

New York Times Man Views Canada's Effort

The following article in the New York Times from its Ottawa correspondent, F. J. Philip, gives an impartial view of Canada's war record under the King government.

WHEN a new Canadian parliament was elected in April, 1940, the country, like most of the rest of the world, was not fully awake to the sternness of the struggle that lay ahead. The war still was remote and, in appearance, "phony." Among all parties there was a reluctance to disturb the nerves of the electors, and such matters as conscription, price control, rationing and the possible displacement of large sections of the population from one industry to another scarcely were mentioned.

It could be fairly said that the majority of those elected in 1940, and their electors, would have been amazed if they could have foreseen how far they would go in action and achievement beyond the conceptions and ideas of five years ago.

Almost before the new parliament met in May of that year, the situation had changed completely. The big German attack through Belgium had begun and within a month the defeat of the French Army and the British withdrawal from Dunkirk had become history.

STEP by step from then on, the government under the leadership of Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King led parliament and the country in a continuous development of action toward total war. It was done for the most part without any dramatics, taking first things first.

The first necessity was an immense increase in arms and ammunition for Britain, and Canada quickly found herself producing guns, shells, transport, wagons, electric devices, airplanes and ships of kinds and in quantities that previously had been undreamed of.

The second most urgent need was for airmen. The first commonwealth air-training schools were opened in June, 1940, and in the emergency of that time the Canadian government offered to send every available man to Britain to take part in the critical struggle going on there. But the British government, taking the long view, replied that it was more essential to keep all instructors at work here; and by November of that year the first of that great force of 131,000 trained airmen, most of them Canadians, who have played such a tremendous part in building up victory, had arrived in Britain.

THE third need was money. Canada's annual budget before the war was something near \$500,000,000. During these last four years, parliament has voted approximately ten times as much, and although it has kept a watchful eye on expenditures it never has refused any war appropriation. From the outset the plan has been strictly adhered to—to pay for at least 50 per cent. of war costs out of taxation, while the other half has been raised by successive loans that always have been fully subscribed.

One measure that was passed was Canada's equivalent of Lend-Lease, the appropriation of a billion dollars as a gift to Britain in one year; and,

during the last two years, under the title of Mutual Aid, the voting of a similar amount to be distributed among all the United Nations seeking credit here. There are no strings attached to Mutual Aid. Those who are or may be in a position to repay the advances they receive will, it is hoped, do so; but there is no signed obligation. Opinion at Ottawa always has favored the decision that the post-war era and the making of the peace must not be disturbed by the vexed question of inter-Allied debts.

FOURTH on the list of war necessities came Canada's contribution in sea power. When this parliament first met, Canada had one of the smallest navies in the world of any country with such a length of sea coast. Today she has a strength of 370 fighting ships with a personnel of 95,000. This fleet's main duty has been convoying across the Atlantic. All types of ships have taken part in the rough and tumble of the war at sea and have sunk forty-four enemy surface vessels and twenty-two submarines, with other undisclosed destruction to their credit.

It was not until after the landing in France last June that the manpower situation with respect to the army became acute. Out of a population of 11,500,000, nearly 900,000 men and women had joined the armed forces. Hundreds of thousands had gone into war industry. The farms that had been called on to double their output had to do so with only a fraction of their workers. The mines and forests claimed more and more able-bodied men, and the government could fairly claim that the distribution of manpower had been worked out more fairly than it would have been by over-all conscription.

PARLIAMENT suddenly, however, found itself face to face with the accusation that the Canadian Army lacked reserves in the crisis of last November. Accusations and criticisms were bandied about in a manner that left the ordinary members of parliament very confused. But finally this parliament, which had been elected on the understanding among all parties that conscription never would be applied, voted to send drafted men overseas. These men have been in action and have given a good account of themselves, but Canadians can boast that almost entirely they have made total war as volunteers, not only in the service but in their loyal respect for price control, their financial contribution and their continuous work, of which the record has been marred by very few strikes.

Now the members of the majority, who have supported all these measures, and their critics in the opposition who have urged that the government should and could do even better, must go to the country and ask approval of what they have done and support for what remains to be done.

The election has been set for June 11, the earliest possible date, but among the retiring members—and a good many are not seeking re-election—the opinion is that however composed it will not do any better job than has been done by the one that has just been closed.