

IMPORTANT SPEECHES ON CONSCRIPTION

SIR SAM HUGHES WILL SUPPORT THE BILL, FAILING BETTER MEASURE

Mr. Hugh Guthrie Wholeheartedly for it, Though Desiring Certain Improvements — Former Minister of Militia Charges Intrigue to Slow Down Recruiting — Hon. Mr. Lemieux for Referendum

(Staff Correspondence of The Globe.)

Ottawa, June 19.—From varying standpoints, and in marked contrast of tone, style and argument, Sir Sam Hughes and Mr. Hugh Guthrie made two notable contributions to the conscription bill debate in Parliament today. Both arrived ultimately at the same conclusion: that they would have to support the bill, failing something better. Both criticized some of its provisions and the limitation of its scope purely to military service.

Sir Sam, however, devoted most of his attention to reviewing past mistakes of his former colleagues in regard to the administration of the voluntary system. He handed out Hughesonian thrusts at Sir Robert Borden, Sir Thomas White and the other "meddlers" in the Borden Cabinet who had hampered his own efforts to raise men, and who were responsible, he believed, for the falling down of the voluntary system. He had, too, little use for the bona fides of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who, he declared, was really responsible for the Quebec situation. It was the real speech which Sir Sam was expected to have made early in the session. He charged that there was a deliberate intrigue to slow down on recruiting. He found in the plot some evidences of German gold, as to which he has referred repeatedly before. He made covert references to the influence of the Finance Minister, the Imperial Munitions Board and Lord Shaughnessy. He dilated upon all the varying influences which were brought to bear upon Sir Robert Borden in the spring of 1916 to slow down on recruiting, and he repeated the specific charge made in his Lindsay speech that direct orders were given to retard his recruiting efforts and to change his plans. He quoted instances, and would have quoted a letter from Sir Robert Borden to himself marked "Confidential," only Sir Robert, somewhat testily, declined Sir Sam's invitation to decide whether or not the letter should be made public. Sir Sam evidently has no love for his former leader. He referred to-day to the lack of control in the Cabinet and the "dabbling and meddling" allowed other Ministers in connection with his own department.

In connection with the confidential letter incident Sir Sam declared that he did not think it was necessary to consult Sir Robert in regard to reading letters in the House. "As soon as the Prime Minister treats me in a courteous manner," he said, "I will act in the same way towards him."

After seeking afresh to vindicate his own administration of the Militia Department, and putting all the blame for the present falling down of the voluntary system upon his ex-colleagues, Sir Sam declared his firm adherence to the compulsory system. He believed better results could be achieved under the Militia Act, but failing that, he wanted quick action of some kind, and would stand for the conscription bill and help to make it a success, "if such is possible."

Mr. Guthrie Follows His Conscience.

Mr. Guthrie, in a moderate and earnest appeal for the adoption of the conscription principle, applicable not only to military service, but to all forms of war effort, declared that, in differing from his leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, on the referendum amendment, he was following the patriotic advice of Sir Wilfrid that each man should be guided solely by the dictates of his own conscience. He believed that the present bill did not go nearly far enough, but, like Sir Sam Hughes, urged that it would be far better simply to invoke the Militia Act, with its wider and more drastic powers. In regard to the referendum, he maintained that such a course was merely shirking the duty of Parliament in the hour of crisis. He noted that Sir Wilfrid himself had not previously been an advocate of such a course, as instanced in the case of reciprocity and the naval issue. Mr. Guthrie did not want the question left to the decision of the slackers at home, while the soldiers at the front were busy fighting. In conclusion he made an eloquent appeal for a further attempt of the leaders to get together and make an honest endeavor to achieve a coalition Government, so that conscription might have a fair chance and a general election be avoided.

Mr. Lemieux's Arguments.

Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, in supporting the referendum amendment, followed somewhat along the lines of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's argument, maintaining at the same time that the loyalty of any man who sought first to know the people's will before plunging the country into conscription should not be impugned. He criticized severely the administration of the voluntary system in the Province of Quebec, pointing out that the chief recruiting officer for the Province was a Methodist minister. Suppose, he said, a Jesuit priest had been put in charge of recruiting in

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SIR SAM WILL SUPPORT THE BILL, FAILING BETTER

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Sir Sam Had Urged Compulsory Service

General Sir Sam Hughes rose amid Conservative cheers and in view of expectant, crowded galleries to resume the debate. He began by detailing the pressure he had brought to bear upon Premier Borden to introduce some form of compulsory service. He read the House a letter he had written to Sir Robert Borden, dated Oct. 17, 1916, strongly recommending compulsory service and emphasizing the need at the front.

"I received no answer to that proposition," he commented. "I have never asked a man to go to the front. I have no light to do so. Charge of inducing men to stay."

Storm Brewing in Toronto

Sir Sam Hughes—"The leader of the Government on more than one occasion—take the very day when Mr. McKeown was present—the leader of the Government asked me again if I would not let up on recruiting, and, moreover, the Right Honorable leader of the Government later on pointed out—if he wants the whole story I will be glad to give it—pointed out that there was a tremendous agitation in Toronto over the subject, that he had various deputations from Toronto, and that the Finance Minister had told him there was a storm brewing there, and that agitation was due to the fact that men could not be procured for workers. Mark Irish, Mr. Clavelle, of the Imperial Munitions Board, and others had been insistent in their demands that these men should not be taken. And let me point out that, if the Prime Minister will permit me, I will read letters that will cover the thing, letters from himself."

Conditions Serious in Canada

Sir Sam maintained that conditions in Canada were serious. He declared that certain labor leaders bore "all the earmarks of being in the pay of German agents in the United States." All autocracy was not found under absolute monarchy.

Could Enrol 150,000 in 4 Months

Sir Sam persisted that no drawbacks confronted the enactment of an efficient and workable compulsory service measure, "except such as are created by agitators for special purposes." Given a good bill, 150,000 Canadians troops could be enrolled during the next four months.

German Gold Endangered Canada

Canada had suffered and been endangered by German gold working through United States agencies. William Jennings Bryan, he said, was "not bought by German gold, but influenced by men under German pay."

Slowing Down of Recruiting

"Early in 1916, when Canadian recruiting was at its zenith, whispers were heard from all Canadian centres—the work was skillfully done—driving that workmen could not be found for the various industries and services in Canada. At the time I suspected German gold, and so informed the Prime Minister. The movement grew in force, and the Imperial Munitions Board and the Finance Minister each became anxious and restrictive. Finally the head of the Canadian Pacific Railway was influenced by the agitation, and while the Imperial Munitions Board and the Finance Minister had limited themselves to impressive personal conversations with the Prime Minister and many others, Lord Shaughnessy went further, and not only privately, as did the others, but publicly and openly, proclaimed himself in an address before the Board of Trade at Montreal. Lord Shaughnessy had been regarded in railway circles as a man of sound judgment. He was trained under the greatest railway man of the age, Sir William Van Horne, but he had not the breadth of judgment, had not the force of character, had not the fearlessness in the face of trial, of the great master, Van Horne."

Aliens Replaced Those of British Descent

Sir Sam Hughes—"Whether that was a pat on the back, I do not know. I should point out that these agitators manifested themselves all over the country. The Prime Minister was bombarded with them. He was an easier mark than I. (Laughter.) I would throw them out of my office. I might recite this incident if the Prime Minister will not object: A very distinguished gentleman, head of one of the largest organizations in Canada, the manager of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company, of Sydney, came to the office, and with tears in his voice and some in his eyes, begged us not to enlist and take the men away. I had chanced to visit that institution many years ago, and as I went along the lines of furnaces and down through the coal mines I saw as handsome a lot of fellows as ever

stood inside jackets, Highland Scotchmen, every one of them. I have gone through it in after years and found hundreds of men, not one of whom could speak the English tongue, and almost every one of them an alien enemy in time of war. I asked the Manager, as the Prime Minister may remember, what had become of those gallant fellows that he was now seeking to restrain from enlisting in order that they might shovel coal and handle furnaces in Sydney. I pointed out that his fore-sight should have been exercised in keeping gallant Canadians of British descent in our country, in place of driving them out to the four winds of Heaven and filling their places with aliens from Germany and Austria."

Agitation Very Serious

After a sharp exchange with Mr. A. K. Maclean, who accused the ex-Minister himself of giving orders regarding a certain young man in Halifax, that he be not permitted to enlist, Sir Sam proceeded: "This agitation against recruiting went on and on. The whole thing has been puffed from one end of Canada to the other, by the Prime Minister, yielding to these influences—and I admit they were very serious; I was pestered with them till I threw them out—suggested to me a letting-up in recruiting. It was in vain that I protested and met the fallacious arguments."

Attempt to Penalize Ontario

Sir Sam referred at some length to what he termed the attempt to penalize Ontario, because labor was scarce in Ontario, consequent upon the large enlistment, while it was plentiful in Quebec. He instanced the proposal made in October of last year to erect a large fuse-manufacturing plant at Malsonneuve under the control of the Imperial Munitions Board.

Concerning Idea

"Commenting further on the causes tending to the falling off in voluntary recruiting, Sir Sam noted the growth of the mercenary idea of high pay at one, with easy work and no danger, against low pay at the front, with arduous and extreme danger."

After my return from England

"After my return from England, and after the Meredith-Duff Commission had concluded," continued Sir Sam, "I found myself hampered by being limited in the organization of new battalions."

Sir Sam Wants to Read Some Correspondence

Gen. Hughes then intimated that he would like to read some correspondence dealing with these battalions. As one of the letters from the Prime Minister to himself was marked confidential, he offered to show it to Sir Robert before reading it to the House.

Not Interfering With Factories

"It may be noted, incidentally, that these organizations and agitators, men with affiliated interests, while prominent in patriotic and philanthropic professions, have, nevertheless, not been uninterested in the profits of these factories, hence undoubtedly their intense interest in the labor question."

Indiscreet Language of Recruiting Speakers

"Other contributing causes in the falling off of recruiting are, the abusive tone and language of many speakers at public meetings, calling in 'scornfully all those not enlisting 'strickers,' 'cowards,' 'shirkers,' and those forcing honest men to get their backs against the wall, and become negative instead of positive." Mr. Macdonald—"Speaking at Lindsay, Ontario, on April 28th, regarding the conditions of which he spoke and the agitation, the Honorable gentleman went on to say: 'This unfortunately had an effect upon the Prime Minister. The result was that I was asked in March, 1916, not to press recruiting, and recruiting to-day has been done in Canada for fighting purposes.' Do I understand the Honorable gentleman to say that the statement made by him in Lindsay is quite correct?" Sir Sam Hughes—"I am quite surprised at the Honorable gentleman asking any such question. That speech issued by myself, and I am not in the habit of issuing statements that I do not endorse. I will prove it before I have finished."

Premier Paid No Heed, Says Sir Sam

"The Prime Minister," declared Gen. Hughes, "has stated that he thought that if I wanted to read these letters I should have consulted him. Last October I sent him a letter in regard to compulsory service, but he never took the trouble to reply. When I wrote him about my motion for compulsory service, the Prime Minister did not attend to it. I do not think, therefore, that I need to go out of my way to consult him in regard to reading letters in the House. As soon as the Prime Minister treats me in a courtly manner, I will act in the same way towards him."

The Course of History

Then Sir Sam made this general, but significant, statement: "History records that responsible governments gradually yield to petty bickerings; these to uncontrolled dogmatism, that to autocracy, and to dissolution. In either war or peace, the Cabinet should be properly controlled. No Government could possibly last under a system where each Minister would be privileged to dabble and meddle in the details not only of his own department, but of every other one. The Prime Minister should be familiar with all matters except routine, being informed by the Minister of the particular department. Only great questions of policy should concern the other departments. Non-observance of

his principle, and meddling, hindrance and interference of all other Ministers, besides the Prime Minister, have primarily caused the failure of the voluntary system of enlisting. It is a Prime Minister's right, and his only, to be satisfied by the Minister of Defense in matters other than that of policy."

Reviews His Own Record and Plans

The ex-Minister of Militia then reviewed at some length his own record and plans in regard to recruiting. He declared that his plan for raising battalions, according to the area system, had worked out perfectly satisfactorily until it was interfered with. During the winter of 1915-1916 party interferences began to hinder the work.

Example of Delay in Manitoba

"For example, before I left for England last June I ordered the formation of the battalions in Manitoba. On my return in October they had not yet run the gauntlet of the Treasury Board and Privy Council. The three battalions have never yet been properly completed. Under my system they would have been ready to sail for England by the time they were finally authorized."

Would Advise Enforcement of the Militia Act

After having thus summarized his reasons for the failure of the voluntary recruiting system, Sir Sam declared that his own idea was the best course to pursue now was the enforcement of the Militia Act. To his mind the result would be much better than resorting to the new bill. He did not favor selection by tribunals, but preferred selection by ballot, under the Militia Act.

Act to Penalize Ontario

However, falling anything better, Sir Sam said he would support the Conscription Bill. But he put forward this alternative to a long discussion in Parliament. Meanwhile, while the next few months are being wasted in discussion of the bill, in appointing the machinery to carry out its measures, in hearing tedious judicial appeals, in organizing the training camps, and in conducting the collections, let Canada act, as she can act, under the existing Militia Act, until this bill becomes law.

Mr. Guthrie Supports Bill Wholeheartedly

Mr. Hugh Guthrie, South Wellington, expressed his regret that, in regard to the principle of the military service bill, he found himself "in rather serious conflict with the opinion of my leader and with the opinion of a large majority of my political comrades."

Must Involve More Than Manhood

While in accord with the principle of the bill, Mr. Guthrie expressed his belief that, in many ways, it might be usefully amended and improved. "Conscription, to his mind, must involve more than manhood, more than flesh and blood."

Larger Reserves a Waste

In another letter to Sir Robert, on July 19, Gen. Hughes had commented against the policy of keeping large reserves in Canada and England. It was waste of money and waste of energy, he said, to keep 200,000 men in reserve in England and Canada. They should be in France, relieving the men at the front, and doing actual war service."

Why Postpone Taxing Wealth?

Mr. Guthrie said he believed the people who had applauded the doctrine of conscription meant something different from this Government bill. They meant the conscription of wealth, of industry, of resources, too. "Sir Wilfrid Laurier—"Hear, hear." "Why Postpone Taxing Wealth?" Mr. Guthrie could not understand why so able a man as Sir Thomas White had, from year to year, postponed this question of taxing wealth. He had taxed industries. "Why he cannot adopt the system of right-ness and equality in regard to the income of the rich man I cannot say." Mr. Guthrie thought the people were entitled to know, at this time, what was the "withholding force" and why the procrastination was continued. "Voluntary System Had Limitations." Mr. Guthrie did not agree that the voluntary system had been a blunder. He believed it had been a magnificent success. But conditions had changed. Like all human institutions, the voluntary system had its limitations. The member for South Wellington said he had introduced a resolution

intoxicating lines, I have never asked a man to go to the front. I have no light to do so. Charge of inducing men to stay. The actual action of certain prominent people in directing men not to places of those going to the front, has had its effect. I regret to say. Since the ex-Prime Minister, the Hon. leader of the Opposition, is so wedded to his beloved Province of Quebec, I regret to say that that is a charge which you might well inquire into, relating to the common clergy of his own Province."

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for compulsory service. He recognized that some definite step in the line of leadership was necessary, though Parliament should be supplied with a statement of the number of men of military age available, exclusive of the 400,000 men already enlisted. Mr. Guthrie thought that such consideration should be given to the agricultural needs of the country and the necessity for production. "If," said he, "men who enroll for service under the Military Service Law are better adapted for agricultural service than for military service, agricultural service is what they should be put to."

Put in Mr. E. W. Nesbitt, North Oxford

"Then," said Mr. Guthrie, "the bill should be remedied." Sir Sam continued at the night sitting. Mr. Guthrie emphasized the vital lack in the bill in regard to making any provision for compulsory service. He recognized that some definite step in the line of leadership was necessary, though Parliament should be supplied with a statement of the number of men of military age available, exclusive of the 400,000 men already enlisted. Mr. Guthrie thought that such consideration should be given

That is not provided in the bill

Mr. Guthrie said he believed the people who had applauded the doctrine of conscription meant something different from this Government bill. They meant the conscription of wealth, of industry, of resources, too. "Sir Wilfrid Laurier—"Hear, hear." "Why Postpone Taxing Wealth?" Mr. Guthrie could not understand why so able a man as Sir Thomas White had, from year to year, postponed this question of taxing wealth. He had taxed industries. "Why he cannot adopt the system of right-ness and equality in regard to the income of the rich man I cannot say." Mr. Guthrie thought the people were entitled to know, at this time, what was the "withholding force" and why the procrastination was continued. "Voluntary System Had Limitations." Mr. Guthrie did not agree that the voluntary system had been a blunder. He believed it had been a magnificent success. But conditions had changed. Like all human institutions, the voluntary system had its limitations. The member for South Wellington said he had introduced a resolution

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vision for compulsory service for necessary branches of war work other than straight military service. He believed that in this respect the Militia Act would be preferable, in that it could allocate for munitions or other work all surplus men not immediately required for the front.

Opposed to Referendum Principle.

Coming to the referendum amendment proposed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Guthrie noted in the first place his opposition to the referendum principle, as being contrary to the underlying spirit of responsible government. If it were to be adopted in this case, it might be invoked by succeeding Governments to evade responsibility on every difficult question. Sir Wilfrid himself had taken a different course on the reciprocity and naval issues, and had boldly taken his stand in Parliament on these issues, and accepted the responsibility of decision, leaving the people to approve or disapprove, according to the constitutional usage, when the time came for a general election. The first duty of Parliament was to defend the realm, and that duty could not be evaded by asking the people for guidance.

Slackers Would Vote, Soldiers Not.

Moreover, continued Mr. Guthrie, under a referendum the soldiers' votes would have to be largely disregarded. The war could not stop while ballots were passed to the trenches. Practically the result would be that the slackers left at home and their parents who did not want them to go would decide the issue, and the men at the front, comprising thirty-three per cent. of the electorate, would have little or no say.

Parliament Legally Constituted.

As to Sir Wilfrid's objection that this was only a rump of a Parliament, Mr. Guthrie said that, while he himself had been one of the few men on his own side of the House who were opposed to granting the extension, yet since the extension had been granted by the unanimous vote of the House, Parliament was now legally constituted, and must accept all its responsibilities.

People Opposed to Election and Also to Referendum

The people, he believed, as a whole, were now opposed to a general election, and they were equally opposed to a referendum. The country believed that more men must be obtained. Sir Wilfrid offered no solution as to how they were to be obtained. The only methods by which they could be obtained were either by the medium of the present bill or by invoking the militia act. He preferred the latter act, but if the present bill were to be pass-

ed, at any rate a time limit should be fixed for its coming into effect, and there should be safeguards against local tribunals being influenced by merely local conditions.

"If Ye Break Faith."

Amid an impressive silence in the House, Mr. Guthrie referred to the call of the living and the dead at the front, and quoted with fine effect the beautiful lines which have gone round the English-speaking world—the poem, "In Flanders Fields," written by an old school friend of his, Jack McCrea:

"If ye break faith with those who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies blow
On Flanders fields."

Appeal to Try Again for Coalition.

In concluding an impressive appeal for unity and the sinking of party politics, Mr. Guthrie urged the leaders to try again to see if coalition could not be worked out, and the life of Parliament extended. No single political party could successfully enforce the bill. If the two leaders really intended to agree on this great question of compulsion, he believed they could effect a satisfactory compromise. That compromise might be along the line of invoking the militia act and adapting to it the selective clauses of the new bill. If the leaders were now bent on continuing their present attitudes, then, said Mr. Guthrie, "perhaps a few of us back benches might get together and seriously try to work out a solution which might get us somewhere. All the brains are not on the front benches."

Mr. Lemieux Opposes Conscription.

Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux opposed conscription. He was proud of what Canada had done and hoped to see her continue, but it should be done by voluntary enlistment, and not by a compulsory system. Compulsion, said Mr. Lemieux, was "the Milner and autocratic system." The honor of the Government was at stake. The Premier had repeatedly pledged him-

self that there would be no conscription. Colleagues of the Premier had been authorized to assure the Archbishop of Montreal that the signing of the National Service cards would not mean compulsory service.

"In what position is that dignity of the Church to-day?" asked Mr. Lemieux. The present bill was "all risk to the poor and all immunity to the rich."

When Mr. Lemieux put the question, "What should we do?" Sir Herbert Ames interrupted to say: "I will tell you. We should send men to the front instead of talking here."

"Let us go together?" challenged Mr. L. A. Lapointe to Sir Herbert Ames. The latter did not answer and was greeted by laughter. "He is anxious to send others. Will he finance them as he financed the Nationalist party in 1911?" asked Mr. Lemieux.

A moment later when Mr. Lemieux remarked that he was not in favor of "the conscription of blood for election purposes," there were loud cries of "shame" from the Government benches.

Mr. Lemieux retorted that the policy of voluntary enlistment was Canada's policy until a few days before Mr. Mr. Justice Galt made his report. Mr. Lemieux stated that opposed to the people of Quebec were allowed to conscription, they were ready to abide by the result of a referendum.

Hon. T. W. Crothers, Minister of Labor, moved the adjournment of the debate. It is expected that he will be followed to-morrow by Mr. F. F. Pardee.