

# SHOUTS OF "SLACKER" MAY BE HEARD AGAIN

The Govt. Contemplates Getting  
Farm Labor by Compulsion  
Through Public Opinion.

## COMPEL THE ALIENS?

Possibly in the Govt.'s Mind—  
Everyone Over 16 Years Old  
Will Have to Register.

Special to The Star.

Ottawa, Ont., Feb. 16.—While the Government has decided that the actual conscription of labor in the Dominion is both impracticable and inexpedient there is some degree of compulsion contemplated in the measures for the organization of the man and woman power on the general principles of which the Government has already agreed. There is to be compulsory registration of every person over sixteen years of age, with full particulars as to age, residence, occupation, etc.

The details as to how this registration is to be worked out are yet to be decided upon. This much however, is certain; the exigencies of the time demand that the registration, if it is to meet demands, must be done speedily and without loss of time. The coming few months are the critical ones and it is the 1918 crop which is to count. A Dominion census occupies about two years in the taking. The national service scheme which was very similar in purpose to the scheme now in contemplation occupied about six months and today is practically useless for the reason that the filling in of the cards was not compulsory, and that, therefore the record is not complete.

### Most Essential Occupations.

Though the Government announces that conscription of labor is not contemplated, all the purposes of the scheme as set forth in the statement given to the press and as submitted to the labor men, would appear to aim at placing individuals in occupations most essential at the present time.

It is difficult to see how these aims can be carried out without a measure of compulsion. On the other hand while conscription for fighting purposes has been adopted it is hard to see how individuals can be forced to leave their present occupations and to work for other private individuals who are making profits. On this point the Government has as yet made no announcement. It does state however that one of the aims of the scheme is "to secure all such information as will enable the Government to co-operate with labor to carry out a Dominion wide propaganda for voluntary enlistment of men and women in essential industries."

### More Patriotic Appeals.

As a matter of fact the patriotism of Canadians has been appealed to for nearly every purpose but that of labor. And the Canadian people have responded to all appeals made on patriotic grounds. The new scheme of registration by the very nature of the information asked will emphasize probably as nothing else can do the patriotic duty of Canadians in the present time of great need of production. The man whose circumstances may be a perfectly good excuse for the fact that he is not in khaki, but no excuse at all for the fact that he is simply spending his income, will probably come to the realization by the very signing of his registration card that he cannot escape the name of slacker because he had good excuse for not being at the front.

The person engaged in less essential occupations may be induced to find more essential employment, once "less essential and more essential" have been clearly defined to him. It is the purpose of the new War Trade Board to make this definition. It is further the purpose of the War Trade Board to see to it that raw products are diverted to the more essential industries. By this means alone a curtailment of less essential industries is inevitable.

### Compulsion for Aliens?

At the present time the Government is a little undecided as to compulsion in connection with alien labor. But the new registration scheme contemplates ascertaining the number of persons in the country who are "not British subjects." To such men who remain idle the vagrancy laws might very well be applied in an advanced form.

Compulsion through the medium of public opinion which, once the propaganda gets under way, will have little tolerance for the idler or the useless worker, appears to be the aim of the Government's proposed scheme for the obtaining of labor.