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Government Should Get After Four-Flushers in Khaki

Gadsby Hands Out Some Sensible Advice on the Recruiting Problem---Khaki Should Only be Worn by Those Who Are In the Game to Fight---War Profiteers and Cold Storage Magnates Should be Rounded Up.

(By H. F. Gadsby.)

Ottawa, Dec. 18.—How to stimulate recruiting—that is the question. As chairman of the National Service Commission, R. B. Bennett, M. P., will put in hand a census of the man power of the Dominion, which is good as far as it goes. What, people keep asking, is he going to do with the census? Will the government act on it or shelve it, as they do the reports on the high cost of living, being satisfied to treat it as an increase of knowledge for cold storage purposes?

Mr. Bennett speaks vaguely of measures to prevent the absorption of too many able-bodied men in unessential industries, being careful, however, not to define what the unessential industries are. Considering the general shortage of labor and the high wages paid for such labor as can be got, the public would be pleased to learn from Mr. Bennett what unessential industries are soaking up the available supply of man power.

Ideas Not Divulged.

Chairman Bennett may have ideas in his head which he has not divulged. No one asks him to reveal those ideas prematurely, but the public would like to know how much farther he is ahead when his census of man power has been taken. Granted that he has every man in Canada classified to the last detail—what job he works at, what job he ought to have, what wages he gets, what people are dependent on him, what his eligibility for active service.

Suppose he has winnowed the truth to the last grain, what next? He knows that a certain number of men of eligible age, earning good wages, or, it may be, loafing, having no fathers, mothers, wives or children, who would suffer hardship if they were killed, are available for the war if they care to go. What does Chairman Bennett do then? Why, the same old thing—he works on the men with argument and exhortation. How does that help?

Not at all.

Imperialism Needed.

The fact of the matter is that the census will give no great flip to recruiting in Canada. What is needed is an inspiration, an example. Somebody has called it moral compulsion—a good name for it. Where men can be sure that they go to the front in a good cause and not as the dupes of conscienceless profiteers who remain behind and fleece the people, then recruiting will take a great jump. Premier Borden, no doubt, imagined that recruiting would live up when he got rid of Sir Sam, that hero having got in wrong with Tommy Atkins generally. But the remedy did not work, possibly because the public came to the conclusion that Sir Sam was only a symptom and that the real disease lay deeper. At all events recruiting lags.

Spirit is Lacking.

The new arrangements by which battalions in the field are kept reinforced by fresh drafts and care is taken to hold Canadian regiments together after they arrive overseas, thus preserving their esprit de corps—these arrangements are highly commendable, and would be very fine indeed if they would only bring in the recruits.

This, however, they failed to do. Somehow or other the spirit is lacking. The chances are that prospective recruits would like to feel first that they are not making all the sacrifices.

This frame of mind on the part of Canada's young manhood should ultimately compel the government to put in operation that moral compulsion which was mentioned a little while ago. What form should this moral compulsion take? A good example—that is the answer. What does the good example consist of? Well, the Government might lay its cards on the table—take the public into its confidence—show where it has gone wrong and where it intends to do better. Recruits will not be falling over each other to enlist until the Government makes

it clear that the square deal is to be its policy henceforward.

Actions Speak Louder.

How can the Government demonstrate that the square deal for the brave men who go to the front to get shot at and for the loved ones they leave behind them, is the future policy? By deeds, of course. Actions, as we all know, speak louder than words.

The very first thing the Government might do is to make a plain statement of the shell contracts since the beginning of the war, the prices paid, and the profits in 1915, as compared with the profits now. This statement should include not only the amounts paid to Canadian munition manufacturers for Canadian war material, but the amount paid to Canadian manufacturers by the Imperial Munitions Board on behalf of the British War Office.

Moreover, the War Purchasing Committee of which the new Minister of Militia, Mr. Kemp, is the chairman, should come forward with a complete statement of its transactions since it took over the business of buying supplies. If these statements were supplemented by a hint that the Government intended to go after excessive war profits a great deal harder than it has been doing, it would enhance the moral compulsion of the thing about 1.0 per cent.

Some such statement as this ought to be forthcoming. It is asking a great deal of the public to go on believing that all is right as right can be when the facts are systematically concealed. A frank, honest balance sheet of war expenditures would be readily understood by the Canadian people and they would soon let Sir Thomas White know whether or not to take a little more out of the profiteers.

Get After the Squeezers.

Another guarantee of good faith on the part of the Borden Government would be to make an example of one of their cold storage supporters, one of those fellows who, under the pretext of heavy exports to feed the soldiers abroad—at the top price by the way—take advantage of this over-worked excuse to squeeze the people at home for the last dollar.

This fellow is a disgrace whatever way you look at him. If he takes the customary profits of peace years and full harvests, instead of taking his medicine with the rest of us, then he is a poor patriot. If he takes double and triple profits, as he generally does, then he is a robber. It would help recruiting a great deal if the Government would hold one of these land pirates up to public execration, unmask his methods and punish him accordingly. Of sudden death—we are not spiteful—something slow and lingering. For example, he might be forced to eat all the eggs he has kept in jail

for more than year. His would make a fine busy hell for him for the remainder of his natural life. Prospective recruits would feel much better for it. They could leave their wives and mothers behind in the assurance that they would not be gouged for every dollar of patriotic fund or separation allowance to keep from starving.

Another act of grace on the part of the Borden government would be to say to all the non-combatant officers in handsome uniforms in the Pay and Records Office at London, "It's your turn at the front. Fight or go home." The same thing could be said to the stay-at-home brigadiers on this side of the water.

There are enough urgers in Canada, husky fellows who keep egging the rest of the people on, to make a couple of regiments. Everybody would be glad to see them get their chance in the fighting line. Another regiment might consist entirely of the honorary colonels, with which Sir Sam has bestrewed this happy country.

Placard the Fourflushers.

Joking aside, the Government would do well to get after the four-flushers, who strut around in khaki, but have no intention of getting nearer the front than Piccadilly or the Strand.

Make them wear the red and gold and feathers of the ante-bellum days. That would cure their prancing. Let khaki be the real distinction. These morning glories who take no risks should be placarded some way or other. If they were, recruiting would get a big boost among real soldiers.

Another thing that would help recruiting would be fair treatment for Major General Lessard—a man's size job at the front for which this fine soldier has been yearning ever since the war started. The government probably thinks it would have too good an effect in Quebec, where it has no real desire to recruit for fear of offending its nationalist allies.

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