassembled on 17 Feb the Prime Minister expressed his agreement with Mr. Churchill that it would be a "waiting year" and intimated that it would very unlikely witness a major attack upon enemy-occupied Europe. Conservative newspapers that ~~with~~ were most outspoken in criticizing the Federal Government for a lack of drive in the national war effort[¶]. In speaking on the War Appropriation Bill for \$1,300,000,000, the Leader of the Opposition remarked, "The fact is that Australia is on the field of battle, and Canada is not" (Debates, 1941, p. 838). On that statement being denied by the Prime Minister, Mr. Hanson pointed to Libya and the few men training in England. A few days later, in acclaiming victories of General Wavell's British and Australian forces based in Egypt, he said: "I have no doubt that the personnel of the Canadian divisions in England would have welcomed an opportunity to participate" (Ibid, p. 942).

55. When the Army programme came to be discussed in the Commons during March, Col Ralston emphasized that it had been

¶ Toronto Telegram 5 and 6 Feb; Journal, 6 Feb; Globe and Mail 7 Feb; Gazette, 17 Feb; and The Financial Post, 22 Feb 41.

worked out in agreement with British authorities. Mr. Hanson, referring to the four-month training plan, asked:

Why, then, has the government not had the courage to go the whole way and retain the absolute right to utilize the services of these men for the defence of Canada over there, after giving them four months' training and spending the huge sums of money that have been spent on their military education?

(Debates, 1941, vol II, p. 1558)

The Gazette of 15 Mar termed these words "guarded language" advocating conscription for overseas. Before the War Appropriation was finally approved on 25 Mar, the Minister was subjected to a barrage of criticism from the Conservatives, who continued their attack when a supplementary bill was introduced the following day. Raising the question of the position of the Canadian Army overseas with reference to the British Army, Mr. Grote Stirling (Yale) asked pointedly, "Is the decision with regard to where the Canadian forces may be used entirely at the discretion of this Government?" (Ibid, p. 2004). Col Ralston replied by reading and explaining passages from the Canadian Order-in-Council of 3 Apr 40 whereby Canadian forces were serving together with British forces and under certain conditions were or could be detailed to act in combination. In answer to queries, he stated definitely that "the decision as to the employment of troops outside the United Kingdom is a matter for the Canadian Government", also that its approval had been given with regard to Norway and France in 1940 and would be required for Northern Ireland or Iceland (ibid, p. 2049).

56. That month there were many rumours that Canadians had accompanied British troops sent to bolster the defences of Greece (Globe and Mail, 19 Mar, and Citizen, 2 Apr 41). Ottawa declined to comment on these or to confirm a report by the Associated Press from Spain that Canadian troops were expected to arrive in Gibraltar about the middle of March en route possibly to Libya (Gazette, 15 Mar 41). The first official denial of these rumours that Canadians were going to the Near East was implied in Col Ralston's statement to the House on 1 Apr that they had been sent only to Gibraltar.

57. A momentous change in the situation abroad occurred, however, when on 6 Apr the German Army attacked both Yugoslavia and Greece. Foreseeing that this onslaught marked "the opening in earnest of the 1941 campaign", Mr. King predicted that the Balkan campaign may well be the prelude to a great battle for the whole Mediterranean basin" (Debates, 1941, vol III, pp 2196-97). Mr. Hanson at once asked "whether any consideration has been given to Canadian participation in the battle in the near east?", but the Prime Minister replied that "the disposition of troops is a matter which come pretty much exclusively within the purview of the high command of Great Britain" (ibid).

58. Events did not go well and expressions of concern soon arose in the newspapers, Toronto's Liberal organ writing:

Reverses in Greece and North Africa and the intensified spring blitzkrieg over Britain have been followed in Ontario by renewed demands for conscription for overseas service. These demands are voiced by a section of the press, and no doubt reflect public sentiment to at least some substantial degree.

(Toronto Star, 21 Apr 41)

The editorial went on to observe that the presence of Australian and New Zealand troops in Africa and Greece had given rise to speculation "whether Canada should have a greater force overseas, serving in Great Britain if they are needed there, or in other parts of the world if they can so be of use to Britain's cause". It noted that Canada's programme was said to be meeting Britain's requirements "to the letter", but added:

If, however, as a result of developments, Britain at a later date needs more men from Canada than those Canada has now arranged to send, public opinion will justify the securing and dispatch of these additional troops. The method of securing them, if they are not secured by voluntary enlistment, will then become an issue.

(Ibid)

The Globe and Mail on 22 Apr voiced a definite demand for more recruits and "a much larger striking force than at present contemplated". Col Ralston replied by announcing on 26 Apr that there was still no need for conscription for service overseas but that the trainees completing their four-months period would be retained for service in Canada. At the same time he denied a published report that Canada had asked for United States troops to be sent here to allow Canadians to proceed overseas. (New York Times, 27 Apr 41). The following day the first representative group of the Canadian Armoured Corps reached England.

59. Immediately Parliament reassembled on 28 Apr, Mr. Hanson charged that the campaign for recruits had failed. This Col Ralston vigorously denied, at the same time announcing that there would be a three-months drive with assistance to be sought from committees of citizens. During the debate on the budget, however, Dr. H.A. Bruce made a direct demand on 12 May for "selective compulsory enlistment" for service "wherever the need is urgent" (Debates, 1941, p. 2729). The Minister of National Defence at once intervened to say that this was a distinct blow against the call he had formally issued just the day before for 32,000 volunteers. Several speakers joined in before the main topic was resumed.

60. The newspapers gave generous support to the drive, and the Minister remained optimistic regarding its success. Speaking for Liberals of the Pacific coast, however, The Vancouver Sun of 12 Jun bemoaned the fact that British Columbia, the province where there was the widest demand for conscription, was the worst failure. It warned, "Thus, by relying on the ultimate effect of conscription, we are probably damaging the voluntary recruiting campaign". That same day Major Cockeran charged in the House that there was unsatisfactory training, headquarters inefficiency, and a lack of essential equipment for forces in Canada. Col Ralston and the Prime Minister replied that the struggle centred on Britain and Canada was every month sending her more defenders. The latter added, "We have made known to all the world that our forces overseas are ready to go, and that we are equally ready to have them go wherever their services may count for most" (Debates, 1941, p. 3932). General satisfaction with this was expressed by Montreal's Conservative daily in an editorial entitled "To Fight Wherever Needed", which contended that "it has been more or less a secret up till now, and the inaction of these troops has been a source of public worry". To this paper it was now perfectly clear that no "constitutional or statutory impediments stood in the way of the British High Command in the event of a desire to use this force in some other

theatre of war". Moreover, it could now be taken for granted that, when all four divisions had been assembled and sufficiently trained in England, all four would be available "wherever service may be needed for the safety of the Empire" (Gazette, 14 Jun 41). Another Conservative paper, The Daily Colonist (Victoria) of 20 Jun, complained that the Government seemed to have no definite plans for the 4th Division, which had been organized for over a year as the result of "the pressure of public opinion because of the gravity of affairs in Europe".

61. The previous month the C.G.S. had written to the Corps Commander in England that equipment continued to be the limiting factor with regard to the size of the Army. Mentioning Brens, rifles, tanks and guns, he said:

I am constantly being pressed to mobilize further divisions but so far have succeeded in holding our Army expansion programme in some balance with the prospect of receiving equipment on which they can train and with which they can subsequently fight.

(CC7/Creerar/6: Creerar to McNaughton,
19 May 41)

Continuing, he advised General McNaughton that he felt it would be "in the interests of the Corps, and indeed of the country, if you can arrange to secure Canadian representation" in some of the Commando raids. His argument was as follows:

Although the public here realize the vitally important role the Canadian Corps is playing in the United Kingdom, there is a not unnatural desire to see the Canadians in the headlines these days by some demonstration of their fighting abilities.

(Ibid)

Whereas the autumn and winter had provided airmen with plenty of action, giving added impetus to the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme, for soldiers it was mainly a case of constantly guarding against an attack which never came. Even by spring 1941 the Canadian public was beginning to show a certain impatience with this unspectacular role for their Army.

PART IV: THE GROWTH OF PUBLIC DEMAND FOR ACTION BY THE CANADIAN ARMY

HITLER ATTACKS RUSSIA

62. Land warfare received renewed emphasis, however, when Germany attacked Russia on 22 Jun 41. Within a week Col Ralston told the press that provision would be made for women to serve in the forces and for the recall of men who had completed their 30 days' training (Montreal Star, 27 Jun 41). Nevertheless, the Prime Minister on a speaking tour of the West emphasized that his Government had no intention of adopting conscription for overseas, basing his stand directly on the issue of national unity. The Toronto Star of 28 Jun pointed out the

danger to the recruiting drive from various newspapers aligning themselves for or against conscription, although its own editorial included the sentence "The Star believes that conscription is the fairest way of raising men for overseas service". Premier Godbout of Quebec was insistent that conscription would smash national unity (Montreal Star, 21 Jul 41). On the other hand, the Canadian Corps Association at a meeting of 2000 in Toronto pressed for decisive action, its president (Lt-Col C.E. Reynolds) openly accusing the Prime Minister of seeking before the war an assurance from Mr. Neville Chamberlain that no Canadian expeditionary force was expected by Britain (Ottawa Citizen, 30 Jul 41). In view of the many charges and counter-charges at a very critical stage of the war, the Minister of National Defence was happy to be able to announce early in July that the recruiting campaign had netted 107 per cent of its objective.

63. The Army policy was being subjected to severe attack at this time in a series of highly inflammatory articles published by the Globe and Mail beginning 21 Jun 41 under the title "War Problems Affecting Canada".²² Based upon the theme that Canada's military methods were woefully outmoded, they called for abandonment of plans to train large bodies of infantry and heavy field artillery and for concentration upon light, compact mechanized units to be trained by realistic mass-manoeuvres in Canada. Over a period of two months beginning 21 Jun, there were in all 18 articles said to have been prepared "with aid of consultations with recognized students of military science". Identifying Lt-Col George Drow (then Leader of the Conservative Opposition in Ontario) as their author, General Crerar wrote to General McNaughton of his difficulties from this external pressure.

In recent weeks, mainly for political reasons, and inspired to some extent by speeches and articles of certain people who should, or do, know better, there has developed a degree of public impatience with the unspectacular, but most necessary, activities of our Basic, Advanced, Trades and Officers Training Centres, and of my insistence on thorough section, platoon and Company, etc training being carried out before the more spectacular unit and formation tactical exercises are undertaken. There have been suggestions that Training Centres are ineffective and unnecessary...

((H.S.) CC7/Crerar/6: Crerar to McNaughton, 26 Jun 41. See also Crerar to the Minister, 27 Jun, and dictated notes by Crerar on articles of 15 and 16 Jul 41)

The Corps Commander replied with a cable (intended for publication) emphasizing the importance of individual training to the soldier and the value of "schools", also stressing the co-operation existing between Corps H.Q. and N.D.H.Q. (ibid: Tel GS 1410, McNaughton to Crerar, 18 Jul 41). In expressing his appreciation, General Crerar wrote:

As you, of course, realize the Canadian Army is more vulnerable to political attack than the other two Services for the simple reason that owing to factors which none of us can control the Canadian Corps has been tied down to a passive defensive role in the

* (H.S.) 000.5(D1) contains articles 1,2,3,4,5,10,11,12,15,16, 17 and 18 of this series.

United Kingdom and has thus been unable to satisfy the public in its demand for sensational action.

(Ibid: Crerar to McNaughton, 11 Aug 41)

Meanwhile, the Financial Post of 2 Aug endorsed those articles in renewing its demand for General McNaughton to take charge at home while the Edmonton Journal joined in the criticism of army training.*

64. In the face of these attacks, the arrival overseas on 2 Jul of the 1st Canadian Army Tank Brigade, a formation unheard of six months before and then not even in the Army programme, was hailed by the Defence Department as a "spectacular achievement" (Citizen, 3 Jul 41). When a month later units of the 3rd Division began to arrive also, The Times (London) of 6 Aug noted that in his speech of welcome General McNaughton "said that the time was drawing near when the Canadian forces now assembled in Great Britain would be usefully employed, and he emphasized the word 'usefully'". Indicating that home defence was not being neglected, Col Ralston that week announced that three brigade groups of the 6th Division would be mobilized for active service and trained with the 4th Division. He added that "all necessary defence precautions" were being taken on Canada's Pacific Coast "because of the situation in the Orient". (Montreal Star, 8 Aug 41). Proclaiming this as encouraging news, the Gazette of 9 Aug wrote, "Facing both ways, Canada needs all the strength she can muster". The series of articles on "War Problems Affecting Canada" concluded on 16 Aug with the statement that many obstacles had been removed.

65. All sections of the press approved the action of Prime Minister King in flying to England late in August 1941, just after Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt had held their Atlantic conference. With the Russians then being pushed back in the Ukraine, there were many reports of a British invasion of the continent. It was generally believed this would come about the following year, with the Canadian troops playing a part, although newspapers such as the Ottawa Journal of 21 Aug queried whether the existing voluntary system would provide adequate forces trained and ready as reinforcements. The United States had that summer aided in garrisoning Iceland, yet for the Canadian Army there seemed to be no objective other than building up the Corps in Britain for an indefinite task at an unknown date.

66. Such conditions undoubtedly were largely responsible for the wide prominence given to the incident at the Aldershot Sports Meet of 23 Aug. The Canadian Press despatch by R.K. Carnegie describing the interruptions which occurred there said "mixed cheers and boos" greeted Prime Minister King and offered this comment:

Some of the boos seemed to have been the Canadian troops' way of indicating that they are a bit weary of 'watchful waiting' in Britain and over-anxious to get into the field of battle.

(Gazette, 25 Aug 41)

* The latter's editorial was reprinted by the Ottawa Citizen, 2 Aug 41.

The point was driven further home by the following account of the reaction to Mr. King's words when he spoke of taking back to Canada his impression of the spirit of the men.

These remarks were the signal for a sharp outburst of boos, and Mr. King countered after a moment's hesitation with: 'I gather from the applause that many of you are impatient and would rather be engaged in more active operations than you are today'.

The response to this was unmistakable. There were loud cheers, whistling and applause, and the Prime Minister shouted into the microphone: 'That is the spirit to which I was referring'.

(Ibid)

It was also said that a "warm reception" had been planned by some soldiers, who argued that the Canadians should have been given a place alongside the Australians in the Eastern campaign and that conscription for overseas should be introduced.

67. No mention of any unpleasantries was made in the English papers except the Evening Standard of 25 Aug, which carried a Montreal despatch stressing that the booing was a lark but pointing out that "what may be interpreted as a gesture of disrespect is probably a sign that the men are weary of inactivity because some of them have now been overseas for almost two years without seeing any action". Two days later The Daily Telegraph reported that in Canberra a Labour member, Mr. Conclan, had asked the Australian Army Minister why Canadian troops were not employed in the Middle East, adding "Our troops are always in action".

68. Mr. King's subsequent addresses to the troops on 26 Aug were reported by the Globe and Mail of 28 Aug to have "effectively disposed" of rumours that the Canadian Government had refused consent for its Army to fight in the Mediterranean. Publicity was given through The Times (London) of 27 Aug to Mr. Churchill's assurance to Mr. King that Canadians had been kept deliberately in the United Kingdom because the British Government regarded it as the citadel of liberty. This was re-emphasized by Mr. Churchill's luncheon speech at the Mansion House on 4 Sep when, in expressing heartfelt sympathy with the Canadian Corps for having to remain as guardians of Britain, he praised the part it had played as "second to none".

69. Public attention was directed back to the Aldershot incident by a speech in the Canadian House of Commons on 11 Nov 41 when Mr. J.F. Pouliot remarked that "the young fools" that made some noise when the Prime Minister visited then ignored the fact that if they were still alive, if they had not been killed in the Dunkirk retreat, it was because of the very wise and patriotic recommendation" of Prime Minister King to General McNaughton (Debates, 1941-42, vol IV, p. 4133). On later denying the implications of this statement, Mr. King said that it was General McNaughton who had given the assurance that lives would not be needlessly wasted and for that reason had not taken his men across to Dunkirk in 1940. With regard to the Aldershot demonstration, the Prime Minister went on to explain that even before he reached England there was being spread among the Canadian troops a rumour that he was responsible for keeping them

* Mr. Pouliot later explained that he meant "fool" as the translation of "gamin", a French word he claimed meant a noisy person (Montreal Star, 12 Nov 41)

in Britain. Mr. King felt that Mr. Churchill had effectively answered that rumour and that he himself had removed the impression that his Government had placed restrictions upon the movement of Canadians from Britain. In conclusion, he rebuked the Canadian Press for sending out the story when the British newspapers and other news services did not feel it necessary to do so. (Ibid, p. 4430). The management of the Canadian Press replied with a statement asserting it was satisfied that its report of the occurrence was accurate and fair, and the matter rested there.

70. The whole incident had a significant part in the rising public pressure of 1941 seeking action by the Canadian troops overseas to aid Russia and the occupied countries of Europe or the British Army in Africa by participation in some offensive blow. This pressure was answered by a brief venture undertaken with the Royal Navy and a definite assurance that full-scale action would eventually result.

SPITSBERGEN AND THE "DAGGER" STATEMENT

71. In September 1941 news of the raid on Spitsbergen caused among the press in Canada a certain "smacking of the lips", moderated somewhat by reflections that once again Canadians had been denied a chance to do actual fighting. The Montreal Star of 8 Sep spoke of "their appetites whetted by this adventure", while the Globe and Mail on 10 Sep wrote that it "may well be the curtain-raiser to a more ambitious adventure". The latter speculated that Canadians would certainly be included if a British expeditionary force were sent to Petsamo or Murmansk to establish with the Russians there a northern front to draw off the Germans from Moscow or the oil fields of the Caucasus. On the other hand, the Toronto Telegram of 11 Sep said: "The boys are back in Britain, for which their friends will be glad, for while none would grudge them a little action after their two years of tedium, none would wish them a lengthy exile on the lonely islands near the Pole".

72. Shortly afterwards, a group of correspondents received from General McNaughton a significant declaration regarding the role of the Canadian Corps^{*}. Without ruling out the possibility of an invasion of Britain, he said to them:

There will have to be an invasion of the Continent. I don't think you can bring a proud and well-organized nation to her knees with missiles alone. The Canadian Corps is a dagger pointed at the heart of Berlin - make no mistake about this...

(Globe and Mail, 29 Sep 41)

Strossing "fundamental training in Canada" before troops were sent overseas, he remarked that "The possibility of forming an army of two corps cannot be considered until it is known precisely how many men are available" (ibid).

73. Throughout Canada the phrase "a dagger pointed at the heart of Berlin" was echoed by the press in editorials seeking to spur on the country to greater effort. One Western Ontario newspaper wrote:

* The paragraph and the succeeding two are based upon clippings contained in General McNaughton's file PA 3-7, now in possession of the Historical Section.

... it is obvious the Russo-German war has completely changed our plans. Before that conflict broke out there was no sign of an opportunity of attacking Germany from the west. That opportunity has now come in the opinion of those on the scene. Canadian troops will take their place in any such invasion scheme. Present indications are that this hour and action will not be long delayed.

(The Free Press (London, Ont)
27 Sep 41)

This paper along with The Canadian Observer (Sarnia) of 27 Sep even suggested that United States troops might augment the British and Canadians in the drive.

74. On a visit to Britain at this time, Lt-Col George Drew in a B.B.C. broadcast the same day that General McNaughton interviewed the press declared that the shock troops for invasion should be trained in Canada (The St. Catherines Standard, 27 Sep 41). In the flood of editorials linking the two pronouncements, The Kingston Whig-Standard of 29 Sep suggested "it would be something of a land counterpart of the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme". Noting that "no suggestion has been made in this country that a second corps be recruited", the Globe and Mail also of 29 Sep asked, "How soon will it be known whether or not men are available for a second corps if this further strength proves necessary?" The Winnipeg Free Press requested a survey in view of "demands for a larger army" and called for "our best support, with abundance of necessary equipment and with reinforcements for the present, or a larger, corps". The Toronto Star wrote: "There is much to be said for bringing troops to a high state of efficiency in Canada although there are finishing touches which must await their arrival in Britain"; it then went on to encourage "a release of man-power from the non-essential services to the war-machine-producing or fighting services".

75. General McNaughton had described Britain as well situated strategically for an offensive along the European coastline from Gibraltar to Spitsbergen, but several editors speculated that other routes might be chosen with men and materials from Canada and the United States being sent westward as well as across the Atlantic. There were many predictions of crucial battles in the Mediterranean area and particularly in the Middle East, with frequent mention of a possible thrust at Italy or through the Caucasian isthmus to aid the Russians. The Ottawa Journal stood almost alone at that time in contending that "missiles from the air may do more than merely help win the war". Several days later, however, The Beacon-Herald (Stratford) of 6 Oct endorsed its editorial calling for severe bombing as a prelude to, and accompaniment of, invasion. The Toronto Telegram of 30 Sep meanwhile contented itself with delivering a sharp reminder that the danger of invasion to Britain still remained.

76. It is interesting to note how a number of Ontario newspapers linked the remarks of General McNaughton and Col Drew to an unofficial (and quite unfounded) story from occupied France via New York telling of a raid by Canadian soldiers on the French Channel coast in which some 28 German staff officers were captured^{###}.

[#] Edmonton Journal, Brantford Expositor, and The Ontario Intelligencer (Belleville), all of 29 Sep 41.

^{###} Identical editorials in this regard were carried by Sarnia's Canadian Observer, The Galt Reporter, and the Welland-Port Colborne Tribune, all of 30 Sep, and by the Woodstock Sentinel-Review, 2 Oct 41.