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ARMY HEADQUARTERS

The command of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada  
In the United Kingdom, 1914-1918.

BACKGROUND

1. The establishment of the Ministry of Overseas Military Forces of Canada on 31 October 1916, was the most important step in solving the problem of controlling Canadian military effort in the united Kingdom and France in the First World War. It was an answer to difficulties which the Canadian Government had taken two years to discover and define. Much of the delay must be attributed directly to Sir Sam Hughes who, as Minister of Militia and Defence, had insisted on retaining contro2 over every aspect of military affairs in his own hands, Even when the Overseas Ministry had been established and Hughes had resigned, the late Minister continued to exercise a considerable influence on institutional developments in the Overseas Ministry, both as a cautionary example and as a very dangerous critic in the Canadian House of Commons.

ESTABLISHING THE CANADIANS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

2. When a Canadian contingent was offered to Britain even before the outbreak of war, there was no thought of future difficulties of command. The euphoria of the moment gave no hint that the force would provide a justification for demands for more, not less autonomy for the Dominion. Certainly there were no formal plans for the political and administrative control of Canadian forces sent overseas. Some fifteen years before, Canadian contingents had been sent to South Africa but, on arrival at Capetown, the units became for virtually all purposes part of the British Army. Canada's responsibility went no farther than arranging to make up the difference between British and Canadian rates of pay. Apart from opposing the breaking up of the Royal Canadian Regiment, the Laurier Government was careful to avoid any intervention in military affairs in South Africa.

3. In the years following the South African War, it became clearer that the most probable employment for the Canadian Militia would be to provide a contingent to support the British Army in a European war. Efforts to establish a Canadian branch of the Imperial General Staff and to standardise military equipment on British models met with only limited success. On the other hand, most Canadian militiamen were prepared to regard the British as their military mentors, British officers occupied the key positions on the General Staff and British manuals provided the basis for training. No question seems to have been raised about the degree of authority that the Canadian Government would retain over troops sent to assist the British. If the issue had emerged, it seems probable that the precedent of South Africa would have been

invoked. A Canadian contingent would simply form part of the Imperial forces, subordinate to British command and sharing British administrative resources.

4. Since the Canadian Government in 1914 had been elected some three years before on a frankly imperialistic platform, it *was* not inclined to emphasize questions of military autonomy as a matter of principle. Indeed, the personality of its Minister of Militia and Defence was ill disposed to philosophical inquiry of any kind. When Robert Borden formed his Cabinet in October, 1911, he was willing to admit that his selection of Colonel Sam Hughes was his most controversial appointment.<sup>1</sup> A school teacher and prominent athlete from Toronto, Hughes had moved, as a young man, to Lindsay where he acquired wealth in railway and canal speculation and influence as editor and publisher of the *Victoria Warder*. A past Grand Master of the Orange Lodge of Ontario, a militia colonel and an ebullient defender of Imperialism, he seemed almost a caricature of the popular conception of an Ontario Tory. Hughes owed his fortune to his personal charm and a boundless self-confidence and energy. He owed his ministerial appointment to his long service as Conservative military critic in the house of Commons, to the powerful Orange electoral interest in Ontario and claims of past support for Borden in internal Conservative battles.<sup>2</sup> The appointment was not made without misgivings and Borden treated his Minister of Militia to a stern lecture about past indiscretions and future responsibilities.

5. Hughes did not find the responsibilities of office chastening. He became the first Minister of Militia in the Dominion's history to campaign actively in parliament and out for greater military expenditures. Within the Department, Hughes did not regard himself as a civilian Minister alone. In his earlier, notorious quarrel with General Hutton, he had switched his role from militia officer to Member of Parliament and back again as it best suited him. So it was as Minister. At training camps, he appeared in full uniform as senior colonel in the Militia, giving practical direction on the exercising of the troops. Believing himself thwarted in a number of pet projects by the Chief of General Staff, a British officer, Major General Colin Mackenzie, he flew into a characteristic rage and had him removed.<sup>3</sup> Hughes' mingled suspicion and contempt of British officers was usually a more powerful emotion than his Imperialism. They were insufficiently impressed by his ability and inadequately amenable to his power. Although Mackenzie was replaced by another British officer, Colonel Gwatki Hughes had no other competitor for military authority in the Dominion. Most officers in the Department knew that their careers were at his mercy and forbore to criticize his policies. Others, like Colonel Henry Smith and Col. J.D. MacDougall owed their positions on the Staff to him. The Militia Council ceased to have any influence for the Minister's power in all matters was paramount.

6. Despite his absolute mastery of his Department, Hughes furnished the Opposition with a large and vulnerable target. Any such glorious military pretensions would have provoked satire. In addition, there were accusations about his trip to England in 1913 to inspect the British manoeuvres, with an entourage of twenty-one officers, two secretaries and a large number of ladies.<sup>4</sup> There was his attempt to have himself made a major general which was angrily vetoed by the Governor General.<sup>5</sup> As an example of his Orange bigotry, there was his intervention to cancel the traditional custom of militia units bearing arms in the Montreal Corpus Christi procession.<sup>6</sup>

7. It seems necessary to dwell on the character and activities of the Minister of Militia because only his personal dominance and prestige can explain the long delay in rationalizing the overseas organization. Before the war, Hughes might strike his Cabinet colleagues as ludicrous and a growing political liability. It is some measure of the dramatic change in public opinion after 1 August 1914, that Hughes should appear to so many as the ideal leader for the national war effort.

8. It was early evident after the offer of the Canadian Contingent that responsibilities for the force would be greater than they had been in 1899. A repeated Canadian suggestion that the men should be enrolled under the Army Act was turned aside by British replies that the Canadian volunteers should be attested under Canadian authority.<sup>7</sup> A much more important difference was the early Canadian announcement that Canada would bear the full cost of her force.<sup>8</sup> The growing Canadian demand for control of Canada's overseas forces was to be based, at every stage, on the argument that Canada was not merely providing the men but paying for them as well.

9. Much of the responsibility for the initial arrangements for the Canadian Contingent fell to the Canadian High Commissioner in London. The vacancy left by the death of Lord Strathcona in January, 1914, had proven difficult to fill. In June, the Hon. George H. Perley, Minister without Portfolio in the Borden Cabinet, was sent to London to serve as acting High Commissioner for the summer. The Order—in—Council appointing him charged him with negotiations for the site of the new offices for the High Commission but secret arrangements were also made for him to confer with the Admiralty about future Canadian naval contributions.<sup>9</sup> Perley was a close friend of the prime Minister and one of his intimate political advisors. As Chief whip in Opposition, he had helped to keep the Conservatives united behind their leader and to quell a number of revolts.<sup>10</sup> Although he had not received an office, he stood third in Cabinet precedence. If Perley had close ties with the Prime Minister, he was on very poor terms with the Minister of Militia. Hughes resented Perley's wealth, manner and intimacy with the Prime Minister and suspected him of plotting against him.<sup>11</sup>

10. When Perley came to London, he looked on his post as temporary, a chance for a pleasant summer visit to England. The better he came to know it, the better he liked it and he was soon drafting a plan of reorganization which would group all Canadian Government activities in the United Kingdom under the High Commissioner while that post would be elevated to a Cabinet portfolio.<sup>12</sup> It was a proposal he was to argue for the next few years without success. In the meantime, the advent of war changed a visit of a few months into a stay of eight years.

11. Once the Canadian offer of a military contingent had been accepted, the Colonial Office made arrangements for the Minister of Militia to have a direct channel of communication with the War Office on "details of a military character relating to the contingents".<sup>13</sup> The acting High Commissioner was nevertheless an intermediary in the selection of a British officer to command the Contingent, passing Kitchener's three nominees to Canada. Colonel Hughes selected Major General E.A.H. Alderson from the three aging South African veterans who were preferred.<sup>14</sup> In a host of other matters, major and minor, the Minister of Militia tackled the British Secretary of State for War directly.

12. Having overseen the organization and embarkation of the First Contingent, Hughes himself set sail for England on October 7th. Borden explained to Perley that he was not going in any official capacity but rather for a holiday and to pass on information about officers to Alderson. After Hughes had been absent for some weeks, the reverberations of what had happened at Valcartier reached Ottawa in sufficient volume to give the Prime Minister second thoughts about the Minister's early return. On October 20th, he cabled Perley:

In case Hughes should be desirous of going to the front it would be advisable from political considerations to give him the opportunity as he has unfortunately aroused great antagonism by his peculiar methods and manners although he did splendid work in organizing the camp at Valcartier.<sup>15</sup>

Lord Kitchener abruptly refused the offer and suggested that the Minister should return to Canada and attend to his work.<sup>16</sup>

13. The Canadians had reached Plymouth Sound on October 14th and Colonel Victor Williams, the Canadian Adjutant—General, handed over command of the force to the newly promoted Lieutenant General Alderson. From then until the departure of the 1st Canadian Division for France in February, 1915, the command of all Canadian soldiers in England rested indisputably with Alderson. At the same time, there were no formal terms of references for Alderson *viz à viz* his Canadian employers. After a short correspondence, the War Office conceded his right to correspond with the Canadian Militia Department on purely Canadian matters.<sup>17</sup> The Minister of Militia, promoted to major general during his visit to England, as well as other Canadian officials, dealt directly with the General. He was visited by several prominent Canadians, all anxious to size up the commander of their men. After a long talk with Alderson, Parley reported to Borden that he was a man "with whom I feel sure we are going to have very satisfactory relations."<sup>18</sup>

14. Another Canadian official who had been on the dockside on October 14th was to have a considerable influence on the administration of the Canadians overseas. Colonel John Wallace Carson was a businessman and mining speculator from Montreal. He had been colonel of the Royal Highlanders until a Liberal Minister of Militia had promoted another officer over his head. Carson, Major Frank Meighen and several other officers of the regiment had resigned in indignation.<sup>19</sup> The advent of the Conservatives had given Carson and his friends a chance to reorganize the Prince of Wales Fusiliers into the Canadian Grenadier Guards. During his militia career, Colonel Carson had become a good personal friend of the Minister of Militia and it was due to this friendship that he was despatched to England on September 22nd, at the head of a small advance party for the Contingent. Carson initially was far from clear about what his duties were to be. On his arrival, he called on the acting High Commissioner and discovered, as Perley later explained to Borden, that "... neither of us knew exactly what he was supposed to do except that he had been asked to arrange so that things would be as comfortable as possible on the arrival of the troops."<sup>20</sup> Carson took up his residence in Salisbury but seems to have found little enough to occupy him. he was entered in the Contingent Orders of 7 November 1914 as "representing the Canadian Government as regards certain financial and other questions in connection with the Canadian Contingent."<sup>21</sup> Since Hughes, during his stay in England, never seems to have taken pains to explain to Carson or anyone else just what "other questions" might

involve, Carson felt himself to be in possession of a generous mandate. On November 14th, attending the Lord Mayor's Show as Canada's military representative, he called on Lord Kitchener to inform him of the conditions of cold, wet and mud prevailing in the Canadian camp on Salisbury Plain. The War Secretary apparently learned of the problem for the first time from Carson and, in his concern, offered to make room for the Canadians in huts by moving Territorials under canvas. He also called for Alderson. Both Carson and Alderson joined in repudiating the notion of special favours for their men but Alderson also called a meeting of his senior officers and had them join with him in denying that there were serious grounds for complaint. Carson was furious at this repudiation of his first intervention on behalf of the Canadians. he was even more displeased when he found that he was accorded no further interviews with the Secretary of State for war.<sup>22</sup> In mid-December, he returned to Canada.

15. Not long after his return to Canada Carson submitted reports to the Prime Minister on the state of affairs on Salisbury Plain, on the British replacement of most of the Canadian-made equipment of the Contingent and on the ability of General Alderson. He explained to the Prime Minister that he had proposed to Kitchener that the Canadians be sent to Egypt for their training and told how he had conveyed the Minister of Militia's objections to a British proposal to break up the Canadian division for training in France. Borden was obviously impressed with Carson's opinions and sent a copy of the report to Perley in London, adding his own comments on what he regarded as a remarkable contrast between Hughes' accomplishments at Valcartier and the near-disaster on Salisbury Plains. Parley's reply was quietly defensive, pointing out that Hughes had personally approved the campsite on Salisbury Plains, countering most of Carson's charges of British folly and pointing out that if Carson had only brought his complaints to the high Commissioner, Perley would have taken them up with the War Office. Indeed, until he had received a copy of the report, he had been unaware that Carson had ever visited Kitchener.<sup>23</sup>

16. Carson's report demonstrated the need to establish his powers and responsibilities. The Colonel's own suggestion was that he be appointed an Assistant High Commissioner under Perley.<sup>23A</sup> This did not exactly meet with the Prime Minister's views and he directed Hughes to give Carson some definite status. As a result, an Order-in-Council of January 15th declared that Carson would be:

"...appointed during pleasure, to represent the Militia Department of Canada in the United Kingdom, in connection with supplies and other requirements for the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force.

It went on to state that Carson would be:

"....acting as the agent of the Minister of Militia in maintaining the depots of articles of equipment and other supplies necessary for the upkeep and subsistence of the Canadian Expeditionary Force both in the United Kingdom and at the seat of War."

Carson was to be rated as a General Staff Officer and to be paid a total of \$23.00 per day plus travelling expenses.<sup>24</sup>

17. The role assigned to Carson reflects the indignation of the Canadian Government at what it saw as the apparently systematic rejection of Canadian equipment by the War Office. Much imagination and ingenuity had been devoted to the procurement of the military stores, and a great deal of money had been spent. Canadian industrialists, beset by the depression which followed the outbreak of war, were clamouring for contracts. However vaguely it was set out, Carson's appointment was seen by the Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet as a means of regaining control of the supply of at least the Canadian Contingent. It also gave no scope to interfere with Hughes' personal ambition, to keep all aspects of the war effort in his personal control. No one seems to have explained to Carson how important his newly defined task would be. He announced his dissatisfaction as soon as he heard the terms of the Order—in—Council. Any limitation on his authority as the Minister's personal representative in all military matters would restrict his entree in London. He urged the Prime Minister to send letters to Perley, Alderson and the War Office to announce that he, as representative of the Department of Militia and Defence, would be at their disposal for consultation about any matters on which they might seek advice.<sup>25</sup> These and other suggestions were rejected by Borden. In his opinion, the Order—in—Council went far enough.<sup>26</sup> Replying to Carson, he wrote:

I do not think it would be possible for me to control your relations with the War Office or with General Anderson. So far as Sir George Perley is concerned, he will, of course, be glad to have you consult with him at any time and I shall at once write to him accordingly.

So far as other matters are concerned, your best course is to be governed by the terms of your Order—in—Council.<sup>27</sup>

#### ESTABLISHING A BASE

18. When Carson returned to England at the beginning of February, he found that Anderson and his Division were already moving to France. Canadian military concerns in the United Kingdom were entering upon a new phase. Thereafter, until the end of the War, they would embrace three main functions: the training and despatch of reinforcement, the organization and training of new formations and the rehabilitation of casualties. The Minister of Militia had begun to establish the organizations which he felt would be needed. One of the first to arrive was Colonel Ward of the Militia Department, to establish a Record Office. Perley reported that he had been set up with a large staff at 36 Victoria St., S.W., in London, not far from the High Commission.<sup>28</sup> Another appointment was made when the 1st Canadian Division departed for France. Colonel Guy Carleton Jones was appointed Director of Medical Services and established his headquarters in London as well, but independent of any other military authority.<sup>29</sup> The Canadian Cavalry Brigade was concentrated at Uckfield. The appointment of Colonel J.E.B. Seely to command the Brigade gave rise to the first signs of resentment at British officers. Colonel Seely had a considerable reputation as a writer of adventure stories. He had also been Secretary of State for War in the Liberal Government until the Curragh incident. However his military experience as a yeomanry officer had been equalled by at least some of the Canadians who were now placed under his command. The Canadian Government was consulted only after the appointment had been made and Perley, through whom the correspondence was conducted, had to recommend acquiescence. Borden agreed but he warned that the next Mounted Corps he

sent over would have a Canadian officer in command.<sup>30</sup> The remaining Canadians were assembled at Tidworth in a Canadian Training Depot. Still assuming an unquestioned authority over the Canadians, the British sent Colonel W.R.W. James of the Royal Artillery to command the Depot.

19. Some arrangements had already been made for the command of the Canadians left in England. Colonel J.C. MacDougall, a permanent force officer who, until the outbreak of war, had been a supernumerary officer in the Judge Advocate—General's Department, had been sent over with the Contingent. Alderson originally intended to take him to France as his Military Secretary but the War Office vetoed the notion as there was no establishment for the appointment. Informed of this, someone unidentified in the Militia Department in Ottawa cabled to Alderson on February 9th to inform him that MacDougall would have temporary command of the Canadians in England when he had left. Another telegram to the War Office informed them that MacDougall would have temporary and local rank as Brigadier—General as long as he held the appointment.<sup>31</sup>

20. Between Carson with his new instructions and MacDougall with his new authority and promotion, it might have been expected that there would be no grounds for conflict. On February 15th, Major General E.A. Altham, officer in charge of administration for Southern Command, wrote to Carson to inquire whether any Canadian officer in the United Kingdom had the power to return incompetent officers to Canada. Carson modestly claimed his authority. "I am the only officer now serving in the country who would have that power," he wrote, "and I would not hesitate to act if the necessity were unfortunately to arise."<sup>32</sup> While Altham seems to have accepted the claim without further question, Carson seems to have had qualms about his claim. His letter to Hughes on February 23rd warned that:

...from time to time other cases of undesirable officers are bound to arise and there is no authority now in England capable of dealing with them."<sup>33</sup>

Brigadier—General MacDougall also proved willing to use Carson as his channel to the Minister of Militia. Although Alderson had left him as General Officer Commanding Canadians, he found that with Seely commanding the Cavalry Brigade and James, the Training Depot, there were no Canadians left for him to command outside the hospitals and the growing Ordnance Depot at Ashford.

Since he felt that the Minister would hold him responsible in any case, MacDougall asked Carson to arrange that: "all matters concerning the command of the Canadians - including the Training Depot — should be under my thumb."<sup>34</sup> Carson warned the General that he would have to wait patiently until the Minister of Militia had made up his mind and then wrote a long letter to the Minister himself, to explain the progressive fragmentation of the Canadian organization. The arrival of the Second Contingent and rumours of further cavalry units suggested that there would be even more independent commands. "Would it not be wise," he suggested,

...for you to consider the appointment of a Senior Canadian Officer who would carry a rank not below that of Major General, and put him in supreme central command of all the Canadian Troops who might be at any time in England, and let him at his office, (which



could be in London or elsewhere, be the supreme authority on all matters of discipline etc., etc., without, of course, attempting to interfere with the, as it were, Head Office functions of the British War Office."

A further passage in his letter intimated how generously he was already interpreting the terms of his Order—in—Council:

I find myself in the embarrassing position of having unending requests made on me for information and advice and even instructions and as your Representative here I am supposed to be able to fill all three functions but naturally I have no authority to give on these matters, and can only advise, which I am always willing to do."<sup>35</sup>

21. Within a week of the letter, matters were changing of their own accord. Colonel James of the Training Depot was given an appointment on the Lines of Communication in France and he left Tidworth on March 2nd. On the same day, Carson was also able to tell Hughes that the Canadians would be going to Shornecliffe, a district in Eastern Command, and that MacDougall would have command of the Reserve Brigade, the four battalions of the First Contingent which had been left behind in England.<sup>36</sup> On March 10th, MacDougall had established his headquarters at Shornecliffe. He found himself under the authority of Major-General J.M. Babington, General Officer Commanding the Shornecliffe District and also in command of the 23rd Division of the New Army. On the same day that Carson was reporting this news to Ottawa, Ottawa was settling MacDougall's status. Two cables reached MacDougall on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. The first, from the Adjutant-General, stated:

As Officer Commanding all Canadian troops in Great Britain, you are responsible to the Department of Militia and Defence, Canada, for all appointments to the forces and the training and discipline and all other matters pertaining to and including stores and equipment. You will therefore organize to meet these conditions and to carry out these duties.<sup>37</sup>

There was also a characteristic message from Hughes:

You will please remember that you are in command of the Canadian troops in England and will be held responsible for all appointments. You have a number of Canadian Officers yet there who must be utilized. You must assume your responsibilities.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps as an afterthought, there was also a message for Carson, on the 19<sup>th</sup>:

Regarding command of Canadians in Britain General MacDougall is in military command of all Canadian units in British excepting those under General Seely. You will continue as authorised by order-in-council to represent the Defence Minister for Canada in Britain.<sup>39</sup>

22. Hughes may have expected that this flurry of telegrams would settle all problems. Of course they did nothing of the kind. Carson continued to regard himself as Representative of the

Minister without any regard to the limitations of the Order—in—Council. With his office now established in the Savoy Hotel in London, he was in immediate contact with the War Office and with Sir George Perley. MacDougall, in Shornecliffe, found himself obliged to turn to Carson if he wished to appeal against British military authority. In any event, it would have been difficult for one whose position depended on the Minister's favour to challenge one of the Minister's best known friends. The series of telegrams might, at first sight, have appeared to sustain MacDougall's authority fully but by not explicitly stating the essentially administrative and logistical responsibilities assigned to Carson, they offered no bar to the Minister's Representative assuming just as much military authority as did the Minister himself.

23. Within a few days of receiving his new authority, MacDougall was writing to Carson to complain about being subordinated to the 23rd Division for training and asking him to intervene at the War Office. Carson did as he was asked and found out that the arrangement was temporary, until MacDougall should have a staff organized. He passed this on to MacDougall and went on to explain that the British were dissatisfied with the standard of training achieved by the Canadians on Salisbury Plain. He had not, he added, been authorised by the Minister to refuse their help in this case.<sup>40</sup> Further correspondence with Canada about obtaining staff officers for MacDougall was also conducted through Carson. When the Second Contingent began to arrive, Hughes' order to keep its affairs separate from MacDougall's command was also passed through Carson.<sup>41</sup> It is thus evident that neither MacDougall nor Hughes interpreted Carson's role narrowly.

24. The arrival of the Second Contingent in May, 1915, introduced an important new element into the accumulation of Canadian military organizations in the United Kingdom. Now determined that its forces would be led by Canadian officers, the Canadian Government had named one of the few eminent military men of the Dominion, Major—General S.B. Steele to the command of the Second Contingent. Having joined the Permanent Force at its inception and having served in both the Northwest Rebellion and the South African War, General Steele had acquired many years of military experience. Long years in the public service had also taught him the value of political influence and he had an unfailing patron in the Minister of Public Works, the Hon. Robert Rogers of Manitoba. Steele's appointment also gave pleasure to the west which felt that it had not received its share of high military offices in the C.E.F. These considerations did not weigh heavily with the War Office which had its own officers to place and which felt that, at 66, Steele was rather too old for active field command. Hughes was furious at their rejection of this "splendid organizer and disciplinarian" and the implied claim that no Canadian could command a division in the field:

I am convinced by my opinion based upon years of experience and observation, in war and on manoeuvres, that Steele and my brother Colonel John Hughes are each as qualified for a division as any officer in the British Service. Baden—Powell has been seriously suggested from England, I believe I have fifty better.<sup>42</sup>

He did, however, agree that Steele would go no farther than England and that another general might be selected to take the division to France. He went on to deliver any angry protest to the British War Secretary:

I know many of our Major Generals, some good and capable but many the absolute reverse, far inferior for administration in office or capability in the field to Steele or a dozen other of my officers. Have calmly and loyally remained aloof from Salisbury horror and disintegration of 1st Canadian Division but please do not ask that too much be borne. Claim no authority to manage force in field, but under Army Act Canada has absolute authority in respect to appointments. Further, offensiveness and contemptuousness of some Army Officers in 1st Division became almost intolerable. I look to see that courtesy and even-handed justice and fair play are accorded to all my deserving officers.<sup>43</sup>

Kitchener's reaction was to send a copy of the letter to Perley with the notation: "This seems extraordinary even from Hughes."

25. Carson took care not to ignore the arrival in England of such a well—recommended officer. Steele was met by a welcoming letter announcing that:

As the representative in England of the Honourable the Minister of Militia and Defence and the Department of Militia and Defence, I trust that I shall be of service to yourself and your Division, and please understand that I am very much at your disposal and will be only too glad to be of any service to you personally or to the Division which you so ably and effectively command.<sup>44</sup>

The two men met for the first time on May 27th and they had a "good, long, and confidential chat", after which Carson arranged an interview for Steele with the Secretary of State for War. He also promised his good offices to the General's aide—de—camp who happened to be the son of the Minister of Railways and Canals.<sup>45</sup>

26. It was Eastern Command which asked that Steele's and MacDougall's commands be kept separate but, as has been mentioned, the arrangements for the separation were conducted through Carson. As he communicated it to Steele, "MacDougall would have entire command of his Training Division and you would have entire command of your Second Division without possible conflict or question between you as to standing, seniority, or anything else."<sup>46</sup> This was a somewhat optimistic hope but the authority over both officers remained the General Officer Commanding, Shornecliffe District. When Major—General Babington left in June, he was succeeded by Major-General P.S. Wilkinson who seems to have provoked less friction. This did not, however, solve problems between Canadians.

27. Although his authorising Order—in—Council only described him as representing the Minister of Militia in the United Kingdom, Carson's letterhead described him as also being the representative at the "seat of war". It was this assumed authority which justified him in winning abortive approval for his project of giving all the battalion commanders and brigade majors of the 1st Division a step in rank for their service at the Second Battle of Ypres. Hughes' support for this did not last long and General Alderson, in France, refused to take it seriously. Despite seven letters, Carson failed to retain the Minister's support and the project died.<sup>47</sup> This did not improve Carson's respect for Alderson. He had blamed the British general for the Salisbury Plains situation and had criticized him for failing to maintain a sufficiently strict discipline.<sup>48</sup> He told

Steele that he had opposed the promotion of Alderson to command the Canadian Corps although evidence for this is missing. Indeed, he claimed that if he had had his way, there would have been a Canadian as commander of the 1st Division.<sup>49</sup> Alderson, perhaps *faute de mieux*, continued to regard Carson as an ally. It was to Carson that he turned when trying to answer the Minister of Militia's bitter but largely unfair criticisms of his conduct during the Battle of Ypres. "I believe you to be an absolutely fair & square minded man, and I think you will admit that, in all my dealings with you, I have been perfectly candid & open."<sup>50</sup>

28. On 3 July 1915, the Minister of Militia reached England to find that a considerable number of policy decisions had waited upon his arrival. The most important of these were the future command of the Canadian corps and the 2nd Canadian Division. Since French had selected Alderson to command the Corps, there was little that Hughes could do to interfere but it was agreed that two Canadians would command the divisions, after further negotiations at the War Office, Sir Sam was also able to cable Senator Lougheed, the Acting Minister of Militia, on July 26th, that Major—General Steele "is promoted to command South—Eastern District including all Canadians in England."<sup>51</sup> Two days later, there was another wire to state that Brigadier General MacDougall would retain his rank of Brigadier-General. On August 3rd, Steele took over Shornecliffe District from Major—General Wilkinson and, a fortnight later, Major-General R.E.W. Turner arrived from France to take over the 2nd Division.

29. The impression left by Hughes' arrangements, at least in the mind of the Chief of the General Staff in Ottawa, was that MacDougall had been replaced as General Officer Commanding Canadians in England by General Steele.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, ambiguities persisted. There was a myth that MacDougall owed his appointment to an Order—in—Council and that his status would be unchanged until the Order was revoked. Steele believed that the Order existed, later claiming that he had been told of it by the Minister himself even though the Minister had added that the Order had been passed without his knowledge or consent. Carson believed in the myth as well, helped possibly by the realization that as long as ambiguity remained in the command structure in England, his claim to power could be sustained. On August 27th, at the moment that the Minister had departed once more for Canada, he sent out a long memorandum, making a dramatic claim to absolute military power in the United Kingdom,\* This memorandum,

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\* I have had several long conferences with our mutual friend Major—General Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia and Defence on the subject of the relative commands of yourself, General MacDougall and General Turner, and the Minister was exceedingly anxious, and so told you, that nothing whatever should arise that would cause the slightest friction between yourself and the two General Officers now serving under you in your important command, and with that object in view the Minister asked me to write you a private note and tell you just what his views and ideas and wishes are in the premises, and they are as follows:-

First - That all promotions and appointments of Staff and other officers were to be referred to me as the Minister's representative

Second — That your command over the two Canadian Divisions now in Shornecliffe, shall be exercised through the General Officers Commanding them.

Third — That matters of training are to be left entirely to the discretion of the General Officer Commanding our two Divisions in Shornecliffe.

addressed to Steele, admitted the elderly General's pre—eminence in all matters except training — which was directly controlled by the War Office in any case. At the same time, command was to be exercised through Turner and MacDougall and MacDougall was also to have command of all the Canadians scattered over England outside the Shornecliffe District. The most interesting assertion, however, was Carson's claim to a Vice—Ministerial status With a right to go anywhere and to do anything that would be in the power of the Minister of Militia. Not for him the limitations of chains of command or channels of communication.

30. Did the memorandum set out the Minister's real intentions for the command in England or was it no more than a grab for power the moment he was safely on the ocean? It would certainly have been characteristic of Hughes' erratic manner of administering his Department to grant such authority on the spur of the moment to one of his friends while guilefully neglecting to provide the evidence to sustain the claim. On the other hand, Carson's persistent pursuit of the prestige of power and his earlier conduct on arriving in England indicate that little deterred him from falsification of his authority, in the belief that widespread terror of the Minister would prevent even senior officers from questioning what purported to be his wishes. In either case, the Minister was personally responsible for the failure to ensure that his intentions for the command in England were not made evident, then or earlier, to all concerned, including the War Office and the Canadian High Commissioner.

#### THE CARSON ERA

31. After Hughes had finished his second wartime visit at the end of August, 1915, and until his fourth trip to England in the summer of 1916, Carson maintained an uneasy but undoubted military supremacy in England. Although challenges to his authority were made and were even compounded, his position remained very strong while he could claim the support of Sir Sam Hughes.

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Fourth — That upon Canadian matters the right is reserved to me to correspond direct with the General Officers Commanding our two Divisions in Shornecliffe as the Minister's direct representative, in fact as carrying out my position as detailed and set down by the Minister as Vice—Minister of the Department of Militia and Defence in the British Isles and at the seat of War. I naturally have very extended powers, and among other, the authority which is vested in the Minister, or acting Minister of the Crown, to correspond with anyone in Canada's employ and on any subject.

Fifth — That when the 2nd Canadian Division leaves Shornecliffe these instructions shall continue to apply to the Canadian Training Division. Of course this is obvious, as my position is that of control as the Minister's direct representative of all our troops in England, whoever they may be and wherever they may be.

Sixth — That the Canadian Training Division consist of all Canadian Troops except the 2nd Canadian Division stationed in the District of your Command, and in fact for this matter in any other district or any other Command. where they may be located, as it is well understood and has been always from the date of his appointment that all the scattered units of the Canadian Troops in England automatically come under the command of General MacDougall as soon as they arrive in the British Isles, the 2nd Division, of course, being excepted.

Seventh - I understand apart from this that the following units situated outside the immediate Shornecliffe District form part of the Canadian Training Division, and as such, are under the command and authority of General MacDougall, who, under you, will, of course be held strictly responsible for their efficiency, and will have them under charge ...(Carson File 8-5-43, Carson-Steele, 27 Aug 15)

32. A number of important changes occurred in September 1915. Between the 13th and the 17th, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division moved to France and a Canadian Corps was established under the command of Lieutenant—General Alderson. Brigadier-General Currie was promoted and given command of the 1st Division. In England, Carson was promoted to the rank of Major-General on September 13th. General Steele remained in command at Shornecliffe but virtually the whole of his troops were Canadians, under the direct command of General MacDougall. The creation of a Canadian Corps gave Carson a chance to intervene on behalf of the Government policy to "Canadianise" the staffs of the Canadian formations. Alderson was successfully prevailed upon to appoint Canadians as Brigadier—General, Royal Artillery and as Chief Engineer in his Corps despite his own misgivings.<sup>54</sup> The selection of officers for most major appointments in England and even in France was a prerogative which both Hughes and Carson fought to keep out of strictly military hands. There was, for example, the problem of finding a place for Colonel Maynard Rogers, an elderly, retired officer, but an influential militiaman and a friend of the Minister. Carson adopted Steele's solution of creating a fourth training brigade.<sup>55</sup>

33. After his return to Canada, Hughes decided to send a further twelve battalions to England before the winter. He did not consult the British authorities and the War Office, already desperate for winter accommodation, protested that there was no room for 12,000 more men. The Minister would not reconsider his policy and he also insisted that, although the men were to be used as reinforcements, they would be sent over in the battalions in which they had been recruited. The War Office, after determining that there was room for 5,000 at Shornecliffe, finally agreed to make room for the new men in the Aldershot Command. The first men arrives at the beginning of October in circumstances of profound mystery. Carson pleaded in vain with Ottawa to be told when and how many men were coming. The War Office did not say exactly where the men would go and no one seems to have asked. Carson was wakened on 11th of October with news that a thousand men had arrived at Bramshott, 14 miles from Aldershot. No one had been there to meet them nor were facilities ready. Paradoxically, the 1,000 odd men were actually a collection of loose drafts intended for Shornecliffe but the British had mistaken them for a complete battalion. It was in this welter of confusion that the large Canadian camp at Bramshott was founded.<sup>56</sup>

34. Finding a commander for the camp proved unusually easy. Lord Brooke's name seems to have occurred to many people at once. One of the sons of the Earl of Warwick, Brooke had spent some years in the Army and had then tried ranching in Western Canada. He had also become a close friend of Sir Sam. At the outbreak of war, Brooke had resumed his service with the British Army but Hughes had intervened to give him a brigade in the 2nd Division. A month in France had satisfied Turner that Brooke would have to be replaced. The danger of removing the Minister's protege would be removed if he could be given the command of a large training camp. In addition, from Carson's viewpoint, if a Canadian Officer was not appointed quickly, the British would impose one of their own nominees. After some delay in negotiations with General Headquarters in France Brooke assumed his command on November 19th.

35. So far, the Canadian command system in England had been illogical and complex; the addition of Bramshott added an element of the absurd. Hitherto, MacDougall's Canadian Training Division had been under the supervision of Shornecliffe District which was part of

Eastern Command. There was another channel on matters of Canadian concern which passed from Ottawa or from the War Office through Carson to whomever he thought fit to approach. If MacDougall was still G.O.C. Canadians, as everyone in England believed, he also became responsible for the troops at Bramshott and had authority over Brigadier— General Lord Brooke. Although he was a Major-General, Steele would have no authority over Bramshott, nor over MacDougall when he was giving orders to that camp. In addition, Bramshott came under Aldershot Command and hence the two Canadian Training camps would be under two separate Imperial commands.

36. Carson set out, in a variety of ways, to try to rationalise the situation. On October 18th, he wrote to the War Office, explaining that MacDougall would be responsible for the brigadier-general in command at Bramshott and suggesting that that particular piece of Aldershot Command be made a part of Shornecliffe District and, hence, of Eastern Command. He also proposed to eliminate Steele by making him an Inspector-General of Canadian troops in England, with a promise of trips to France "You are," he wrote to Steele, "and I say it without trying to throw any bouquets, a master hand on matters of inspection and the handling of men..." Steele did not object to the proposal and Carson wrote a long letter to the Minister, explaining the developing problem in England and particularly explaining the conflicting positions of Steele and MacDougall:

There is no question of friction between these two distinguished officers, and yet I do know that the only thing that prevents friction is the common sense displayed by both of them, and perhaps I should also say the presence of myself here always ready to throw oil on the troubled water at a moment's notice, and the thought has struck me, and struck me only to-day, could we not make much better use of General Steele's services by giving him an appointment similar to that which he held in Canada and make him Inspector— General of all our forces in England? He could then give up the Shornecliffe Command, which is a fifth wheel to a coach in any case, have his headquarters in London or elsewhere, wherever best suited to his position and spend his time in inspecting from camp to camp, hospital to hospital, convalescent home to convalescent home, etc. ....I am sure the War Office would be quite agreeable, if you thought well of such a move, to approve of it and to put back General MacDougall, in his former dual position of G.O.C. Canadians as well as G.O.C. Shornecliffe area.<sup>58</sup>

Neither the War Office nor the Minister of Militia replied to Carson's recommendations. He knew better than to bother Hughes but he was obliged to take up the question of Bramshott. MacDougall wrote to ask for a clarification of the role of the battalions being concentrated in the other camp. Were they to be used for reinforcements or were they to form a Third Division? He sent Carson a report from the British Inspector of Infantry, Major-General Howard which drew attention to the problems of a divided command, and recommending that if the Bramshott battalions were to produce reinforcement drafts, they should be under Shornecliffe.

37. Moved by MacDougall's letter and Howard's report, Carson wrote once again to the War Office recalling his October letter and repeating his suggestion that Bramshott should be transferred from Aldershot Command to Shornecliffe. Lord Brooke would be serving under MacDougall, he informed them, and reminded them that "the desire of the Canadian Government

is that the training at Bramshott should be regulated from Shornecliffe."<sup>59</sup> The British reaction seems perverse. The General Officer Commanding in Chief of the Aldershot Training Centre was informed that Steele, not MacDougall would be "entirely responsible for the training of the Canadians in your Command."<sup>60</sup> Steele, himself, seems to have been surprised by this authority but he assumed that it was a result of Carson's proposal to make him an Inspector-General. Carson assumed the same and wrote back to congratulate Steele on his appointment: " ... this is very pleasing news to me indeed, and I know the Canadians will benefit by your long and useful military experience."<sup>61</sup> Predictably, Steele's authorisation from the War Office could not be accepted by General MacDougall. He, too, had received the War Office instructions giving Steele responsibility for the training at Bramshott, and he wrote to Carson on December 18th to complain that they were contrary to the terms of the letter Carson had written to the War Office.<sup>62</sup> The matter was taken up with the War Office once more and it was agreed that nothing had been done to interfere with MacDougall's command. After further correspondence and a visit to the War Office, Carson felt able, on 9 January 1916, to write to Steele about what he felt was the structure of the Canadian command in England.

The position of affairs today is that General MacDougall remains in the position to which he was appointed by the Canadian Government, and approved by the British Authorities, namely, General Officer Commanding Canadians in England.

Brigadier-General Lord Brooke is Commanding in Bramshott and serving directly under General MacDougall, and subject to his orders and directions, and the same syllabus of training carried out in Shornecliffe is to be carried out in Bramshott.

You remain in your command of General Officer Commanding the Shornecliffe area, and in addition to that your supervision authority has been extended to also take in our troops in Bramshott which was the exact thing that I asked the War Office to approve of many months ago."<sup>63</sup>

This did not satisfy Steele who wrote an immediate reply protesting that MacDougall could not be responsible for the training and discipline of all Canadians in England since that would prevent him as General Officer Commanding in Shornecliffe from exercising any authority or supervision over such matters.

38. Steele's reaction to Carson's letter and MacDougall's letter of the 18th of December both reflect a marked decline in the good feeling among the senior officers in England by the end of the year. Early in November, Carson had intervened to contradict Colonel Prank Reid, the Director of Organizations, in an observation that MacDougall had charge of the various administrative directorates in England. Carson claimed that control for himself in all matters save discipline.<sup>64</sup> Even discipline was involved when he passed on a rebuke to both MacDougall and Brooke from the Assistant Provost Marshal in London that discipline was lax because offenders were too lightly punished. This led to an angry correspondence in which MacDougall challenged Carson's right to interfere in such matters. Carson eventually gave way.<sup>65</sup> The tension between MacDougall and Steele was even more evident and contrasted with the mood in September when Steele had recommended that MacDougall be promoted as a reward for his services.



39. Having felt his own pre-eminence challenged, not merely by MacDougall but by other Canadian officers, Carson had recourse to the Minister:

MacDougall's ideas and mine do not coincide and I want this understanding of my powers, responsibility and authority etc., to be thoroughly straightened out. I claim that I have full authority over and charge of all directorates and that they are my administrative staff, MacDougall's duties being restricted in so far as directorates are concerned, to discipline only.

Carson's anxiety had been aroused by an attempt to prepare a gradation list for the Canadian forces overseas which seniority was to be based on service outside Canada. MacDougall's suggestion that his appointment was irregular and that he was not really a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force would leave him no place at all on such a list.

My claim is that I am a member of the C.E.F. and that as your representative here I am senior to all.... I don't claim military seniority over Steele. That common-sense officer recognizes my position and standing, so does the War Office and everyone else including MacDougall when it suits him and at all times he is ready to shove responsibility on to my shoulders, but when a gradation list is being made up which will be a permanent record, why he wants chief place at the feast.<sup>66</sup>

Hughes' reply was prompt, abusive but not particularly helpful:

Have had many complaints from several sources concerning MacDougall's lack of attention to his proper training duties, but have not asked you to investigate them hoping he would give attention to the detailed training and development of his officers and men. However I have thus far refused to recall him. If he would centre his efforts on developing the soldiers of all grades under him it would be well. There is too much time wasted over petty trifles and personal aggrandizement. I had to point out several times in England his lack of supervision in detail in each corps. He is not there simply as a figurehead to work out ideas. Please show him this.<sup>67</sup>

MacDougall was furious that Carson should have provoked such a letter from Hughes and complained bitterly to Sir Max Aitken, the Canadian Eye—Witness. However, Aitken was a closer friend of Hughes and of Carson than of MacDougall and passed on the General's remarks. This seems to have restored peace between the two men for the time being. Carson wrote to insist that he had given him his fullest support and deny that he had ever suggested his recall to the Minister. MacDougall also made his apologies:

I think you must know that I have had and still have the warmest personal regard for you, and I cannot imagine how the matter could have been presented to you in such a manner as to bring about your telegram to Ottawa and the Minister's reply.<sup>68</sup>

40. Restoration of peace in personal relations did nothing to solve problems of divided authority. Carson also spent December in proposing to the Minister the necessity of establishing a single authority overseas. On the 3rd, he wrote:

The trouble is that there is not one solitary soul on this side of the Atlantic Ocean authorised to say "This shall be or this shall not be, and the time is rapidly coming when we must have authority to act on any or every matter on this side of the water..."<sup>69</sup>

On the 15th, he went on to recommend a duplicate of the Ottawa organization. The present organization had reached the end of its possibilities. In addition to himself as "practically Acting Minister of Militia", an Adjutant-General a Quartermaster-General and an Inspector-General's Branch were all needed. He had hoped that the Minister would be able to make a visit himself to see the situation. If not, "the sooner the authority is given me by mail or otherwise to make these changes the better for our organization over here." On the 27th, he again called for a sub-militia council as the only solution of the problem of disposing of surplus officers.

41. Carson's concern for a re-organization was justified. The functioning of the Canadian organization in the British Isles was increasingly unsatisfactory. The most apparent symptom was the lack of any system of Communication. The Militia Department in Ottawa sent its messages direct to the War Office, to Carson, to Steele and, to MacDougall, without any evident system. General Alderson, in France, complained of receiving correspondence from Steele, Carson, MacDougall and Brooke as well as from Sir George Perley and from Sir Max Aitkin.<sup>70</sup> Aitken, with a commission as a Colonel in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, the confidence of both Sir Robert Borden and Sir Sam Hughes in Canada and the friendship of many important political figures in Britain, did very much as he pleased in sustaining a personal zest for intrigue. He even contemplated the notion of commanding a Canadian brigade although he quickly reconsidered on being required by the Minister to receive training first as a captain.<sup>71</sup> The war Office, lacking the time or inclination to understand the Canadian confusion, reacted pragmatically by corresponding with whomever might bring results. One consequence, as pointed out by Carson to the Under-Secretary of State for War, was that at the beginning of January, two regiments of cavalry were being prepared quite independently and unknown to the other to fill a single vacancy in the Canadian Cavalry Brigade. Directions to form the regiment had gone to both Steele and MacDougall but not to Carson. MacDougall had mobilized the resources of the Cavalry Training School at Shornecliffe while Steele had directed Brooke at Bramshott to form a regiment of cavalry from the battalions of Canadian Mounted Rifles concentrated there. "Now, is this not an absurd condition of affairs," Carson complained to the War Office:

and this absurd condition of affairs, and every other absurd condition of a like nature could be overcome and overcome in one way only, and that is by these official instructions of the War Office coming to me as the representative of the Department of Militia and Defence, Canada, and to me alone, and I would see that prompt action is taken at all times and no mistakes made.<sup>72</sup>

42. Beneath this tangle of conflicting authorities, there was widespread evidence that the Canadian administration in the United Kingdom was functioning badly. It was to take a year and a very different organization to grapple with the failings of the medical, dental and chaplains' services but the correspondence of all three departments demonstrates that their respective problems were well developed by the beginning of 1916. The reinforcement question was harder

to postpone. A 3rd Canadian Division was in process of formation by the beginning of the year, largely from units already in France but it was proving very difficult to maintain the strength of the two divisions already in the line. Carson, indeed, had opposed the formation of a third division unless there was some guarantee that one of the three divisions would always be out of the line.<sup>73</sup> Many aspects of the reinforcement problem were far beyond the control of Carson, Steele or MacDougall. Unfit men were sent in large numbers from Canada, The British set the training standards and insisted that all men coming from Canada should be considered no further trained than third week recruits, an inflexible viewpoint but one which also reflects on the quality of training, often given over many months, to the men in the Canadian camps. These problems aside, the traditional bitterness between front line and base was developing to serious proportions between the Canadian Corps and Shornecliffe, and there seemed to be no means of restoring confidence. In December, Lt. Col. Edward Hilliams visited Shornecliffe from France, anxious to obtain a few experienced officers with whom to re-organize the 25th Nova Scotia Battalion Colonel Burritt, MacDougall's General Staff Officer, rejected his request and Hilliams returned empty-handed to France. MacDougall backed up his officer even when Carson complained.<sup>74</sup> Garnet Hughes wrote directly to Carson to ask for machine gunners and was put off with the answer that the Canadians could send only the men authorised by the British. Major-General Currie echoed the request and went on to complain about the way requests were answered. "I almost feel as if it is no further use making complaints because the position is almost hopeless.... Apparently Shornecliffe has got its back up and does not intend to help."<sup>75</sup> Finally, on 8 February 1916, Alderson directed a complaint through British channels, pointing out that there were over 25,000 Canadians in England but that only 1,000 were available to be sent as reinforcements. He pleaded that semi-trained men should be sent to fill his vacancies and to receive their final training in the field.<sup>76</sup> Carson was forced to concur, blaming the discrepancy on a lack of facilities.<sup>77</sup> The bitterness worked both ways. MacDougall had two of his officers who had visited France prepare statements about remarks which had been made to them about the Canadian Training Division. Major General Mercer of the 3rd Division, for example, had described Shornecliffe as a "joke". MacDougall demanded a court of inquiry. "The statements ... are just the limit, and are the first more or less specific statements that I could take hold of. They reflect upon us all."<sup>78</sup> Carson agreed.

43. There was also the steadily growing problem of surplus officers. Hughes had adopted the plan of recruiting additional battalions rather than drafts as the easiest way to raise men while also gratifying the newly aroused military ambitions of many influential men. Senior officers were selected in large part on their assumed ability to attract recruits; by definition, they were mostly men of substantial political influence or else close friends of the Minister. Once in England, the newly made colonels and majors saw their subalterns and their privates being sent away to France while they remained. To return to Canada would mean having their own recruiting speeches and their own promises cast in their faces. To remain in England meant idleness and frustration. To go to France, for those who were young enough to accept, meant a major sacrifice in rank and self-esteem. The Minister called repeatedly for the surplus officers to be used and the inefficient ones to be sent home but no one dared take decisive action. In October, 1915, Hughes had cabled:

You must insist on Steele, MacDougall and every acting brigadier weeding out every weak officer from brigadier and colonels down. See that these two senior officers

actually test out day after day all officers and make sure all are able to think and act like lightning. Deliberately mix them up so as to test them and get rid of all net thoroughly fit.<sup>79</sup>

By the end of the year, Steele was able to present a list of only seven names, a majority of them French, of officers who were to be sent home. A few weeks later, when he tried to follow up the fate of these officers, Carson discovered that some of them had actually been sent to France. His own searching was hardly more profound. In January, he reported that all the officers at the Canadian Training Division were poor with one marked exception, Captain Greene, Staff Captain with the 12th Brigade, who was "hard working, always on the job, popular with his men and a decided success."<sup>80</sup> Capt Greene was the Minister's son—in—law. It was easy to condemn in general. It was up to Steele to select the inefficient. He took the viewpoint that none of the officers were really soldiers but all were studying their work as hard as they could.<sup>81</sup> The only possible way to making the senior officers willing to go home would be short trips to the front line, ostensibly to give them training experience for use back in Canada, really as a bribe and a face—saver. There was also a hope that a few of the officers might find a place for themselves near the Front. The two week visits persisted intermittently until September, 1916, when the War Office requested that they cease.<sup>82</sup>

44. Carson was aware of at least some of the problems in France but he believed that they would be resolved if he were given complete authority. He had passed on a suggestion from Aitken in a letter to the Minister in early November, 1915, Sir Max felt:

.....that we should consolidate, and moreover have a distinctive title. His suggestion was that I should be known as the 'Commissioner of War for Canada' and, that he should be known as the 'Assistant Commissioner of War for Canada', that we should join forces and gravitate from a common centre, and I think, even if I say it myself, that we should make a strong team and capable of doing the very best of good work in Canada's interests, but so far nothing has been done regarding this suggestion, and I am quite satisfied still that this is the solution, and a solution that would be perfectly satisfactory to Sir Max Aitken, and it would be perfectly satisfactory to me.

Carson went on to give an idea of how important he had become in the system and how he was taking charge of the Canadian organization:

The condition of affairs now as against November, 1914, are (sic) as different as day is from night. Now every door is open to me and every official general, helpful, kindly and very much at my disposal. A year ago, every door that could be was kept shut and kindness or consideration were very much the exception. If I do say it myself, I consider that we have a very good organization here. Changes are being made from time to time but they are all helpful. I am now arranging to have weekly meetings with all our Chief Officials, one week here, one week at Shornecliffe, where we can have a sort of board meeting and thresh out difficulties and decide on policies as occasion presents itself..<sup>83</sup>

No record has been found of any such meetings being held.

45. Evidently, Carson was not going to suggest any organizational change beyond a more explicit insistence on his authority. The issue was precipitated by the War Office, perhaps as a reaction to the blunder over the two cavalry regiments. Through the Colonial Office, it asked the Canadian Government whether the powers assigned Carson in the Order—in—Council of 21 January 1915, had been extended and whether it was the wish of the Canadian Government that communications should be conducted through him.<sup>84</sup> This cable, passed through the Governor General and the Prime Minister, reached the Militia Department when the Minister was away. General Gwatkin, the Chief of the General Staff, took the opportunity to present his own solution of the problem of the command in the United Kingdom. In a memorandum\* addressed to the Deputy Minister of Militia Surgeon General Fiset, he called for a local Council to be established in England under a representative of the Minister who would act as President. Carson was explicitly excluded from this role by being suggested as the Representative of the Quarter—Master—General. Gwatkin sent a copy of his memorandum to the Prime Minister's secretary, Loring Christie with the noted intimation that he predicted that the position of Carson would provoke bitter discussions. He added that his views were shared by Fiset, Major—General Hodgins, the Adjutant—General, anti Colonel Ward. lie had not consulted the Quartermaster—General, Major—General Macdonald (notoriously under the Minister's influence.)<sup>84</sup>

46. Actually, the Minister of Militia was no better pleased than Gwatkin that Carson had been claiming and even assuming absolute power. Borden told the Governor General of the Minister's reaction to Carson's "War Commissioner" letter: "The Minister of Militia informs me that Major-General Carson conceived an extravagant idea of his jurisdiction which the Minister took occasion to correct in the month of November last. He was then informed that he has no military position or status, and that he is purely the business representative of the Department of

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\* "General Carson is performing functions beyond the scope assigned to him by Order-in-Council. His business capacity is unquestioned; but in military matters, he has gradually acquired an influence which is viewed with alarm on both sides of the Atlantic.

There is no one officer qualified to take sole charge, under the Minister, of the C.E.F. in the United Kingdom; and therefore I suggest the establishment of a local council.

I propose -

A president, the immediate representative of the Minister

Major-General Steele representing the C.G.S. and acting as I.G.

Lieutenant-Colonel Kemmis Betty, A.G.'s representative.

Major-General Carson, Q.M.G's representative and purchasing agent.

Colonel Ward, Finance Member, representing A. & P.M.G.

A Secretary to be selected by the President.

On matters connected with the administration of the C.E.F. the local Council would be the medium of communication between the Militia Department and the War Office."

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Militia for the purpose as set forth in the Order-in-Council which appointed (him)"<sup>85</sup> The Canadian Government's official reply added nothing to Carson's stature:

Carson's original functions have not been extended. It is considered appropriate that War Office should communicate with him touching matters for which he was appointed or any matters incidental thereto. Militia Department will if necessary communicate more fully with War Office on this subject. Minister of Militia hopes to visit Great Britain so soon as opportunity offers and will then take up fully the situation in this respect.<sup>86</sup>

Hughes also took up another matter in which he suspected that his prerogative was suffering. On 16 September 1915, an Order—in—Council had been passed authorising the promotion of officers in the Canadian Expeditionary Force on recommendation of the General Officer Commanding Canadian Expeditionary Force for officers in Europe and on recommendation of the General Officer Commanding, Shornecliffe, for officers in the United Kingdom, in both cases without need of reference to Canada<sup>87</sup> Hughes always maintained that this Order had been passed without his knowledge. Canadian officers in France continued to believe that their careers were being blighted by the appointment of British officers to staff positions within their Corps and Hughes continued to be responsive to their appeals. To Aitken, he wrote on November 30th:

It is discreditable to have British officers run the Army Corps and Divisional positions. It would be insulting to have them brought into the Brigades .... it is the general opinion that scores of our officers can teach the British Officers for many moons to come. ....There is altogether too much staff college paternalism and espionage abroad.<sup>88</sup>

The Minister's indignation might have been tempered by the realization of how utterly unsuitable some of his appointments had been but, in fact, it proved infectious in the Cabinet, many of whose members were under similar pressure. The outcome was the substitution of a new Order—in—Council of 23 February 1916, establishing that while recommendations for promotion in the Canadian Expeditionary Force must pass through the War Office or, in the active theatres, through the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief, they must also be recommended by the Minister of Militia and approved by the Governor in Council.<sup>89</sup> This decision was to provoke a long and bitter correspondence for this was a most explicit claim by the Canadian authorities to repatriate a responsibility which had long been conceded.

47. On March 9th, the Minister of Militia set out for England, leaving the Hon. A.E. Kemp in temporary charge of his Department and his Prime Minister facing a growingly restive Parliament. Hughes' avowed purpose was to investigate training in England and he had decided before he set out that the responsibility for the failure to date lay with Brooke and MacDougall. The Minister was also in search of a rest and a change. His heart was giving him trouble and he had been suffering from insomnia. Borden approved his departure with considerable apprehension, writing ahead to Sir George Perley:

I have cautioned him with regard to his activities in Great Britain. In case his impetuous temperament should lead him into any difficulties, I earnestly hope you will send me a secret message so that I may get in touch with him by cable.<sup>90</sup>

He also wrote to Hughes, asking that:

In case any difference of opinion should arise between your Department and the War Office with regard to matters affecting the conduct of the War, I hope you will endeavour to have them disposed of with a minimum of friction,<sup>91</sup>

48. A certain amount of friction confronted the Minister on his arrival. MacDougall had sent Colonel Burritt, his General Staff Officer, to London to see Carson and to explain the problems at Shernecliffe. Carson and Burritt had sat down and discussed each of the officers of the Training Division, a subject which MacDougall did not feel to be appropriate. Carson had replied with a long letter, stating that "as the Minister's representative here, and in fact as what might be called the Acting Minister here I have got a perfect right, and I have every intention of exercising that right, of keeping myself in the closest possible touch and get any information that I think is necessary that I should know through the medium of any officer of the Canadian Expeditionary Force." Several further angry paragraphs reiterated the point that as the Minister's representative, he would ask no man's permission to obtain information.<sup>92</sup> MacDougall gave way completely before the barrage and added, by way of apology that the fault was entirely Burritt's, that the incident he had meant to complain of had nothing to do with Carson but rather with Steele, who had also called on Burritt to make a report and, in my case, Burritt was rather inclined to use superlatives. "As to your position as representative of the Minister, I have understood it all along and am aware that the way you carry out your duties is a matter between you and the Minister and that, even if I had the slightest desire to interfere which I have not, it is none of my business."<sup>93</sup> By March, however, with the Minister already on the sea, MacDougall was once again disputing the control of the various directorates, attempting to obtain action on questions which Carson insisted on holding in abeyance until the Minister should arrive.

49. Within a week of his arrival, Hughes was satisfied that he understood the whole problem. He wrote to Borden to tell him that he had had a meeting with 16 officers and discovered that the trouble lay with MacDougall. He had shown "petty, childish jealousy", was not "broad enough or big enough" and had been "nasty" to Carson and Steele. He also discovered the problem of officers' wives in England, with their constant whispering rumours. In typical fashion, he gathered over two hundred officers together at Shornecliffe and gave them a lecture. The Commander of the Canadian Corps, who had dared to condemn the Ross Rifle and to oppose some of Hughes' appointments, was reserved for the most complete denunciation before the Prime Minister:

Alderson - I have the proof of this - has deliberately been playing double with Turner, with Brooke, with Garnet\* with Watson\*\* and with others. He has sent the now, famous report on the Ross Rifle everywhere, ... I have the evidence to show that he plays men so far as they suit his purpose and then throws them; to show that he is insistent in trying to ruin Turner and from the time the second contingent crossed over under General Turner, an Lord Brooke stood by General Turner, he has never ceased trying to ruin Lord

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\* Brigadier-General Garnet Hughes, the Minister's son.

\*\* Brigadier-General David Watson, commanding the 5th Brigade and proprietor of the Quebec Chronicle, a Conservative newspaper.

Brooke. He did his best to prevent Garnet becoming a Brigadier—General, although he, at first, voluntarily recommended him and he has, without any let—up, been picking on every officer known to be a friend of mine in the entire Force.

Even letters which Alderson had sent to the Minister, urging him to give the full authority in England to Carson, were a cloak for his effort to get the job for a friend of his, a General Harrison. Another British officer, Colonel Harrington, had told the Minister that "it was impossible for any self—respecting man to remain with Alderson." Hughes continued: "Haig despises him; Earl Kitchener, with whom I had the honour of lunching today, it is asserted, has no use for him."

The result is that to-day General Turner, Garnet and General Watson stand far ahead of General Alderson in the opinion of the greatest men at the Front and in England. They are recognized as practical soldiers and giants while poor General Alderson is regarded as a pigmy and an intriguer.<sup>94</sup>

50. With speeches at Shornecliffe and denunciation of "poor General Alderson", it was perhaps surprising that the Minister should consider any reorganizing necessary at all. However, in the same letter to the Prime Minister, he said that he was calling Brigadier—General Watson back from France to become Inspector—General and "knock the whole thing into shape."<sup>95</sup> He then seems to have decided to make Watson the chief military commander of the Canadian Forces in England and build an "informal Councillor Committee to handle overseas affairs" around him. This was given to Aitken to organize. The Minister's plan called for a membership of Watson, promoted to Major—General, Carson, as his representative, Aitken, Colonel George Murphy, a friend from Ottawa, who was to be Quartermaster—General, and MacDougall as Adjutant General, if Watson so desired. There was to be a weekly meeting, which the Director of Medical Services would also attend. "In matters concerning any question other than military, the Council will be good enough to call in for consultation, Colonel\* The Honourable Sir George Perley, K.C.M.G., Canadian High Commissioner."<sup>96</sup>

51. During the absence of the Minister of Militia in the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister found an opportunity to look into the affairs of the Militia Department. Although he was not in sympathy with Sir Sam Hughes' somewhat turbulent approach to human affairs, the Prime Minister seems to have shared his Minister's suspicions of the British indifference to Canadian interests and contempt for Canadian officials, military and civil. As leader of the Conservative Party in Canada, he was under pressure from political supporters who wanted contracts for their firm or promotions for themselves or their friends. A substantial proportion of the Prime Minister's wartime correspondence is devoted to dealing with claims of this sort. At moments of great strain, he displayed almost a petulance when British and Canadian officials on the far side of the Atlantic failed to make arrangements which would relieve him from this sort of difficulty. It was a feeling which he shared with the Minister of Militia and it served as a bond between two utterly different men. The opposing point of view was expressed by Sir George Perley who, like many Canadians before and since, had acquired a sense of gratification from being accepted in the inner circles of British government and society. Despite his position as a member of the Canadian cabinet and as the senior Canadian official in the United Kingdom, Perley had been

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\* Perley was Honorary Lieutenant Colonel of the Argenteuil Rangers.



inhibited from involvement in Canadian military affairs in England by his poor relations with Hughes and by a certain disinclination to exercise direct power. He continued to press at regular intervals for the appointment of the ~High Commissioner as a regular member of the Cabinet, a proposal which the Prime Minister as regularly refused to consider.<sup>97</sup>

52. Perley became involved in military matters because the prime Minister sought to use him as an independent source of information and to exploit his political influence with British statesmen. This role increased with Borden's growing dissatisfaction with Hughes' department. On October 30<sup>th</sup>, Perley was asked to report on the use and value of the Ross Rifle, a question which he referred to the War Office. In January he passed on a report of tests conducted in the presence of Alderson, Aitken and Carson in which the Ross Rifle functioned rather less well than the Lee-Enfield.<sup>98</sup> He also undertook the negotiations with Sir Reginald Brade at the War Office for the return of the P.P.C.L.I. to the Canadian Corps. At the end of November, he was charged with discovering, as surreptitiously as possible, the views of the troops about Laurier's refusal to enter a coalition. He soon found that others had been directed to make the same sounding, chiefly at Hughs' behest, and he left the field to them.<sup>99</sup> The same confusion of authority occurred when Borden directed him to intervene with the War Office to obtain more Canadian appointments in the Corps. He discovered that the British ministers had intercepted Hughes' telegram to Aitken of November 30<sup>th</sup> (c.f. supra) thanks to the Censor and that negotiation had been rendered very difficult.<sup>100</sup> Borden continued to press his strong feelings on this subject on Perley. In a very bitter letter of January 4<sup>th</sup>, Borden complained

Procrastination, indecision, inertia, doubt, hesitation and many other undesirable qualities have made themselves entirely too conspicuous in this war. During my recent visit to England a very prominent Cabinet Minister in speaking of the Officers of another Department said that he did not call them traitors but he asserted that they could not have acted differently if they had been traitors. They are still doing duty and five months have elapsed. Another very able Cabinet Minister spoke of the shortage of guns, rifles, munitions, etc., but declared that the chief shortage was of brains.<sup>101</sup>

53. Although he had not intervened himself in military affairs, Perley had complained that he was being bypassed in communications with the Colonial Office and the War Office. On 22 January 1916, Borden advised him that Carson and Aitken had been directed to consult with him before taking up matters with the War Office and the Colonial Office. During his visit to England, Borden had been told that Carson saw Perley twice a week.<sup>102</sup> In reply, the High Commissioner explained that, while he got on well with Aitken and Carson, the visits from Carson were rare and, according to Carson, they were not made on instructions from Hughes. It was while the Minister of Militia himself was in England that Perley received his most direct invitation to discuss the organization in England, when Borden sent, for his comments, a copy of an anonymous letter from an officer at the front. The letter described the arrangements in England as "deplorable". Perley could hardly go so far:

There seems no doubt that the senior officers here have been working a good deal at cross purposes. I believe myself that there should be a strong head here in England, and have so told Sir Sam. However he seems to know all about the situation here, and will no doubt take steps to remedy it.

Perley had learned of the proposed appointment of General Watson and approval of it. The High Commissioner was still consciously on the outside of the military organization and he was not easily tempted to move inside. "The Pay and Records Officers have become an immense institution," he admitted, "but I have no idea as to whether the percentage of expense in maintaining them is greater than it ought to be." <sup>103</sup>

54. The Prime Minister also referred his concern to the senior officials of the Militia Department still in Ottawa, Surgeon—General Fiset and Major—General Gwatkin. The Chief of General Staff's earlier memorandum seems to have accompanied the Minister to England<sup>104</sup> but the basic notions were recalled. At a Cabinet meeting on March 11th, Gwatkin had been called upon to explain why, when there were over 240,000 men in uniform, there were less than 60,000 of them in France. The Chief of the General Staff blamed Brooke and MacDonald, who lacked experience and who failed to co-operate with Alderson. He also suggested that "the attempt to utilize General Carson as a means of co-ordinating the work of the two Divisional Commanders has not proved successful. General Carson exceeds his proper functions and there is friction."<sup>105</sup> In the memorandum which he and Fiset sent the Prime Minister less than a month later, the same point was made even more forcibly:

By Order-in-Council dated 15 January 1915 certain duties were assigned Carson. He exceeded those duties and on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1916 Mr. Bonar Law asked questions on the subject. The questions were evaded. General meanwhile continues to perform functions beyond the scope assigned to him by Order-in-Council. There is friction, misunderstanding, extravagance; and the War Office, not without reason, stands aloof.

The two officers went on to recommend a Local Council as Gwatkin had before. Two changes were made; Major-General Lessard, the Inspector-General for Eastern Canada, was substituted for Steele, and three associate members were proposed, one each from the artillery and the engineers to speak for the Master-General of Ordnance and the Director of Medical Services, Surgeon-General G.C. Jones <sup>106</sup> In a covering letter, Gwatkin proposed Fiset for the presidency of the Council on the assumption that Sir George Perley would be too busy.<sup>107</sup>

55. Six days after the memorandum had been received in the prime Minister's office, it emerged as a draft report to Council, embodying virtually all of the recommendations made by Gwatkin and Fiset. Perley was named as the President of the proposed "Canadian Overseas Council", with Fiset as Vice-President and member. Lessard was to represent the Chief of the General Staff as Inspector General, Kemmis Betty represented the Adjutant-General, Carson, the Quartermaster-General and Colonel Ward, the Accountant and Paymaster-General. There were to be four associate members, the three recommended by Gwatkin and Fiset and a fourth appointment by the War Office. The secretary was to be A.B. Goldwyer-Lewis, then acting as Secretary of the Small Arms Committee and a professional civil servant. The Council was to be empowered make promotions and appointments in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the United Kingdom and, subject to the concurrence of the British Army Council, to suspend any officer pending decision based on a report to be sent to Canada. Purchases and requisitions on the War Appropriation would be made only on a requisition from the Council. Provision was also made for the payment and expenses of members and secretary.<sup>108</sup>

56. It would hardly have been possible to implement the new plan without consultation with the Minister of Militia but the Prime Minister was sufficiently confident that it would be accepted that he took steps to have General Lessard, then concluding a three month tour of England, kept from sailing. Sir George Perley managed to catch him as he was about to sail and the astonished General naturally demanded an explanation. Borden's reply was that Lessard's services were more needed in Britain than in Canada at that time and that he was considering a reorganization in Britain by constituting a sub-committee of the Militia Council with wide powers. He promised further information in a few days.<sup>109</sup>

57. In the meanwhile, Huges was on his way back from England. His last instructions had been to add Lord Brooke to his Council.<sup>110</sup> The visit had been quite peaceful and Perley admitted to the Prime Minister that he would have been pleased if Sir Sam could have remained longer. This could not well be as Hughes was urgently required in Ottawa to answer the charges of a number of Opposition Members of Parliament who had been digging into munition contracts granted under the Minister's aegis. On his return to Ottawa on April 16th, Hughes was also confronted by Borden's proposal for the reorganization of affairs in England. In the face of the Minister's undoubted claims of a sweeping reorganization having been achieved and perfection now reigning in every Department, Borden abandoned his scheme. He may have been reassured by the presence of Aitken and Watson on Hughes' Council and he was certainly reluctant to face the storm which must follow from any opposition to the Minister's plans. There remained the problem of the stranded Lessard. The issue was first raised by Carson on April 10th, asking the Minister why the Inspector—General has been held in England, presumably on the Prime Minister's orders.<sup>111</sup> This news met Hughes on his arrival and doubtless his indignation gave the Prime Minister a foretaste of what he might expect were he to set his will against the Minister's.<sup>112</sup> A solution to Lessard's problem was found by April 22nd when he was directed to make reports on MacDougall's and Brooke's commands. This pretext had served out its purpose by June 7th, when Lessard was ordered back to Canada.<sup>113</sup>

Fortunately, Perley had had the good sense not to give the old General any notion of the splendid position planned for him.<sup>114</sup>

58. Moved by the anonymous letter of criticism which the Prime Minister had sent him on April 3rd, in company with a serious attack against Carson and MacDougall by one of the auditor's from the office of the Paymaster and Accountant General, Perley had been doing some serious thinking about the organization in England. He had discussed the matter with during his visit and had largely accepted his opinion. He had also learned, from the cryptic remark in the telegram to retain Lessard, that the Prime Minister was also thinking along similar lines, at the same time, the High Commissioner held to his principle that he had no responsibility for the conduct and organization of other Departments. These were all conflicting ideas behind the letter which he sent the Prime Minister at the end of April. He expanded on his opinion that the command should be concentrated in the hands of one or a very few men:

I am quite sure that there should be some strong central authority set up here so that friction would be avoided and all the various kinds of work properly co-ordinated. Personally I was inclined to think that this power might have properly been put in the

hands of one man, but after hearing Sir Sam's views on the subject I think that perhaps a small Committee would be better, but I am sure it would be a mistake to have a large one. Three men at most ought to answer the purpose, and they should be carefully chosen, and have someone very strong and capable at their head. This Committee would of course carry out the policy of the Government, and the instructions received from Ottawa, but subject always to these considerations I think they should have as much real authority as possible. Their powers of course should be definitely set forth by Order—in—Council, so that they may know exactly to what they are expected to attend, and that the War Office would recognize their authority as so defined.

He admitted that, officially, he could know nothing about the situation then prevailing, but the rumours of frictions were very prevalent and unpleasant:

The story is that Steele and MacDougall are far from happy together at Shornecliffe, and that Carson has attempted to exercise military authority over them, which they are not willing that he should do. Then the situation between MacDougall and Brooke is not very clear, and I am told that it leads to a great deal of duplication of work.

He reiterated his belief in the value of a concentration of power:

..... With reference to the personnel of the proposed Committee, I have no suggestion to make except to urge that it should consist of three of the very best men possible. The work which it would have to do is very important and growing day to day. My feeling is that a Committee of five or seven, composed of even fairly good men, would not make things better, and might make them worse. I have got along very well with all the chief men here, and believe they are doing their best, but think that most of them might be improved upon for members of the proposed Committee.<sup>116</sup>

Again, on April 29th, he suggested that all matters would be better if his suggestion of a strong Militia Council was adopted.<sup>117</sup>

59. The Prime Minister, however, had decided to give the Minister's alleged reorganization a chance to prove itself. On April 5th, the day Hughes left London, Carson, Brooke, Colonel G.P. Murphy, the acting Quarter-master-General, and Brigadier-General Watson met and decided that the War Office should be told that the Minister had appointed Watson to the command of the 4th Canadian Division, then gathering at Bramshott. Watson was also to have temporary command of all the Canadians in England and "immediate steps should be taken, through the friendly influence of Colonel Sir Max Aitken, to have Brigadier-General J.C. MacDougall, C.M.G., attached to the Canadian Army Corps Headquarters in France for instructional purposes for an indefinite time. A second meeting was held on the 20th. Carson was appointed Chairman and Lieutenant Pinkney of his staff was made secretary. Unfortunately, there were only three others present, Brooke, Murphy and Surgeon-General G.C. Jones. The little group decided on a title for their headquarters; it would be "Headquarters, Canadian Expeditionary Forces, London, Enland". Other matters were held over for the arrival of General Watson, expected back in a week.<sup>118</sup> Meetings were set for two subsequent days but had to be postponed and the idea of a Council evaporated.

60. The problem lay with Watson's insistence that Steele and MacDougall must be removed before he would take command in England. It had only been with reluctance that he had ever agreed to do anything about Shornecliffe and he could hardly demand less as a demonstration of good faith. MacDougall was offered a chance to go to France. At first, he accepted but then he realized that no firm appointment was attached to the offer and that it was simply a subterfuge to get him out of Shornecliffe, he changed his mind. He would accept an appointment appropriate to his seniority but he would not give up his command for three or four months to find that it had all been pulled to pieces in his absence.<sup>119</sup> In the midst of Aitken's negotiations with Watson and MacDougall, the Battle of the St. Eloi Craters had occurred with the consequent demand by Alderson for the dismissal of Generals Turner and Ketchen. In the circumstances, Aitken appreciated that the vacancy being made for Watson might suddenly be needed for Turner. In the event, it was Alderson who was dismissed but, by then, Watson had been confirmed by the War Office in the command of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division and was unlikely to consider the command in England. Brooke had managed to become a brigadier in the Division. In view of the absence of the most reliable members of the proposed Committee, Aitken had decided that it would be wiser not to proceed with it and rather to concentrate on keeping the peace between the various generals in England, particularly while the Minister was thoroughly involved in Ottawa in answering his accusers.<sup>120</sup>

61. All three schemes of reorganization, Hughes', Borden's and Perley's had been directed, in varying degrees, against the absolute power sought by Major General Carson. With the failure to implement of them, he was free to seek to re-establish his pre-eminence. On 12th April, a conference was held at the War Office to discuss matters of training and reorganization. Steele, MacDougall and Colonel Ironside from Bramshott were present; Carson was not. Somehow Carson discovered what had been decided at the meeting and demanded to know from Steele what action had been taken on the decisions reached.<sup>121</sup> To Major-General Whigham, Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff, he complained:

Might I point out that there is only one person in the British Isles that is in touch with the Canadian Department of Militia & Defence, and capable of speaking on the all round question of policy, which was a fact well known and recognized by the late Adjutant-General, Sir Henry Slater. General Mcready is apparently not aware of this fact and I would feel grateful to you if you would advise him in the premises that I should be present at all conferences of this nature, as the representative in England of the Department of militia and Defence, Canada.<sup>122</sup>

The War Office would have been within their rights to continue to bypass Carson but evidently they preferred peace and, at the meeting on April 28th, Carson was on the distribution list and presumably among those attending.<sup>123</sup> Early in May, Carson authorised Watson to take command of the remaining details at Bramshott, thus removing them from authority of MacDougall.<sup>124</sup> A fortnight later, he was berating MacDougall for appointing brigadiers and forming brigades without the authority of the Minister. Carson had forwarded a list of proposed names to the Minister and it was necessary to wait. MacDougall, however, had gone ahead and appointed Colonel Black and Carson would have to explain this to the Minister.<sup>125</sup> On June 12th, he announced that he Watson and Colonel Ironsides would be coming down to Shornecliffe to

select the needed battalion for the Fourth Division and that he was to parade his four best so that they might take their pick. This provoked twelve querulous and repetitive pages from Steele, a small part of which may be cited:

I do not think for one moment that you intend to slight me, it would be very strange if you would but nevertheless the slight has been put upon me. There is no short circuit in such things and I think that when you wanted a regiment selected for General Watson you might at least have let me do it. I would as you know have given fair play to Watson or any other man. I have the confidence of the Minister and I want yours. The Minister's cable when I was appointed here is proof that he sought something of me, and as I have always done my duty without favour or affection I trust that I cannot in the future feel that there is any slight meant and that as G.O.C. troops I get fair play. I may as well add that men, who if they were in Canada dare not open their mouths about me talk of me in this town as if I were side tracked. It has been common talk for a month past. I reported it to the Minister and he was furious about it.<sup>126</sup>

A month before, Steele had made his personal effort for the command of all Canadians, sending a letter to the Minister of Public Works, adding that he should "press this matter to the utmost extent."<sup>127</sup> So much for favour and affection.

62. In settling the question of command in the Canadian Corps after the unfortunate battle of the St. Eloi Craters, as has already been mentioned, it was Alderson who was removed, rather than Turner and Ketchen. The Canadian Government was obliged to offer the British General the Post of Inspector-General of Canadian Forces in the United Kingdom. Aitken arranged with Haig that Alderson should be given four days to accept the post, at the end of which period, he would simply be removed.<sup>128</sup> On the 28th of May, Alderson gave way and the command of the Corps passed to Lieutenant General Sir Julian Byng. Haig imagined that Alderson's new post would have some significance, that it would at least relieve the commander of the Canadian Corps of his political responsibilities.<sup>129</sup> Aitken, on the other hand, had made it clear to the War Office that the post was purely nominal.<sup>130</sup> This was difficult to communicate in public, however, particularly to Alderson, who was soon demanding cars, clerks and orderlies.<sup>130</sup> General Steele considered Alderson's appointment a personal insult, aggravated by the Inspector—General's decision to take up residence in Shornecliffe:

This is no place for Alderson, his place is in London with you and if he is here I shall consider it a direct affront. I have been loyal to you and the Minister but no confidence has been shown me. Sam Hughes told me when I was in London that I was to have had command of the Canadians and that the Order in Council\* was without his knowledge. He is all right I believe and I shall put it to him to right me when he comes over.<sup>132\*\*</sup>

Carson seems to have mollified him although a later letter from Steele suggests that the unfortunate British general could expect a chilly reception:

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\* Steele refers to this Order-in-Council in several letters in which he claims the over-all command. It may refer to the mythical Order-in-Council alleged to appoint MacDougall as General Officer Commanding Canadians.

\*\* Steele refers presumably to the Minister.

... according to my custom with all officers with whom I may be associated, he will receive from me the assistance in my power to facilitate the performance of his work when he visits for inspection purposes the Canadians under my command, and I am sure he will find everything running very smoothly.<sup>133</sup>

It is probably not surprising that Alderson's status remained as vague as possible. In response to a query from General Watson, Carson could only say that he was responsible to Lord French, Commander-in—Chief of Home Forces, that he had a sort of roving commission and it was impossible to say where he might go.<sup>134</sup> In July, Carson asked Aitken to get the War Office to remind Alderson of his responsibility to the Canadian Government; he had been found writing embarrassing memoranda about the problem of surplus officers.<sup>135</sup> In Ottawa, there was no record of Alderson's appointment and communications from him were treated as unofficial.<sup>136</sup> In the circumstances, he must have been delighted to take up an appointment as one of the Inspectors of Infantry for the War Office and to leave the Canadians on 26 September 1916.

63. On July 5th, the War Office sent Lord French a memorandum in which they sought to explain the system of command of the Canadian forces in the United Kingdom. On the eve of the summer visit of the Minister of Militia and an autumn of administrative reorganization, the memorandum furnishes a useful basis of review. It was pointed out that MacDougall had been placed in command of all Canadians in the United Kingdom but his position had been "modified" by the arrival of General Steele. Steele was now in command of all the troops at Shornecliffe while MacDougall was in command of the Canadian Training Division. General Watson was in command of the 4th Division and of all other Canadian troops at Bramshott. The two training centres were independent of each other. Major—General Carson was responsible for stores and supplies but due to their being two separate centres, "Major—General Carson's office in London has become a central office to deal with correspondence concerning the general administration of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Major—General Carson is not vested, however, with any command over the Canadian troops." Carson was also responsible for the depot at Ashford. The General Officer Commanding in Chief, Eastern Command, was as responsible for the Canadians in his Command as for any other troops. Drafts for France were ordered through the Adjutant General at the War Office to either Shornecliffe or Bramshott as required, with a copy of the notice to Eastern Command or Aldershot Command respectively. Alderson, as Inspector—General, was authorised to inspect either camp.<sup>137</sup>

64. Inevitably, the British memorandum gave a superficial simplicity to the picture. Steele had certainly not renounced authority over Watson.<sup>138</sup> MacDougall had certainly not accepted subordination to Steele. Carson's function was certainly greater than a mere channel of correspondence.

#### HUGHES UNDERTAKES REFORM

65. Early in July, Sir George Perley returned to Canada for his first visit since the war had begun. Even before he left England, he had written the Prime Minister to press on him once more the necessity of establishing some more definite military authority in the United Kingdom. "From what I hear I should judge that there is a good deal of difference of opinion as (to) relative

rank and powers of General Carson, General Steele, the Officer Commanding at Shornecliffe and the Officer Commanding at Bramshott".<sup>139</sup> On the first day after he arrived in Ottawa, Perley met with Borden and Hughes to reiterate his views on the necessity of reorganization.<sup>140</sup> Restless by nature and relieved by the relative innocuousness of the revelations of the Shell Inquiry, Hughes needed little encouragement to go to England. The appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary, F.B. McCurdy, a Halifax financier,<sup>141</sup> gave some assurance to the Prime Minister that the business of the Militia Department would be carried on but his reluctance to allow the Minister to venture too far afield may be reflected in the fact that for the first time, Hughes made formal application for an Order-in-Council to permit him to go. His desire, he wrote, was "to reorganize our forces in England and assist in getting things in better shape for the Front."<sup>142</sup> On July 18th, Borden submitted the Minister's report to the Cabinet and the same night, Hughes was on his way to New York.<sup>143</sup> He sailed on the 19th, leaving a fiery letter for the Prime Minister about a rumour that he was going to give way to Hughes' bitter enemy, Sir Thomas White and also announcing, that he had used his time in the American city to arrange for lumber shipments to Britain aboard sailing ships.<sup>144</sup>

66. On July 31st, the day after he reached London, Hughes received a telegram from the Prime minister:

When you have reached conclusion respecting your proposals for the reorganization please cable them fully as they should be definitely embodied in Order in Council and it would be desirable to consider them before they are actually put in operation.<sup>145</sup>

On the 3rd of August, Borden cabled for further information. The question of surplus officers had been raised by the Chief Paymaster overseas, Colonel J.G. Ross, who had pointed out that there were 214 officers surplus, drawing a total of \$1064 per day. On August 2nd, Hughes had wired to say that there were not fifteen unemployed Canadian officers in Britain. "Carson informs me we are short several hundred."<sup>146</sup> Borden now demanded to know the names of all officers in England who were not employed on the establishment. He went on to ask about how many non—effective troops had accumulated in England and why soldiers who had trained for months in Canada were only considered to be fit for the third week of the War Office syllabus. He also demanded to know whether Canadian equipment, such as boots, bicycles and motor vehicles were used at the Front. "It is in the highest degree urgent that you should take very possible step to prevent any unnecessary expenditure."<sup>147</sup> There was no reply on these subjects. Instead, Borden received a cable from the Minister on August 15<sup>th</sup> suggesting that four more divisions should be raised and asking that fifty to eighty thousand troops be sent over immediately. "Big drive expected and great desire that Canadians should be first in Berlin." He was going over the following day to discuss his proposal with Haig.<sup>148</sup>

67. It appeared that the Minister had forgotten the sober responsibilities which he had taken to England and, on the following day, Borden tried to remind him of them:

Hope you will cable as soon as possible your suggestions respecting better organization. There seems to be lack of system in the arrangements for direction and control in Great Britain and absence of co-ordination between the Branches of the



Service in Great Britain and those in Canada. It would seem that each important branch in Ottawa should be in touch with its representative or corresponding branch in England and regular reports should go forward to the Department so that the heads of the various services here should know proposals or conditions and needs in Great Britain. I regard this as one of the most important objects your visit and hope you will be able to give prompt and effective consideration thereto.<sup>149</sup>

On the same day, Hughes was also composing a cable for the Prime Minister, embodying his random thoughts on the efficiency of Lloyd George, the timber problem in the United Kingdom and the supply of Canadian fish to Canadian soldiers. He concluded, however, with a promise; "Will submit detailed organization on return".<sup>150</sup> Borden showed this message to Perley who quickly suspected an intimation that Hughes would be setting up his organization before he returned to Canada. He drew this to the attention of the prime Minister and reminded him that "you should know what the definite organization is before anything is definitely done regarding it, in order that you may give it your personal consideration and make such suggestions for changes as you may think fit."<sup>151</sup> On the 24th, Borden again asked Hughes; "Please cable what progress you are making respecting re-organization and whether your recommendations may be expected at an early date." A covering letter of the same date pointed out that he had been daily expecting some report of Hughes proposals but that nothing had reached him.<sup>152</sup>

68. Hughes had not, in fact, been neglecting the main purpose of his trip. Unfortunately, there were also pre-occupations. Carson had insisted on holding over many decisions, particularly about appointments, until the Minister's arrival.<sup>153</sup> Steele and the brigadiers at Shornecliffe insisted on an interview with the Minister when he arrived, a proposal which caused Carson some alarm until Steele explained that their grievance was against those who had unjustly criticized the work of the Canadian Training Division.<sup>154</sup> There were also manifold arrangements for a grand review at Branshott in honour of the Minister. The genesis of the proposal for Canada to form four new divisions, already mentioned above, seems to have been a speech to the Canadian officers at Shornecliffe on August 4th, promising that the surplus officers would be taken up by the expansion.<sup>155</sup>

69. In his visits, tours and inspections, the Minister was satisfied that there was nothing wrong with the senior officers; rather, the problem was one of channels of communication and, in particular, of having to deal with the War Office and with British headquarters in France. His solution was to have another attempt to form an Overseas Council, this time to be called a Sub—Militia Council. Remembering the Prime Minister's insistence that no final arrangements were to be made in the re-organization, he added the prefix "acting". On September 5th, a preliminary meeting was held and on the following day, Hughes sent a somewhat enigmatic progress report to Ottawa:

After carefully considering from every viewpoint plan for organization here after consultation with War Office and our officers at front and General Headquarters have a system practically ready. Fault is not with training so much as disorganization and irritation through cases mentioned previously. Hope to have full report based on most mature consideration from every viewpoint ready to mail by end of week. Meantime everything going splendidly.<sup>156</sup>

Even if he saw this telegram on September 6th, it hardly prepared Sir Robert Borden for the evening news stories from London which announced that an army council for the administration of the overseas forces would soon be formed. The headline in the Ottawa Journal was representative:

"MILITARY COUNCIL FORMED IN LONDON TO SOLVE TROUBLES IN HIGH COMMAND

FIRST MEETING HELD TODAY

SEVEN MEMBERS, LATER TEN UNDER MAJOR GENERAL

WILL IMPERIAL AUTHORITIES APPROVE - THE ONLY QUESTION"

Hill, the London correspondent of the Journal reported that; "It is thought generally in military circles that Sir Sam Hughes has shown the military judgement of a Solomon in this solution and that the existing unpleasant overlapping among various Canadian Majors General which certainly has caused friction in the past will be ended by the council."<sup>157</sup> On the following day, the Canadian Associated Press sent reports which named Carson, Steele, MacDougall, Meighen, Murphy and Reid as members. The Prime Minister could only telegraph in protest:

Extraordinary press reports appeared last evening giving details of arrangements which you are said to have made with respect to the control of our forces in Great Britain. Please note my cable of thirty first July on this subject. In my judgement more effective and definite arrangements must be made for control of overseas expenditure and for direction of overseas forces. Such arrangements must be put in definite shape and embodied in an Order in Council. It is most undesirable that proposals contemplated should be announced in advance of consideration by Council.<sup>158</sup>

All that Hughes could reply was that he had given "positive orders" that nothing was to be said about the proposals until they had been approved in Canada. He was investigating the breach in secrecy.<sup>159</sup> This was hardly likely to mollify the Premier and he found that even fuller details of the Council was beginning to appear. "Greatly surprised that composition of proposed Overseas Council is announced in press this morning," he cabled on the 8th, "Hope you can return immediately."<sup>160</sup> Hughes' reply could only increase the Prime Minister's anger. He would return at the end of the month, he said and continued by protesting:

Know nothing whatever about our own composition of proposed Council and cannot understand your peculiar message. Report on proposed Council mailed you. Question of salary or rank never once raised by an officer. Absolutely understand nothing settled until approved by Order in Council.

He concluded that he was off for a week's inspection of timber camps.<sup>161</sup>

70. Sir Max Aitken had also been involved in the arrangements for Hughes' Sub-Militia Council and he also wrote to Borden, perhaps appreciating better than the Minister the need to justify the arrangements. Two cables were sent on the 11th. The first gave the Prime Minister his first intimation of the officers appointed:

Minister of Militia is visiting lumber camps in Scotland. Asks me to advise you that organization has been completed on basis similar to existing structure in Ottawa. Departmental heads will constitute Overseas Sub—Militia Council. Carson Chairman and Agent of Minister of Militia. Lord Brooke Canadian representative at front. McRae deputy of Carson. Brigadier—General Leckie Chief of Staff and in charge of training. F.A.. Reid Adjutant General. Murphy Quartermaster, Ross Paymaster. Colonel Neill G.S.O. and Director of Remounts. Steele, MacDougall and Meighen also members, latter in command of Bramshott Camp. It is my personal opinion that Leckie appointment will give much satisfaction to Commanding Officers in France. Brooke will be well received by General Headquarters and better fitted for diplomatic duties than for command of a Brigade. Reid appears to be a good worker. Ross is first class man of highest standing. Meighen doing very well at Bramshott. Geary of Toronto appointed to assist Brooke. Minister has not made any statement to Press but members of proposed Council are talking freely.<sup>162</sup>

Aitken had been sent a copy of the same telegram which Borden had sent to Hughes on August 16th with the hope that he would use his "best efforts to have effective results accomplished".<sup>163</sup> Aitken now recalled the terms of that telegram in a second message to Borden in which he specifically defended Hughes' scheme:

I have urged Minister to adopt line suggested in your telegram and it appears to me that scheme cabled you today is very good. Principal weakness in England lies in training and although Leckie is not best man available he has had long experience and good record at front and Minister has selected him on my strong recommendation. Understand Leckie will select his staff from officers at front. This will do much to crush criticism of training in England. Lord Brooke has difficult task to keep balance between Minister, Staff Officers at General Headquarters and General Byng but Geary appears to be good assistant. Council would be strengthened by substitution of one or two officers with experience in France or recognized reputation. If you object to any names on Council suggest you communicate your views to Sir Sam and advise me at same time as Minister is disposed to accept suggestions.<sup>164</sup>

The last explanation to reach the Prime Minister was the letter referred to by Hughes in his telegram of the 10th:

After testing the matter out in every available way, for the past three weeks, consulting the British War Office Authorities; our boys at Front; General Headquarters, as well as our own leading Officers, the enclosed outline is the plan proposed.

The Committee, or sub-militia council as it is termed, includes the following; General Carson who acts as Chairman; General Lord Brooke who was appointed to

command a Brigade at the Front, but who has been induced to accept a position under Sir Max Aitken at the Front for the following reasons. The correspondence from various sources which comes to General Carson and the Canadian Office here, has been sent to the War Office, through the Front, and thence down through the Army; Corps; Division and Brigade Commanders and it maddens everyone.

As a consequence, nothing is properly attended to, and really one cannot blame them for being annoyed. Sir Max could not possibly give his time to it, so he suggested Brooke, and strange to say, everyone concerned, both in France and in England, when I asked them to name a man, said `Brooke, a perfect diplomat and a thorough Canadian." So the plan is that the mass of letters will be sent over to him, and he, with the assistance of a couple of officers, one of whom will be Major R. Geary, ex-mayor of Toronto, will collect the details and send it back to this sub-Militia Council, or to the War Office as the case may be. Colonel A.D. McRae will act as sort of Deputy Minister, he having proven himself a most marvellous manager, and having slaved, as official reports on file show, large sums of money. General Leckie has about recovered from his wounds, and is the best available man for the training. Colonel Reid has proven a perfect master of organization and getting things on a system; he will take the Adjutant-General's Branch. Colonel George Murphy is acting as Quarter-master-General, as well as looking after the Ordnance which is small here. He is a splendid officer as you know. The Financial Department will be looked after in the sub-Militia Council by Colonel Ross of Montreal - brother of P.D.'s\* and also another brother in Montreal.

Colonel Neill, Director of Veterinary Services and Remounts was also to serve on the Council; Hughes had found him universally admired. Steele, MacDougall and Meighen would join the Council for weekly meetings, making a total membership of ten. No one had raised the question of rank or pay, he reported, and he predicted no trouble in coming to a "moderate understanding". Finally, Sir Sam displayed his confidence in the men and the organization he had established:

I do not think there is an officer or man in the service at the Front or in Britain but will agree that we have the best possible organization obtainable here. The men have all proven themselves big and strong. Mac Dougall had a vile job, every organization and detail was unloaded on his Command; they would be with him a few days or weeks and half of them would be taken away and new men brought in. The unfit ones were always remaining and becoming mere numerous. I think his staff might be strengthened, but I will not touch that until a Committee which I have appointed to examine both camps, reports.

Poor old Steele, I fear is pretty well run down, still, out of compliment to him, we put him on the Committee. In many ways he is a good man although I fear his race is nearly run, He is ill, and could not attend today. I saw him yesterday near Folkestone, and really he should have been in hospital.

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\* P.D. Ross, proprietor of the Ottawa Evening Journal.

Frank Meighen shows up as one of the greatest men I have ever met, a thorough organizer in every sense. McRae and Neill have already earned everything that a Government could confer on men. Both are regarded as great men in business and in economy. Indeed the British Adjutant General, General McCready, wished, to me, the other day, that they could model in everything after our systems here, but he said their system, built on in patches, could not now be altered materially, in this war: they had not the men with big enough grasp to handle it, and they well envied the splendid system we have established and are establishing.

Colonel Reid has really been a marvel at organization.

Let me hope that they will meet with your approval.<sup>165</sup>

71. Unfortunately for the Sub-Militia Council, whether the idea was wise or foolish, its author had now completely forfeited the confidence of the Prime Minister. The visit to Britain in the summer of 1916 had been in the nature of probation for Hughes and it was evident from the strength of Borden's insistence on knowing the details of the re—organization in Britain that the Minister would no longer be given an independent charge of his Department. Already in Canada, many aspects of his responsibility, particularly for purchasing, had been removed from his charge. Hughes, perennially lacking in tact and common sense, may not have perceived the change in mood. Alternatively, he may have determined to match his prestige with the Prime Minister in a trial of strength. His reminder to the Prime Minister of his support in past political battles (c.f. supra.) might be seen as a crude reminder of his power. In any event, the Prime Minister was no longer to be overawed.

72. For an alternative source of advice, Borden turned to his friend, Sir George Perley. At the beginning of September, he sent him a copy of a memorandum prepared by the Militia Department recommending procedures to be followed in overseas promotions. The officials of the Militia Department suggested that promotions at the Front be submitted to Sir Max Aitken as the Canadian Representative at the front and that he take them up with the War Office, or, in the case of the more important ones, with the Commander in Chief or his representative. For those in England, Carson would consult with Aitken but it would be Aitken who would submit them unofficially to the War Office and officially to Canada. Perley was still convinced that a much better system of command would be necessary:

As I explained to Sir Sam and yourself the first day I was in Ottawa last summer, I feel that we should have a more definite form of military organization and control in England, as the present arrangements are neither dignified nor effective. My own idea is that the best plan would be to appoint a small council or committee to act in these matters during war for the Canadian Government in London. In my opinion about four would be a good number and they should be chosen from our most capable and respected men. I think that there should be a first class officer in command of all our Canadian forces in the United Kingdom, who should be a member of this Council or Committee, but it seems to me that a civilian should be at its head. I submit that in any case there should be a more official and defined channel of communication between the Canadian Government and the British Government regarding all military matters. The present

system is unofficial and has not worked out very satisfactorily. If my memory serves me right I believe that the Order in Council appointing General Carson and Sir Max Aitken did not give them the authority they are at present exercising and which this memorandum under review purports to confirm and extend I am strongly of the opinion that this is the wrong system and I submit that the only effective or dignified way for Canada to act is to appoint a small Council or Committee by Order in Council (which would fully set out their powers) relying on them to manage our military affairs across the seas in a businesslike way and then notify the British Government officially of their appointment and authority.<sup>166</sup>

The Prime Minister also obtained a very lengthy brief from the Deputy Minister of Justice, E.L. Newcombe, covering the legal position of the Canadian Militia overseas, with particular reference to the right of the Canadian civil government to maintain control over its men. Newcombe concluded with a cautious statement of a new proposition:

Details affecting matters of discipline should perhaps be suggested and considered in consultation with the military advisers of the Government, but if I may venture to suggest, I should think that the executive or administrative requirements of the case would be best satisfied by the establishment of a Canadian Ministry of War in London charged with the administration of the Overseas forces, to be held by a member of this Cabinet, assisted of thought advisable by a council of competent experts, whose advice would be considered by the Minister in submitting his recommendations Governor General in Council for approval. This would, in my humble suggestion, afford the most satisfactory means which can be devised for exercising the authority of this Government with despatch and in harmony with the policy of the administration; and it would moreover provide a ready agency of communication as between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Canada whereby the joint service could be articulated.<sup>167</sup>

By the 22nd of September, a draft report to the Privy Council had been prepared, to which was attached a proposed ordinance for the establishment of a Ministry of Overseas Military Forces of Canada.\* The report laid stress both on the magnitude of the administration of the Overseas forces and on the enormous training responsibilities of the Militia Department. The proposed ministry would have full charge of the personnel, property and expenditures of the Canadian forces in the United Kingdom and on the continent of Europe. Its Minister would reside in London and, in matters requiring the approval of the Governor-in-Council, he was given authority to proceed provisionally on his own authority when urgency required. The Minister would be responsible for negotiations with the British Government for all matters affecting the Overseas Forces and there was provision for the assignment of further powers and duties. To assist him, he was authorised to establish an organization and to appoint officers and clerks, none of whom would be subject to the Civil Service examinations, he was also authorised to form an advisory council, although its members were to be appointed by Order-in-Council. The Minister would report to the Cabinet through the Prime Minister. He was also to receive no pay for the post.

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\* See Appendix "A"

73. A few days after the draft ordinance had been prepared, Perley returned to England, sailing from Halifax on September 27th. There is no formal evidence that he had been informed of the plan for the Overseas Ministry but it is hard to believe that he was not intimately aware of its details. During his stay in Canada, he had been continually consulted on military matters and the Overseas Ministry proposal must have been uppermost in the Prime Minister's mind. It was Perley who had made the suggestion of giving the chief authority to a civilian minister and the provision that the Minister should not be paid was especially suited to him. Under the Independence of Parliament Act, a Member of Parliament who assumed an office of profit under the Crown was obliged to resign his seat and seek re-election. When Perley had gone to England as High Commissioner, he had avoided this step by receiving no pay. It was intended that whoever received the appointment as Minister would also avoid this difficulty. In Perley's case, re-election would not only have meant a delay and additional work but it also imposed a considerable risk as his constituency of Argenteuil had been neglected during his long absence in England and he would also have faced rising French Canadian resentment at the Conservative war Policies.

74. Perley must have passed the returning Minister of Militia on the Atlantic. Having established his Sub-Militia Council and having spent two months in impressing his personality on all the leading Canadian officers in the United Kingdom, Hughes returned with the confidence that the system which he had established in the United Kingdom would provide an effective tool for his continued executive authority. The Sub-Militia Council,\* with its ten members, was unlikely to provide a challenge; its very size made that unlikely. In addition, none of its members had acquired any unquestioned prestige during their years overseas and some of them, notably Carson, Brooke and Murphy, owed their positions largely to the Minister's personal favour. As he had explained a little too cryptically to the Prime Minister, Hughes had, in fact, spent the month of September, seeing that the Council would work to his satisfaction. Carson had proposed his staff officer, Major G.D. Oulster, as secretary for the Council, claiming that he had been working in offices since the age of 18 and had worked for many years with, the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern Railways. Hughes insisted that his own son-in-law, Major Byron M. Greene should have the job and it was so.<sup>168</sup>

75. At the first full meeting of the Council on September 8th, eight of the members were present, Carson, MacDougall, Meighen, Murphy, Reid, McRae, Ross Neill and Oulster, who had not yet been removed as secretary. The Minister was also present, to give his directions as to what the Council was to consider. He called for a thorough investigation of unemployed and inefficient officers at Shornecliffe and Bramshott and a report on inefficient and unfit men to were still being sent from Canada. There was a long discussion of Permanent Light Duty men. Carson and Frank Reid suggested that the Minister might consider raising Labour Battalions for service in England so that the Light Duty men might be returned to Canada. The Minister in turn ordered Reid to find out why Australians got large headings on newspaper reports of their casualties while Canadians got small ones. In the afternoon, the Minister was absent and discussion was possibly more banal. The Council approved a request of the Red Cross that a blanket be authorized for each Canadian a Prisoner of War in Germany. By far the most fascinating business was a final motion by Carson, seconded by MacDougall, that Carson should

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\* See Appendix "B"

write to the Minister to suggest the founding of a Canadian Order to be known as the "Order of the Beaver and Maple Leaf" or the "Star of Canada".<sup>169</sup>

76. The second meeting on the 15th of September was held in the Minister's absence on his tour of Scotland, and produced nothing more sensational than a proposal for the foundation of the Canadian Army Pay Corps. By the third meeting, however, the Council's form was becoming clearer. On September 11th, Lord Brooke, still in command of the 12th Canadian Infantry Brigade, had been wounded and he never took up his place in the Council. In his place, Hughes appointed Colonel E.C. Ashton, a medical doctor who had preferred combatant status and was then commanding one of the brigades at Shornecliffe. The third meeting took place on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Minister was present to introduce Ashton, his son-in-law, Major Greene, and a set of regulations for the Council which he had prepared personally. They defined the Council as "an advisory body, advising generally with respect to the Canadian Expeditionary Force", and listed the members. The regulations directed that the Council should meet weekly and provided for emergency meetings, either on the direction of the President and three other members or in the event of all members being present (or absentees sending their assent). Members were to give the Secretary forty-eight hours notice of matters which they intended to lay before the Council and the Secretary, in turn, was required to send each member twenty four hours notice of matters which might affect the member's responsibilities. Each member was to have an equal voice in the Council and a poll was to be taken on all matters laid before the Council for a decision. A record was to be kept of the votes. The Minister was to receive a triplicate original of the Minutes of the Council.<sup>170</sup> The Minister attended

The Minister was to receive a triplicate original Minutes of the Council.<sup>170</sup> The Minister attended one further meeting of the Council, on September 29th at which Murphy was given permission to return to Canada for six weeks to attend to a sick father. Shortly after, Sir Sam left for Canada.

77. The Minister may well have believed that he had created a satisfactory system for the management of affairs in the United Kingdom. If so, the Council is adequate proof of his administrative incompetence. Alternatively, the Minister may have decided that a weak Council and overlapping jurisdictions would serve as a satisfactory guarantee of his own dominance. Carson as Minister's Representative and Chairman of the Council, McRae as Overseas Deputy Minister and Leckie as Chief of the General Staff had each been given new resounding titles. It is possible that the Minister explained the respective responsibilities of each officer to their mutual satisfaction but he did not do it in writing. Nor did he establish, in writing, the relative status of MacDougall and Steele; even in November, MacDougall still believed that he was General Officer Commanding, Canada.<sup>171</sup> The weakness of a Council of ten undistinguished members has already been mentioned. Hughes ensured their subordination by requiring the submission of all minutes to him, the recording of individual votes and the presence at all discussions of his own son-in-law.

78. In action, the Council was more effective than it possibly deserved to be. A wide variety of matters which had previously been engulfed in competing jurisdictions, were finally at least discussed. The Council heard regular reports from Colonel H.A. Bruce, specially appointed by Hughes to investigate the medical service in Britain. It debated the lack of dental services,<sup>172</sup> the granting of working pay<sup>173</sup> and the employment of civilians in the London offices to release



soldiers for the front.<sup>174</sup> After hearing that there had been 522 graves registered up to the end of September, 1916, at an average cost of £3-1-1, it authorised Colonel Kemmis Betty to establish a Graves Registration Section and to look into the cost of obtaining a standard cross.<sup>175</sup> It is not easy, however, to find manner matters of compar-able significance in the minutes of the nine meetings held by the Council. Like most oversized assemblies, it could spend a disproportionate time discussing trivial questions such as a silver badge for soldiers discharged in England. Its deliberations were inconclusive and matters which seemed to have been settled appeared again and again. Above all, it was the creature of the Minister of Militia. On October 8th, he wired from Ottawa to remind the Council that "All reports of Sub-Militia Council must be carefully prepared and must be endorsed from here before final adoption." On the 13th, at the Council's sixth meeting, it was informed that the Minister rejected the proposed title, "Canadian Imperial Forces" which the Council had suggested earlier. A little later, after a discussion of the reinforcement problem, it was decided to send men from units earmarked for the proposed 5th and 6th Divisions,<sup>176</sup> This unanimous decision was over-turned at the next meeting on the 18th, however, when the Minister's instructions were given "that the 5th and 6th Divisions should be gotten in shape." As there would only be 7,800 reinforcements, some of them half trained, by November 1st, Colonel McRae agreed to draft a letter to the Minister,<sup>177</sup> On the 27th, an unnamed officer who had been promoted by order of the Minister was briefly discussed but this time McRae moved that, since the Council was only an advisory body, "it would be presumptuous (sic) on the part of the Council to criticize such action of the Minister."<sup>178</sup> This was passed unanimously.

79. On October 7th, Hughes was back in Ottawa. A few days later, telegrams began to arrive from Perley to the Prime Minister. On the 11th, he pointed out that the medical inquiry instituted by Hughes was unsuitable, that Colonel Bruce had no experience of the organization he was attacking and that Jones, the Surgeon-General, was being unfairly criticized.<sup>179</sup> An event more disturb-ing cable came later the same day:

Understood you instructed Minister Militia not arrange any organization here until Council had approved of same. Stop. Although desig-nated as acting and technically not yet official new organization is completed and in saddle. Stop. Regret much outspoken criticism Minister here. Stop. Among others two Conservative Canadian Members of Parliament have told me very unpopular among officers and men.<sup>180</sup>

Borden had been obtaining other support for his own plan of re-organization. Even before Hughes reached Ottawa, the Minister of Finance, Sir Thomas White, an opponent of Hughes and a father-in-law of Sir George Perley, wrote to back the need for a Minister of the Government responsible directly for the overseas expenditures: "For myself I feel that the matter is vital and I cannot assume responsibility for the acts of officials not under the immediate supervision and control of a Member of the Government."<sup>181</sup> Doubtless other members of the Cabinet were sounded out for their views.

80. Apparently it was only on the 18th of October that Borden undertook to explain his plan to Hughes. On that day, he sent the Minister a copy of his draft Order—in—Council with a covering letter in which he explained:

It is apparent that we should have a more efficient organization in Great Britain. Your recommendations as to an Overseas Militia Council are based on that view, as I understood. I am not criticizing your suggestions as to the personnel of the proposed Overseas Council; but I am of opinion that the direction of a member of the Government resident in London is both desirable and essential.

To pacify Sir Sam, who had that very day become an Honorary Lieutenant-General in the British Army, he added: "The proposal embodied in the draft Order in Council is not intended as a reflexion upon your efforts or your administration."

81. As might be expected, Sir Sam fought back. On the 23rd of October, he submitted his own draft Order-in-Council which would have given authority for the Sub-Militia Council. On the same day, in a long and disjointed letter; he replied to Borden's letter of the 18th. He agreed that the common object was to win the War but he insisted that the proposed regulations would:

.... cripple, impede and again reduce the Force overseas, to the chaotic condition to which it had fallen at the end of the first nine months of the war under a system practically what you now propose re-establishing.

He did not see that a better organization was now necessary than the one he had just established. In particular he attacked the idea of a resident minister:

As I pointed out to you, it would be absurd. There is no more necessity for a resident Minister in Britain than there is for a resident Minister at our camps in British Columbia, Calgary, Camp Hughes, Camp Borden, Valcartier, & C. Indeed there is less need in Britain because where formerly General Carson was alone the representative, he is now surrounded by a sub—militia Council composed of the ablest officers to be found, to advise and report to headquarters at Ottawa on all military matters. They have no final say -- they merely report to Ottawa -- and there is no more delay than there is in coming from Vancouver Island or from Halifax. Further from a constitutional viewpoint it is more than absurd. The Canadian soldier must voice his complaints, if any, through the Parliament of Canada and the Minister of Militia and Defence must accept responsibility.

An objection which Hushes raised at some length was the suggestion that the new move would lead to subservience to the British. The Minister had been a champion of Canadian management of its own forces. When he had first visited England, he told how Perley had met him with the command: "You do not pretend, surely, to have anything to do with the Canadian soldiers in Britain". This was a remark which evidently had a great effect on Hughes for he was to quote it with effect in all his subsequent apology. He was also to add, as he did in this letter, the sad story of how Canadian equipment, stores and supplies were set aside and how Hughes had shown, to his own satisfaction, how the British excuses for this were entirely without foundation. But now: "It is impossible to lay a finger on any part of our service that is not better and more economically administered than the British and infinitely better than anything that ever occurred before." The Minister also rejected the suggestion that his Department or he, himself, were overburdened:

The excuse is put forward that the Department of Militia is too busy, is very weak... There is also a Parliamentary Secretary for the Department of Militia and Defence to lighten the burdens of the Minister. Therefore why such solicitude to further lightening the Minister's burdens?

Finally, he declared, that:

I cannot but realize that the proposed Order-in-Council will seriously interfere with the efficiency of my Department and if persisted it will be most detrimental to the best interest of the Service.<sup>182</sup>

82. There followed a rapid exchange of some-what lengthy letters between Borden and Hughes. On the 26th, the Prime Minister pointed out that he was not re—establishing the system which had prevailed for the first nine months of the War, There had been no resident Minister in London:

.... Charged with direct responsibility with such matters; and the conditions to which you allude insofar as they existed were evidently due to the lack of direct control on the spot. Thus I am not proposing to re-establish anything which previously existed but to create a new Department under the direction of a Minister who will be in close touch with the British authorities as well as with the needs of the Overseas Forces.<sup>183</sup>

On the same day, Sir Sam tried to make a strategic retreat. He wrote to the Prime Minister to tell him that he had noticed on re-reading the memorandum, that no one was actually named to be Minister although all had supposed that it would be Sir George Perley. His real concern had been "to prevent humiliation and insult to our mutual friend, Sir Max Aitken." The idea of appointing him had not occurred to him but he had been very busy. "Therefore, please fill in his name, let the office be attached to him instead of him to the office, and you have my exact wish."<sup>184</sup> Sir Robert refused to accept this means of resolving the quarrel, possible evidence that he had, in fact, already committed himself to Perley. In replying, he denied that any failure to appoint Aitken could be interpreted as an insult to him. The Minister would be appointed after the Department had been set up.<sup>185</sup> Nonetheless, Hughes cabled Aitken to ask whether he would be willing to accept such a post. Aitken replied that he could not as he was not qualified.<sup>186</sup>

81. Although he had managed to delay the passage of the Order-in-Council for several days, Hughes was unable to stop it altogether and, on October 27th, it was passed with no significant change from the draft of September 22nd. Borden was later to tell Perley that it had received warm support from every other Minister save Hughes.<sup>187</sup> On the same day, Perley was informed of the event:

Order in Council signed today creating Ministry Overseas Forces. Hughes greatly excited and may resign. Order will not be made public until Monday. This message therefore confidential in meantime.<sup>188</sup>

Hughes had not yet conceded defeat. If the Ministry was to be established, he would be deprived of all influence in the Overseas Forces and he continued to seek some compromise which would leave him effectual control while satisfying the Prime Minister. On the 28th, he repeated that his

concern was the man, not the office, and went on to suggest that Aitkin should be "the Canadian representative there for War Purposes under me" while Perley would be consulted about all contracts and purchases not under the fixed charges. Aitken would be given Privy Council rank, an appointment which would not require any election, salary or other impediment.<sup>189</sup> Still believing that the Sub-Militia Council was to be considered, Hughes wrote again two days later, repeating old grievances about Perley as High Commissioner, blaming him for such personal *betes noires* as Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospitals, British Officers in the Canadian Corps and War Office system in the Pay and Medical Departments. Once again he urged a more official position for Aitken in recognition of the role he had long played as an inter-mediator. He now proposed to put Perley, as High Commissioner, at the head of the Sub-Militia Council. All matters would still pass through the Minister of Militia although draft Orders-in-Council would be submitted from Perley and the Sub-Council, only to be signed by the Minister. On the other hand, all promotions, appointments and nominations would be kept under the control of the Minister.<sup>190</sup> The Prime Minister was growing tired of a correspondence which had lost almost all its point on October 27th and, on the last day of the month, he replied to Hughes in a letter obviously intended to be his last word on the subject. He recalled his efforts in August and September to discover his Minister's intended plans for re-organization:

It would appear that the reorganization alluded to in these various messages [cited in the letter] was actually put in operation before you left Great Britain although authority in Council has not been obtained therefore. This is by no means in accordance with the arrangements made in the correspondence above quoted.

I have read your letter with care and it does not seem to me that the proposals which you outline are *practicable*, thus I regret that I cannot concur in them. The control and direction of a Minister actually on the spot seems to me highly important for the reasons which were indicated in my letters of the 18th and 26th instant.<sup>191</sup>

On the same date, an Order-in-Council appointing Sir George Perley to be Minister of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada was passed.<sup>192</sup>

83. Hughes found himself in the embarrassing position of a Minister without responsibility. J.W. Flavelle was looking after the production of shells and munitions; the Hon. A.E. Kemp, as Chairman of the War Purchasing Board, had control of other aspects of procurement; R.B. Bennett, the Chairman of the National Service Boards, had a direct responsibility for recruiting; F.B. McCurdy, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Department, could take care of the day-to-day work of administration. The appointment of Perley and the establishment of the Overseas Ministry meant an exclusion from a field in which Hughes had taken a special pleasure. His anger and frustration burst out in yet another long letter to the Prime Minister, on November 1st. He insisted that he had only set up his Council to test it out. Weak points had been found and improvements had been made. "Permit me to draw to your attention to nearly every Commission which has been formed, They look beautiful on paper, but few, if any one of them have been anything like perfect in practice."

Permit me further to draw your attention to the fact that the British Constitution does not exist on paper; no Order-in-Council is behind it.

Further, had I ventured to conduct this Force on the basis of formal Orders in Council, the First Division would not have left Valcartier yet, and you know yourself~ by technicalities, the Second Division was held through little petty haggling on the question of motor trucks etc., etc.

This sort of abuse, the Prime Minister might have endured. The final paragraph of the letter contained an accusation which he did not feel that he could overlook:

One other point and I am through. It might be implied from your memorandum that my failing to secure authority by Order-in-Council for this sub-Militia Council impelled you to the course you are now pursuing with regard to Sir George Perley. May I be permitted to say that both you and I know to the contrary. I knew early in August that Sir George Perley had planned something along these very lines. You have, also, admitted that as early as the first week of September you had this matter under consideration by you and Perley earlier. You incidentally remarked yesterday that you had not consulted any of your colleagues. Of course, when I drew attention to the statement, you corrected yourself.<sup>193</sup>

Quite apart from the substantial truth of Hughes' accusation of prior arrangement, it must have been evident to the Prime Minister that there would be no co-operation between the Militia Department and the Overseas Ministry as long as Hughes held office. This letter provided a fair reason for which to demand his resignation. It was not an easy decision. On the 6th, almost a week after he had received the letter, Borden wrote Perley that he had received a letter from Sir Sam:

... which demands most serious consideration at my hands. Appropriate action thereon has been discussed with some of my colleagues during the past two days and it will doubt-less be taken before this letter reaches you.<sup>194</sup>

84. Borden's action was a letter on the 9th in which he expressed his regret that Hughes should have sent him such a letter and went on to explain how much of a problem the Minister had been to him:

Under conditions which at times were very trying and which gave me great concern: I have done my utmost to support you in the administration of your Department. This has been very difficult by reason of your strong tendency to assume powers which you do not possess and which can only be exercised by the Governor in Council. My time and energies, although urgently needed for more important duties, have been very frequently employed in removing difficulties thus unnecessarily created. You seemed actuated by a desire and even an intention to administer your Department as if it were a separate Government in itself. On many occasions, but without much result, I have cautioned you against this course which has frequently led to well founded protests from your Colleagues as well as detrimental to the public interest.

I do not intend to dwell on the instances, some of which are still under consideration, in which you have acted without authority or consultation in matters more or less important. Of these, the latest is the establishment of a Militia sub—Council in Great Britain, including the appointment of its personnel. ... The intimation which was given to you in my telegram of 31st July should not have been necessary. As soon as it was received, you proceeded to disregard it. Some portions of your letter are expressive of the attitude which I have described and to which you evidently intend to adhere. Such an attitude is wholly inconsistent with and subversive of the principle of joint responsibility upon which constitutional Government is based.

But more than that, your letter is couched in such terms that I cannot overlook it or excuse it. I take strong exception not only to statements which it contains but to its general character and tone. You must surely realize that I cannot retain in the Government a colleague who has addressed to me such a communication I regret that you have imposed upon me the disagreeable duty of requesting your resignation as Minister of Militia and Defence.<sup>194</sup>

The Prime Minister's rejoinder at first overwhelmed the Minister of Militia but he had recovered sufficiently by the 11th to submit a lengthy letter of resignation in which he assembled a luxurious collection of insults and in-nuendoes against his old colleague, culminating in the accusation that Borden had been conspiring to retire to the Supreme Court, leaving the leadership of the Government to someone whom Hughes could never consent to serve.<sup>195</sup> On the 15th, he announced that he had removed the last of his belongings from his office:

I leave with regret, not on account of the office or anything special, our side of friendships which will last -- but for the welfare of the soldiers. However a kindly watchful eye will be kept over by your humble servant .<sup>196</sup>

After several days, during which the prime Minister managed the affairs of the Militia Department, a Toronto manufacturer and prominent Orangeman, the Honourable A.E. Kemp, was appointed as the new Minister.<sup>197</sup> Sir Sam left Ottawa for the South to recover his strength and to await the resumption of Parliament.

## ESTABLISHING THE OVERSEAS MINISTRY

85. On November 1st, Perley, in London received official notification of his appointment. He also received a cable from the Prime Minister:

You must consider whether you can discharge duties High Commissioner and Minister Overseas Forces. It is highly important from every standpoint that you should not undertake too much. If necessary one of the Ministers could go to London for the next four or five months as acting high Commissioner until you have completed necessary organization in your new post and have become thoroughly seated in saddle. Please consider this carefully. I must warn you against making Griffiths acting High Commissioner as any such course would meet strong disapproval here.<sup>198</sup>

Griffiths, the Secretary of the High Commission, had been appointed by the Liberals in 1903. Sir Robert was seriously concerned that the new Minister's determination to hold both offices would mean that the new post would receive only secondary attention. Sir Thomas White, the Minister of Finance and Perley's father-in-law, happened to be in London and Sir Robert sent him a confidential message:

Perley seems inclined to consider his status as High Commissioner more important than his position of Minister Overseas Forces. In my judgement latter is infinitely more important and more responsible in every aspect. Without informing him that I have communicated with you please endeavor to make him see it in this light.<sup>199</sup>

Perley's own response to his appointment was hardly enthusiastic. In his telegram of acceptance, he expressed appreciation for the confidence shown in him but could only add that he would "try for a while and do my best."<sup>200</sup> In a cable on the 2nd, he explained his desire to hold his old post of acting High Commissioner:

Firmly of opinion I should continue act as High Commissioner. Am unwilling take new post unless am continued in this office. Much prefer work High Commissioner to being Minister Overseas Forces. If it should transpire later that I cannot do both will advise you so that you can send over another Minister to take charge of Overseas Forces.<sup>201</sup>

A few days later, White also indicated the strength of Perley's preference although he assured the Prime Minister that the acting High Commissioner understood the importance of his new Ministry.<sup>202</sup> The truth was that Perley had become fascinated by his diplomatic function and was reluctant to resume the discipline of administration.

86. His reluctance was increased by the sense of magnitude of the task which faced him. He was already realizing that there was hardly a department of his rambling new responsibility which did not demand searching scrutiny and re-organization. The problem was only where to begin. Even before he had undertaken to select a staff and to establish a Ministry, he determined to correct the injustice which he felt had been done to his friend, Surgeon-General Jones, in the investigation conducted by Colonel H.A. Bruce. One of the sins of the sub-Militia Council, in Perley's eyes, had been to appoint Bruce to replace Jones without giving the previous Director of Medical Services a chance to appear in his own behalf.<sup>203</sup> On his first day in office, Perley advised the prime Minister that he would be setting up a committee, under Sir William Babbie of the War Office, to re-examine the Bruce Report.<sup>204</sup> A few days later, he may have regretted his precipitateness and he again wired to Ottawa to inquire about the extent to which Hughes might be expected to back Bruce if his report was disallowed and about the political repercussions should Bruce carry his grievance back to Canada.<sup>205</sup> Nonetheless, he preserved in the formation of the committee.

87. An even more delicate problem was the removal of old advisors and the selection of new. On November 2nd, he asked for Cabinet advice about what to do with the members of the Acting Council.<sup>206</sup> he was well aware that several of them had considerable political influence and he preferred not to deal with them alone. On the 3rd, he attended his first meeting of the Sub-Militia

Council and a word from him probably provoked a letter from Carson to Greene reminding him that the word "Acting" was to be used in connection with the group.<sup>207</sup> On the afternoon of 6th, Perley visited Argyll House, the office of the Headquarters, Canadian Expeditionary Force, and inspected the minutes of earlier meetings. As a result of his examination, a long list of Council decisions was compiled and Greene was ordered to discover what action had been taken.<sup>208</sup> It is evident from the haste with which the list was compiled that poor Green had never seen this as part of his responsibility. It is equally evident from the sketchiness of the replies which he elicited that some other member of the Council had never included executive responsibility among their terms of reference.<sup>209</sup> A few other queries must have been sufficient to convince the new Minister, if further conversion was necessary, that the Sub-Militia Council had not been a success, The problem was to replace it.

88. On the 6th, he received a lengthy cable of advice and information from the Prime Minister. After informing him that the announcement of the creation of the Overseas Ministry had been well received and giving him some news of the progress of affairs with General Hughes, Borden began to deal with personalities;

... There is strong objection to retaining Col. McRae as Deputy Minister. All my Western colleagues admit that he is able, that he has force of character, strength of purpose and promptness of decision. They do not highly regard his reputation and they say that his conduct and demeanour in the purchase of horses on behalf of the Militia Department rendered him exceedingly unpopular in the Western Provinces. Lougheed and Meighen are particularly strong against him. They also say that he is a strong Liberal but I should not consider that as an objection if I could anticipate loyal and efficient service.

Fiset is anxious to be transferred to Great Britain, and Gwatkin even more so. Both are very capable officials and the administration of the Department in Canada is largely dependent upon them. Fiset is of course excitable and pours forth torrents of words on occasion, but he has a wonderful grasp of his Department and I have found him a most satisfactory officer. Gwatkin feels that his relations with the Minister are such as to forbid him remaining with the Canadian service longer than December 31st.

There must of course be thorough co-operation between the Department here and the Overseas Ministry. If that co-operation cannot be accomplished under present conditions, then the conditions at this end must be changed. Fiset and Gwatkin would be very useful in assuring that co-operation....

The Prime Minister also gave Perley another warning that was very close to his heart:

... Under certain circumstances a cry may be raised on this side that Canadian rights will not be strongly asserted under your administration and that Canadian direction and control will not be properly maintained. You will doubtless bear this constantly in mind as conditions may develop which would lend force to that appeal.



Finally, he added an appeal that Perley would see his duties as Minister as outweighing his role as High Commissioner, an appeal which possibly gives a better insight into Borden's mind than into Perley's:

The duties which you are to perform as Minister of Overseas Forces are certainly as important as those which devolve upon any Minister under present conditions. In my judgement your status as Minister of Overseas Forces altogether outclasses the position of High Commissioner, and the duties which you have assumed are infinitely more important than those which devolved upon you as High Commissioner. This is perfectly apparent to me whether the situation is regarded from the standpoint of service to the Empire and the Dominion, or from the lower<sup>210</sup> but important standpoint of our party's welfare.

89. Another question which the Overseas Minister found it necessary to settle was his channel of communication. It had quickly been established with the Acting Council that all cables to and from Canada should be passed through Perley but he also wished to establish his relationship with the Militia Department. There was an exchange of telegrams on the 6th of November which arranged that matters of ordinary administration should be dealt with through the Militia Department and that draft recommendations to Council should be sent in two copies to the Prime Minister so that he might give one to the Militia Department.<sup>211</sup> Meeting on the 10th the Militia Council in Ottawa decided that until an Overseas Militia Council had been established, general questions of policy and matters which concerned more than one of the Branches would be conducted at the Ministerial level, a proposal which it was decided to submit to the Prime Minister.<sup>212</sup>

90. Perley and Sir Thomas White, who had remained in England to help him, both attended the next Sub—Militia Council meeting on the 9th at which almost nothing seems to have been decided save that the men of the 5th Division would be considered as being available as reinforcements. Perley continued his inspections and investigations and on the 16th, he and White left for a three day visit to France, leaving orders that the Council, meeting that day, should discuss nothing beyond routine matters. In Perley's absence, the suggestion was made by Colonel Ross that the members should all offer their resignations to the Minister. Carson said that he had discussed this possibility with Perley and that the Minister had said that it "would be a gracious act on their part." The motion was passed without dissent.<sup>213</sup>

91. Upon his return from France and a few days of further consideration, Perley was at last in a position to make some definite proposals. On the 22nd, he wired his proposals to the Prime Minister:

Regarding best organization here White and I have discussed matter with many officers and others. We have spent three days in France see-ing Corps Commanders and Canadian Generals including Brigadiers. We are definitely of opinion that some first class officer, who has seen service at front should be appointed General Officer in Command of Canadians in England with proper staff such as Adjutant General, Quartermaster General and Director of Training under him. This meets with uni-versal approval. Then we propose having Deputy Minister for civil matters including Pay Office

and possible Chaplain and Medical Services. With good men in these places the situation would undoubtedly be established on sound basis and they could act as Minister's advisers without any formal Council whatever. If you have any different suggestions please cable. Question most urgent and everyone only marking time pending new arrangements, Can make no headway in straightening out tangle until G.O.C. is actually appointed.<sup>214</sup>

In a second and even longer telegram on the same day, Perley gave some insight into the difficulties which he was experiencing in actually selecting the members of his staff:

For G.O.C. Canadians England Currie is generally preferred by officers at front but objections might very likely be raised in some quarters. He says he used to work on Liberal side but got disgusted with politics and now takes no interest. Stop Turner much beloved by everyone but perhaps not quite so firm or forceful as others. Stop. Believe he is a Liberal of neutral tint but exceedingly fine and reasonable. stop. We like Lipsett who is splendid soldier very good at training but is regular English officer and might not be considered Canadian. stop. Watson fine chap but is junior and still gaining much experience by remaining at front. stop. White and I think Currie most capable for position but Turner would be more popular with our following, stop. Propose appointing MacDougall Adjutant General Steele Inspector General and other military officers after consulting our new G.O.C. England. stop. Regarding civil side we recommend retaining McRae if he is willing leave military matters to G.O.C. stop. McRae is very able and energetic and impresses us as a man of action. He has produced good impression here and at front among nearly all officers and we should not lose him stop. We believe there is nothing serious against him. stop. Would like retain Carson for time anyway if can arrange suitable place for him. stop. Imperative G.O.C. should be appointed immediately while Currie is strong-est probably Turner would give most general satisfaction. I shall be quite satisfied to take whichever you and Council prefer. Please cable your views promptly.<sup>215</sup>

On the 24th, in response to on urgent telegram from Perley on the evening of the 22nd,<sup>216</sup> Borden sent a message designed to persuade a reluctant general to take up the somewhat unattractive command in England:

Please convey to officer whom you may select as General Officer Commanding Canadian Forces in England my earnest hope that he will accept the position. The duties which he will be called upon to perform are of a most important character and while I realize the keen desire of every officer to continue his service at the front I hope the officer whom you select will regard it as his duty in the public interest and for the national welfare to undertake the even more important duty which you propose to entrust to him.<sup>217</sup>

In a second telegram on the following day, the personnel to be selected were left up to Perley's judgement. Only Meighen maintained his objections against McRae, the other Minister had no objections. They were equally prepared to approve Currie and Turner.<sup>218</sup> On the same day that he received this telegram from Canada, Perley, using the Prime Minister's appeal, asked Turner to

accept the position. On the 27th, Borden learned that an appointment would be made very soon and then the selection of officers for the other positions might be made.<sup>219</sup>

92. Because he felt that Turner was most in sympathy with the idea of a General Officer Commanding and also because he was the senior Canadian major-general, Perley turned first to Turner.<sup>220</sup> With marked reluctance, Turner accepted, feeling the pressure of Borden's message and his Corps Commander's advice. His real concern was an awareness that he stood in line to become the first Canadian to command the Corps and he sought, in his letter of acceptance, to ensure that this claim would continue to be respected.<sup>221</sup> The first problem on assuming his new command was to dispose of General MacDougall. The myth of the old Order-in-Council still persisted and the Prime Minister was asked to arrange that the Order-in-Council appointing MacDougall as G.O.C. Canadians would be cancelled and a new one passed to appoint Turner. In a confidential section of the same telegram, he was also asked to arrange for MacDougall's recall.<sup>222</sup> The pretext was that there was no position still in England of sufficient seniority for him but the truth was that MacDougall was too intimately connected, in the minds of officers at the Front, with the mismanagement of the past. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, Borden advised Perley that the necessary Orders had been passed although, in fact, the formal approval of Turner's appointment was only given on December 1<sup>st</sup>. In the reshuffling of accommodation for Canadian troops preparatory to the Winter of 1916-17, MacDougall had already moved his headquarters from Shornecliffe to Brighton and he continued under Turner as G.O.C. Canadian Troops, Brighton until December 19<sup>th</sup>, when he returned to Canada for employment.

93. Another officer of the old regime who demanded recognition was General Steele. As soon as Perley was appointed, he had proposed a complete organization which would place Carson as Deputy Minister and himself as Inspector—General.<sup>224</sup> When the proposal to appoint a General Officer Commanding had become common knowledge he demanded the post for himself. He bombarded the Minister with demands for recognition and lengthy accounts of his past services until Perley, armed with evidence that the old General had been seeking further political influence behind his back, sharply cut the correspondence off.<sup>225</sup>

94. The problem of selecting a staff had not ended with the appointment of Turner. He brought with him to become Adjutant General, his own Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General, Colonel P.E. Thacker, a permanent force officer. Colonel McRae preferred to remain in uniform and, to suit him, the title of Deputy Minister was altered to Chief Executive Officer. He also became Acting Quartermaster-General. Perley feared criticism of this appointment, but he pointed out to Sir Robert Borden that McRae was "able and had great energy which is especially needed at this juncture to try and straighten out the position here."<sup>226</sup> The Quarter-master-General in Ottawa, General MacDonald, was anxious to come over but he was badly compromised by the Hughes era and Perley politely doubted that he was forceful enough to put matters right. Colonel Murphy, the previous Overseas Acting Quartermaster-General was also suspected of being too easy-going".<sup>227</sup> Finally, at the end of the month, Perley made up his mind to leave McRae as the Quartermaster-General and to find a new Deputy Minister.<sup>228</sup> As he later explained it to the Prime Minister, he had wanted to have a permanent soldier for the post but MacRae had taken the job up with such energy that Turner had asked for him to remain. What he really wanted was "an assistant with whom he could consult freely and who would be a "strong business man". He was also aware of another Canadian criterion; the man chosen must

be from Ontario or the West.<sup>229</sup> His staff was beginning to have too many Montrealers. On the next day, January 17th, he seemed to have found his man for he wired Borden to ask the Cabinet what they knew of Major Walter Gow. The reaction was favourable. Both Kemp and White approved of him describing him as a member of an old Toronto law firm and without politics. On the 23rd of January, Perley announced that he would be appointed. Initially, he had planned to promote Gow and retain the title of Chief Executive Officer but Gow preferred to become a civilian and to assume the more conventional title of Deputy Minister.<sup>230</sup>

95. With the appointment of the Deputy Minister by Order-in-Council on March 23rd (with effect from January 29th) the personnel of the Overseas Ministry was complete. Perley had made his appointments carefully and with relatively little influence from the Prime Minister. Robert Rogers, the Minister of Public Works, had predictably intervened to demand more jobs for men from the West but the Prime Minister forwarded his telegram only with the sad comment: "There are continual complaints, of course, from all parts of Canada of unfair treatment and it will be so to the end."<sup>231</sup> The only effect on Perley was to cause him to reconsider his plan to retire Steele. The desire of both Fiset and Gwatkin to come to England was overcome by Hughes' departure. The Prime Minister did suggest that it would be nice if Senator MacLennan could assist in the duties of the High Commissioner. He was anxious to go and Borden needed a Senate vacancy for Cape Breton Island. Perley replied that it seemed "hardly feasible."<sup>232</sup>

#### THE OVERSEAS MINISTRY UNDER PERLEY

96. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, Perley informed Major Byron Greene that he was now prepared to accept the resignations of the members of the Acting Sub-Militia Council and that it was therefore dissolved as of that date.<sup>233</sup> On the same day, Brigadier-General Leckie, Colonel Reid and Colonel Neill were asked to relinquish their appointments.<sup>234</sup> The War Office was informed officially that the Acting Headquarters would cease to function on December 5<sup>th</sup> and that the Headquarters of the General Officer Commanding Canadian Forces in the United Kingdom would come into existence on that date. The chain of command would be through the General Officer Commanding at his headquarters in Cleveland House unless delegated by him.<sup>235</sup>

97. With his Ministry officially established and his official appointed, Perley could at last begin to deal with the many problems which confronted him. A long letter to the Prime Minister on November 27<sup>th</sup> serves as an inventory of his worries as he ended his first month of office:

... I find the situation is much worse than even I thought. The difficulty in the medical branch would be enough in itself to keep one busy for some time. The feelings aroused both here and in Canada in connection with this controversy are full of the possibility of trouble, and I shall be much relieved when they are settled. The Board which I appointed here has met with general approval except from General Bruce. I hope that its decision may soon be rendered and that it will enable us to end in some way the present confused state of affairs.

Then there is a great deal of complaint regarding the dental service, the Chaplain service and the forestry branch. How serious these are I do not know, and I have thought it best to let them rest until I got the weightier matters attended to.

He continued to remind Borden of the difficulties which he had experienced:

If I had known how difficult the situation is here I doubt if I should have complied with your request to take it in hand, although you know that I am always most anxious to do any-thing you may wish. If there had been a proper organization here like one of the regular Government departments, it would have been easier to come in and take up the problems which need decision and settlement. If on the other hand everything had been working smoothly, there would not have been any great difficulty in arranging some proper organization. The situation is that the organization has had to be first considered and decided upon, and at the same time there are many open sores which are coming up every day for decision. In the medical service the question of venereal is a burning one and ought to have been settled long ago. Then the arrangements regarding the sending back to Canada of those who are perman-ently unfit have never been really put into shape, and I have been cabling you on the subject. In a way connected with the medical depot and the casualty clearing centre most difficult. The former had not long been transferred from Bath to a most unsuitable place known as "Happy Valley", and the complaints about this were very many and serious, and I have made arrangements to move them.

Perley was also faced with the old problem of surplus officers. He was pleased to hear that the system was to be stopped (a premature relief) but went on to say that he was pushing on with the return of officers to Canada. The first group, largely Members of Parliament, were leaving for France, in a very few days, for the tour which had become the standard reward for their services. He was also concerned about the non-commissioned officers, an encouraging and unprecedented sign of humanity for his predecessors had been so devoted to protecting the officers that other ranks received little or no attention in such grievances. On two questions, relations with the British and the stature of the High Commission, Perley tried to make his position clear:

I note your suggestion that a cry may be raised that Canadian rights will not be strongly asserted under me. I will certainly try and bear this constantly in mind. As you know, I believe that Canada's control should be main-tained in every way possible. At the same time we must get along with the British authorities and my aim will be to try and get on with the War Office and at the same time maintain our authority. Any suggestions which you have to make to me in this direction from time to time will be much appreciated.

With regard to the relative position of the Minister of Overseas Forces and the high Commis-sioner, I quite agree with you that the duties of the former are at the moment far more imp-ortant than those of the latter. I cannot, however, agree with you that the status of the Minister outclasses the position of the high Commissioner. The latter has been in existence here for a great many years and his rank and duties are thoroughly understood by everyone. It would be many years before a Minister of Overseas Military

Forces could have a standing in this community at all comparable to that of the high Commissioner. If I can do them both, I certainly prefer the work I have had to do in this Office, and [Sir Thomas] White will be able to explain to you fully the position in this regard, as he understands it and entirely agrees with me.<sup>236</sup>

98. One of the remaining personnel problems which remained for Perley was the disposal of Carson. He obtained authority to establish a small commission to investigate the problems of demobilization to which he proposed to appoint the ex-Representative<sup>237</sup> but evidently Carson did not welcome the humbler status of such a position and so he chose to go on leave. He remained on leave in the United Kingdom and Canada until 31 January 1918, when he was finally struck off strength.<sup>238</sup>

99. Another difficulty was to find a replacement in France for General Turner. The Prime Minister seized on the notion that a promotion for Garnet Hughes might be a brilliant means of mollifying his father, whose potential for trouble in Parliament was already causing him real alarm. Unfortunately Byng had already promised the 2nd Division to Major-General Burstall, the commander of the Corps Artillery. Perley could hardly begin his regime by an act of gross interference and he bravely backed the Corps Commander. Borden was bitterly annoyed and showed it in a telegram to the Overseas Minister:

I have no knowledge of military matters but with respect to personal ability, I have no doubt that man selected by Byng is much inferior to other mentioned.[Hughes] I would strongly advise you to have capable representative at Front who can keep you informed.<sup>239</sup>

Perley explained that he had kept on Colonel R. Manly Sims as his representative at the Front.<sup>240</sup> There was some coldness on the subject of appointments for several weeks but in January, Borden showed that he was prepared to back his idea of an Overseas Minister by sustaining the Order-in-Council of December 19th which authorised all promotions and retirements of officers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force outside Canada to be made by the Overseas Minister, approved by the Army Council and published in the London Gazette.<sup>241</sup> There would be no further legitimate excuse for Ottawa interference in overseas appointments.

100. The need to find an appropriate place for Garnet Hughes contributed to Perley's early decision to retain the organization of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division. Even more important was the pressure of politicians and battalion commanders, often synonymous, to prevent the breaking up of the battalions. As the manpower crisis grew in Canada, it became more and more difficult to assemble battalions and would-be colonels were forced to utter more and more promises to gain recruits. The prestige of the Prime Minister himself was invoked to raise a Highland Brigade from Nova Scotia and his pocket was raided to purchase colours for all four battalions. Perley was under strong pressure from Sir William Robertson to send the formation to France<sup>243</sup> but he was equally aware that the men of the Division were becoming his only trained infantry reinforcements. Of the 120,000 men in England, he had found that 40,000 were unfit. 20,000 were required per division per year.<sup>244</sup> He simply could not afford to put a fifth division in the field unless the manpower supply was assured. Sir Edward Kemp, the new Minister of Militia, agreed that it would be risky to send the division to France for he did not believe that it could be

maintained there for longer than a year.<sup>245</sup> On January 17<sup>th</sup>, Perley cabled Kemp the news of a compromise. The Division would be recruited to full strength but would not be sent overseas nor would drafts be taken from it.<sup>246</sup> Later, the Minister arranged that Garnet Hughes would take over the command.<sup>247</sup> The political grief of breaking up the Division was postponed for a year.

101. As Perley probed deeper into the affairs of his new responsibility, he was not long in finding evidence of the consequences of Hughes' habit of making personal appointments. Senator Mason, a Toronto Conservative, had been made a Brigadier General (at the age of 73) by Hughes. In late 1916, he had been authorised to go to France to visit hospitals, as befitted a generous patron of the Red Cross. Instead, he had spent almost all his time with the forward divisions where he had proven something of a nuisance. He claimed, in justification, that he had not been provided with a car.<sup>248</sup> Mason's visit was just one of many reasons why the War Office was trying to centralize the issue of passes and to cut down the visits to the Front. Other officers, like Byron Greene and Grant Morden had been appointed Personal Staff Officers by the late Minister. Morden, for one, sought the aid of Robert Rogers to prevent his removal.<sup>249</sup> Sir George Perley was annoyed that so many favours and appointments in the Overseas Force were attributed to political influence. He preferred to describe it as personal influence, for Hughes' friends had included both Liberals and Conservatives.<sup>250</sup>

102. The most urgent problem facing the whole Overseas Ministry was the provision of manpower for the Corps in France. It was a problem which was to persist until the end of the war but it was increasingly acute until the advent of Conscription. Throughout most of the war, there were roughly as many Canadians in the United Kingdom as there were in France. In late March of 1917, for example, there were 125,465 members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in France and 125,278 in England.<sup>251</sup> Many of the men in England were casualties recovering from their Wounds or men who were unfit for further active service. Until the advent of the Ministry, efforts to return these men to Canada had been sporadic. Colonel W.E. Thompson, who visited England in late December, 1916, found that training in the four main camps then occupied by the Canadians, Witley, Bramshott, Shoreham and Seaford, was not carried on uniformly or systematically and that men were sent to France inadequately trained. He was able to report, however, that an improved system was already under way, that a fourteen week syllabus for all training camps had been adopted and, that matters might be expected to improve.<sup>252</sup> An investigation had found that there were some seventy battalions, ranging from full strength to skeletons, in the various Canadian camps. Fifty seven, exclusive of those forming the Fifth Division, were reduced to twenty six reserve battalions, grouped in six reserve brigades. In March, a regimental territorial association was established which affiliated the reserve battalions with other battalions in France, most of which had sustained an association with some part of Canada. This had the important political advantage of fulfilling the promise often made to men of battalions broken up that friends and neighbours would not be separated at the Front.<sup>253</sup>

103. On December 28th, Perley had received copies of the Baptie Committee report on the Bruce investigation of Canadian medical services and, as he had expected, it went a long way to rehabilitate Surgeon- General Jones. Colonel Bruce was promptly removed and, after some thought, Jones was reinstated for a month as symbolic recompense. Perley had found the medical situation "the most serious and difficult of all the many trouble here"<sup>254</sup> and he had developed a very unfriendly view of Colonel Bruce whom he felt had tried to make things awkward for him

from the outset and who had tried to destroy the Baptie investigation because, in Perley's view, he had no case of his own. The Prime Minister reluctantly backed the decision to reinstate Jones for a month and he later suggested that if Colonel Bruce showed any signs of wanting to go back to Canada, Sir William Osler should also be sent, to provide expert testimony on the Government side.<sup>255</sup> This did not prove necessary for Bruce, despite an understandable bitterness, chose to accept an appointment in France. The Minister's plan was carried through on 13th February 1917, when Major-General G.L. Foster, who had been Director of Medical Services in France, took over the same position in England, bringing with him a new staff and setting on foot, with considerable energy and imagination, a new organization. General Jones was appointed a Medical Commissioner for two months more, to give room for Foster and to allow a little further time for the controversy to die away. In the event, he managed to remain for a further year. Like Alderson before him, Jones failed to appreciate the ornamental nature of his post and his efforts to increase his staff and powers had constantly to be frustrated. He was not sent home until room could be made for him in the Militia Department.<sup>256</sup> The vigorous management of General Foster removed the Medical Service from Perley's list of problems.<sup>257</sup>

104. New appointments were also necessary in the Chaplains' Department. Religious matters were quite as politically sensitive as questions of medical care. The Director of Chaplains' Services under the old administration had been Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Stacy, an Anglican. He was not an effective administrator and he was unable to master the growing volume of work which crossed his desk. His most notorious difficulties, however, were with his Catholic chaplains, all of whom came under his authority. Most of his difficulties seemed to centre around the Very Reverend Monsignor Alfred E. Burke, ex-Editor of the Catholic Register, a strange amalgam of Imperialist, agriculturist and advocate of a tunnel from Prince Edward Island to the mainland. Senator Lougheed, during his brief moment as Acting Minister of Militia, had selected Burke, as a fellow Islander, to be the chief Catholic chaplain overseas.<sup>258</sup> Unfortunately for the plan, Hughes refused to back a man he had not chosen himself and Burke went to England with little more authority than his own considerable self-assurance. This was sufficient to gain him a brief trip to France and to Gallipoli and an audience with the Pope<sup>259</sup> and he returned from this journey with sufficient additional prestige to be accepted, without further question, as Stacy's assistant. This might have been satisfactory had Burke not lost the confidence of the Catholic chaplains at the Front, understaffed and already indignant at their subordination to a Protestant.<sup>260</sup> Perley, an Anglican, was not fitted to intervene in ecclesiastical politics. The Minister of Justice, the Honourable Charles Doherty, was consulted on clerical patronage and directed, after consultation with several Bishops, that Burke must on no account have any senior appointment.<sup>261</sup> Unfortunately for Burke, he had fallen foul of Bishop Fallon for adopting a neutral stand on Regulation 17.<sup>262</sup> The Monsignor remained too formidable for Perley to remove single-handed and he also supported Colonel Stacy against agitation from the Front. The matter was not finally settled until the end of February, when Burke appealed to Borden during the Prime Minister's stay in London and was finally turned down.<sup>263</sup> Colonel Almond, the Director of Chaplain Services at the Front, who had remained on very good terms with the Catholics, was brought back to London as was Father Workman, the senior Catholic chaplain in the Corps. Stacy refused to undertake the work of visiting hospitals where there was no Canadian chaplain, as beneath his dignity and eventually, Kemp was obliged to find a place for him in Canada.<sup>264</sup> Burke proved equally difficult, regarding the appointments offered as "degradations". He refused to conduct services, eventually depriving the Catholics at Witley of their Easter



service.<sup>265</sup> After three months of self-imposed idleness, Perley ordered that he should take up an appointment as chaplain to the military hospital at Brighton and Burke eventually capitulated.<sup>266</sup> Almond and Workman seem to have been successful in overcoming the worst failings of Colonel Steacy.

105. The Medical Service and the Chaplains were only two of the departments which required radical reform. It is common that newly appointed officials judge their predecessors harshly, the better to demonstrate their own perfection and it is probably true that many of the strictures passed on the officials of the Carson era were undeserved. Nevertheless, the general impression of decay and disorder is hard to avoid. Perley's method of reform was normally to bring back officers from France and to support them as best he could. Very few of the senior appointments of Carson's day had had greater experience of conditions in France than periodic tours. While the Sub-Militia Council was intended to function as an advisory body for the Canadian Expeditionary Force, only one of its members, Brigadier-General Leckie, had served for any length of time in France and his career had not been such a distinct success as to move the Corps Commander to ask for his return. Now, there were to be a steady stream of appointments from France. There were also to be new efforts to obtain staff training for Canadian officers so that they might occupy the major appointments in their own Corps. This was an issue raised by Turner, who maintained that only the Brigadier-General - General Staff, in the Corps and the General Staff Officers, Grade I in the divisions need be Imperial officers.<sup>267</sup> With the approval of the Minister and through the agency of the Deputy Minister, Turner began pressing for a policy of attaching Canadian officers to General Headquarters and to the Headquarters of the five British armies to learn staff work.<sup>268</sup> Perley, himself, pressed through the Colonial Secretary to receive for Canadians a higher proportion of the foreign decorations which were assigned to the British Army. In a letter of February 21st, he complained that the Canadians had received only 1 of 35 French decorations so far given and 9 of the 225 Russian.<sup>269</sup>

106. It seems evident that matters were not only improving but that members of the Corps in France could sense that they were getting better. Hugh Clark, Borden's Parliamentary Secretary, received a letter from Colonel J.W. Stewart, Deputy Director of Light Railways in France and a Canadian, who reported that:

Sir George Perley is rendering every possible assistance and doing very efficient work all around. I hear nothing but praise of him from every quarter. Think his appointment one of the most popular moves the Prime Minister ever made. I am particularly speaking for the Canadian Army in England. He certainly is putting new life into the cause and the results of his efforts are beginning to tell and are very much in evidence already.<sup>270</sup>

Borden sent a copy of this letter to his Minister and received a reply re—emphasizing the difficulties which Perley had found:

The difficulties here were appalling and I have no intention of ever trying to explain them to you in detail. Every Branch of the Service seemed to have troubles of its own, which we have been trying to straighten up one at a time. The serious difficulty was that the whole machine was out of gear and there was really no organization here through

which one could attempt to put it right. We had first to create an organization, and then tackle the various problems. It was more than fortunate that Sir Thomas White was in London when I took over this work. He helped me in every way with advice and moral support without which I should have found it most difficult to make a start. Even with his help, I would never have taken on the work if it had not been War time, but we have all got to do our best. The mess was not of my making and I am even yet not at all sure that we shall be able to get it into such shape that it will give us satisfaction. However, we are putting forth our best efforts."<sup>207A</sup>

107. As High Commissioner, Perley had been largely responsible for the negotiations with the British for the payment of the cost of the Canadians overseas. From the outset, Perley had opposed the establishment of a separate system of supply for the Canadians and had played a prominent part in arranging the per diem payments which reimbursed the British for the cost of maintaining the Dominion troops in France.<sup>271</sup> The matter was finally accepted by the Cabinet through Order in Council of 24 January 1917, after a steady series of negotiations since the beginning of 1915. One of the reasons which had moved both Perley and White to press for the establishment of a Ministry under civilian control was the hope of achieving economy in England. The per capita agreements applied only to France, however, and doubtless Perley hoped that they had been settled. Unfortunately, the British were obliged to re-open matters when they began to appreciate the cost of the enormous expenditures of artillery which became common in 1916. Against the wishes of both Perley and Carson,<sup>272</sup> the per capita agreement allowed for an adjustment when the arrangement was manifestly unfair to one of the signatories. Sir Charles Harris, Assistant Financial Secretary at the War Office, pointed out to Perley in a letter of 2 March 1917, that the 6/ per diem figure only allowed 1/ for gun ammunition. In the quarter of 1916 from July to September, the expenditure per soldier on artillery ammunition had averaged 7/6d per day.<sup>273</sup> Perley, as High Commissioner, was involved once more in negotiations, further complicated by his own insistence that the Canadian Government should only be liable from the date of Sir Charles' letter while Harris asserted that increased payments should date from the period when the 6/ rate was no longer found to be equitable.<sup>274</sup> In pursuing this paper battle to the end of the war, no one could accuse Sir George of failing to protect Canadian interests.

108. It was probably easier for the Overseas Ministry to improve the organization and efficiency of Canadian establishments in England than to maintain consistently close and satisfactory relations with either the Canadian Corps in France or the Canadian Government in Ottawa. It was in these fields that both the advantages and the difficulties of having a Cabinet Minister permanently stationed outside the country became evident.

109. On the whole, it is evident that relations with France were more satisfactory than those with Canada. Sir Max Aitken, who had become Lord Beaverbrook as a result of the political arrangements which led to the appointment of Lloyd George as British Prime Minister, no longer could find time to be Canadian Representative at the Front. Perley appointed his deputy, Lieutenant-Colonel R.F. Manly Sims, to be the new Representative and gave him a definite set of functions. He was henceforth to serve as the Minister's representative in all matters at General Headquarters and as a liaison officer between the Minister, General Headquarters, the Canadian Headquarters in London and the Canadian Corps. He was also to provide a channel of direct communication between the Corps and the Headquarters in London. His purpose, as the Minister

explained it to the War Office,<sup>275</sup> was to enable the Minister to present his views to the Commander-in-Chief semi-officially and to prevent difficulties arising out of purely domestic matters. Sims was also given a small staff and an establishment of cars to take care of another major function, arrangements for Canadian visitors to the Front. A long memorandum was prepared, largely dealing with the financial and administrative arrangements for this service.<sup>276</sup>

110. The appointment of a Representative in France with defined powers and subordination to the Minister in London was the first step in a series which were to continue until the end of the war, to secure more effective Canadian control of the Corps. Step by step, and possibly imperceptibly to the authors of the measures, it became less a Canadian part of the British Army and more a foreign contingent fighting alongside the British Army. Securing control over promotions was a major step., Although an Order-in-Council of 19 December 1916, had given the Minister of Overseas Forces the authority over promotions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force outside Canada, Perley still found that promotions of Canadians were appearing in the London Gazette, which he had never approved. A letter from the Deputy Minister to the War Office reminding them of the correct procedure and promising prompt action<sup>277</sup> elicited, the surprising reply that the War Office was still operating on the basis of the Order-in-Council of 16 September 1915, which gave them complete control over all Canadian overseas promotions simply on the recommendation of the Corps Commander or the General Officer Commanding Canadians in England and that they had not even adjusted to the Order-in-Council of 23 February 1916, which (c.f. supra) imposed the authority of the Minister of Militia in Ottawa.<sup>278</sup> The War Office was ready to accept the Canadian demand although Gow was obliged to write later in April that General Headquarters in France was not following the correct procedure. He suggested that the Canadian Representative be used as a channel for forwarding names. He also asked that appointments should be made on an acting basis but not "subject to confirmation" as that led to embarrassment when the Minister subsequently found it impossible to appoint the particular officer.<sup>279</sup> The question of promotions appears to have been settled satisfactorily. In July, General Currie wrote in considerable indignation to say that the promotions of certain artillery officers had been held up for as much as fourteen months. Some of them had since been killed.<sup>280</sup> A careful investigation proved to Currie's satisfaction that he had been mistaken and that the delay had, in fact, originated in his own head-quarters.<sup>281</sup> Turner pointed out that by careful checking and giving the right information, it was possible to have Canadian promotions confirmed and entered in the London Gazette within two weeks of their being received.<sup>282</sup>

111. In June came two very important promotions indeed. On June 5th, Haig was informed that General Allenby would be sent to Egypt. To replace him in command of the Third Army, he selected Sir Julian Byng. On June 6th, Sir Arthur Currie\* was called to Corps Headquarters and informed that he would be taking over from Byng. On June 8th, Byng left to take over his new command and Currie became acting Corps Commander.<sup>283</sup> On the same day, Colonel Sims sent word of the change to Perley and advised him that although Currie's appointment was temporary, Byng was unlikely to return.<sup>284</sup> He then set out for London to confer with the Minister. The change created some difficulties for Perley, which he explained in a cable to the Prime Minister on the 9th. He did not fore-see serious difficulty in insisting that a Canadian be given command of the Corps. The problem arose in the selection of the Commander. Currie was senior Major-General in the Corps with a distinguished fighting record. He was also in the strong position of

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\* Knighted in the 1917 Birthday Honour list.

being in France and in temporary command. General Turner, however, was senior to Currie in the Overseas Forces and, in coming to London, had specifically reserved his right to be considered for the command of the Corps as a condition of coming over. Perley had found Turner invaluable in London and he had no desire to lose him. He also knew that Turner's military record did not stand so high in Haig's estimation as Currie's and he had been six months away from the Front. The problem was to prevent conflict between the two men. To achieve this, he proposed to make both of them lieutenant-generals, retaining them where they were but giving Turner more authority over administrative matters in France.<sup>286</sup> After a Cabinet meeting, Borden decided to leave the matter in Perley's hands, after reminding him that Garnet Hughes should have the vacant division.<sup>286</sup> This did not satisfy Perley's hope that an invidious choice would not be left to him. Another difficulty was that Currie preferred to recommend Brigadier-General A.C. MacDonnell for the command of the 1st Division and refused to have Garnet Hughes. Currie came to London and Perley met with him alone on the evening of June 14th and with both generals on the 15th. Agreement was reached on the basis of a long memorandum\*\* which re-emphasized the Minister's control of promotions and insisted that Canadians would hold, or at least be trained to hold all positions in the Corps. The most important section came at the end of which it was stated that "the appointment of General Officer Commanding Canadian Forces in the British Isles is the senior military appointment in the Overseas Military Forces of Canada".<sup>287</sup> On that basis, Currie was recommended for the Corps and Perley accepted his arguments on behalf of MacDonnell.<sup>288</sup> He did arrange with the War Office that both generals would be promoted on the same day so that Haig could go through the pretence of choosing two officers with equal seniority.<sup>289</sup> Some delay was caused while Sir Julian Byng's appointment was confirmed<sup>290</sup> but the promotions were gazetted on June 23rd.

112. The chance of command in the Corps gave occasion to a particularly unbridled display of energetic intrigue. Although he had been a personal friend of Garnet Hughes and had owed his original appointment in some measure to his influence,<sup>291</sup> Currie refused to give way to powerful pressure that he should be appointed to the vacant Divisional command. As a consequence, the two men quarrelled and Currie was exposed to the spiteful and merciless attacks of a large and powerful Hughes interest, well aware of the General's lack of political influence and the dubious state of his finances. The Overseas Minister, himself, was well aware of the pressure. Garnet Hughes had enlisted Lord Beaverbrook on his side and Perley also appreciated that the Prime Minister would welcome any means of pacifying the ex-Minister of Militia.<sup>292</sup> At the end of the month, Walter Gow was sent to France to press Garnet's claims. He returned unsuccessful but his report on the favourable reception of both Currie and MacDonnell's<sup>293</sup> promotions in the Corps convinced Perley that the issue was dead. In contrast to the cruel campaign waged by the Hughes faction, the efforts of General Steele on behalf of Brigadier—General Ketchen seem almost irrelevant. A telegram from him to Robert Rogers was intercepted by the Censor: "Don't forget promise about Ketchen for Division. MacDonnell must not get it."<sup>294</sup> This provoked Perley to send a telegram to the Prime Minister which sounds a little strange in view of the pressure exercised on behalf of Garnet Hughes:

As you know, we are trying to manage the Overseas Department as a military organization, and to make all appointments and promotions entirely on the grounds of efficiency. It would not only be unwise but absolutely inexcusable to have political

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\*\* See Appendix "C"

pressure used in regard to the appointment of a Divisional Commander and I know you agree with this. I do not say that any action should be taken regarding this particular incident, but it gives me the opportunity to say to you again that I think General Steele might be most useful in Canada, particularly in connection with recruiting in the West, where he has great influence. ... I do not think he has as much work to do as he is capable of performing.<sup>295</sup>

113. For the remainder of Perley's term as Overseas Minister, relations between him and Currie remained on a high level of mutual confidence and respect. There were inevitable misunderstandings but these were overcome without permanent wounds. The greater efficiency of the Canadians in England contributed greatly to better relations as Gow found when he visited France at the end of June:

Speaking generally I found a very much better feeling existing on all hands as to the relations between London and the front than existed when I was in France last year. Everywhere the statement was "Things are so much better now than they were. The drafts which come over from England are much better trained and the relations between the field and the forces in England seem to be much closer and better in every way." That is I think a fair epitome of the many statements made to me on the subject.<sup>296</sup>

114. One issue which did remain to be settled was the authority of the Corps Commander for appointments and promotions in the Services. The memorandum of June 14th had explicitly excluded them from the Corps but Currie maintained that he should have control over the officers appointed in the Services within his own Corps:

I am only too anxious to do everything possible to promote and preserve harmony, but I most respectfully submit that, as I am the one who must assume final responsibility for the efficiency of the Corps, there must be no interference with my prerogatives in the matter of recommendation.<sup>297</sup>

He was disturbed about the promotion of veterinary officers from England regardless of the seniority of officers who had served in the Corps. It would, he maintained, "create a similar confusion and ill-will as was formerly created by the late Minister of Militia's practice of slapping people on the back and telling them their rank was so and so."<sup>298</sup> It was a somewhat intemperate letter and Perley, in his reply, noted that there were several things to which he might take exception, but avoided doing so.<sup>299</sup> The dispute was settled with a visit to France at the end of August which established that the heads of the Services would be responsible for their own appointments but that they would be subject to the Corps Commander's advice, to be conveyed through<sup>300</sup> Colonel Sims. Currie noted, ruefully, in one of the letters of this correspondence, that he so much preferred to receive telegrams than letters for the former were always congratulatory and the latter always had reproof.<sup>301</sup> He also recommended, after Perley's visits, that he and Turner should come over more often as a means of setting differences.<sup>302</sup>

115. It might have been expected that a firm but diplomatic Minister, assisted by a competent and respected staff, would improve the efficiency and morale of the much mismanaged Overseas Forces. What was less easy to predict was the success of his relations with the Minister of

Militia, the Cabinet and Parliament. Since the essence of a Minister's constitutional position is his sharing of responsibility for the government of the country with his colleagues in the Cabinet before the tribunal of Parliament, one might legitimately question the role of a Cabinet Minister who had not sat in the Cabinet for more than a few months since June, 1914 and never as a Minister, and who had never appeared in Parliament. Perhaps the essence of the situation was the prestige which all Canadians attached to the role of Minister as they would to no lesser public official. Perley himself, had commented on this in an earlier letter to the Prime Minister:

With us it seems to be a general feeling that if one wishes to get anything done in one of the Departments he must see the Minister himself and in that way he is more likely to have his request granted.<sup>303</sup>

116. For the crime Minister, the main concern was how well the new plan would be accepted in Parliament and by the public. Inevitably, his anxiety centred upon his late colleague, the ex-Minister of Militia. Hughes' chance came on January 30th, in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. He began with a proclamation of his patriotism -- "...with me, country and cause come first ..." -- and then proceeded through a long recital of wrongs and injustices inflicted upon him largely through his support for a purely Canadian war effort. He spoke of his plans for an army of six or eight divisions, with General Currie in charge of one and another Canadian taking the other. As for Turner; he had:

... seen fit to take up a side-show job in London. It is none of my funeral that he has gone over there; he will regret it all the rest of his days.

This sort of observation gave some intimation of what he would have to say of the Overseas Ministry itself. It was, he told the Members, purely ornamental, although it would cost \$3 million a year, a figure which he evidently obtained from his own imagination. Of his own era, he said:

Poor old General Carson and Colonel Murphy had about thirty officers assisting them at comparatively small cost -- but I am told that there are six or seven hundred around the place now, and the Lord knows how many more there will be before the war is over. My aim has been to attain the greatest possible efficiency with the least possible cost, friction and trouble. I always tried to have these questions settled as quietly as I could, but, chiefly because of the newspaper show on the other side, inspired, I assume, from Canada, there was always that little tittle-tattle creating friction and doing harm. But, in spite of all that, the boys got on well.<sup>304</sup>

Hughes' principle target, however was the Medical Service which he attacked with a mixture of half-truths and outright misrepresentations which were unpardonable in a man who, as an ex-Minister, was notoriously indiscreet but who might reasonably be expected to know the truth. When he spoke of dope friends and alcoholics among the doctors or when he spoke of the hospitals as marriage bureaus,<sup>305</sup> his charges were taken up by the Opposition, starved of solid facts by wartime censorship. At the same time, there was no one in Parliament to speak for the Overseas Ministry but the Minister of Militia or the Prime Minister and they were dependent upon cabled information from London. Many of the parliamentary returns demanded were of

great length and complexity. On 23 May 1917, the Ministry was asked to produce a list of all officers not attached to a definite unit on 13 March 1916, the nature of their duties, the amount paid and all the relevant correspondence.<sup>306</sup> Matters were made only slightly easier when a subsequent cable changed the date from 1916 to 1917. A reply was sent on August 9th. At the same time, Perley protested against having to answer such questions as the number of cases of drunkenness since the First Contingent reached England.<sup>307</sup> Such questions might well seem absurd and, in some cases, had no better design than to harass the Government. At the same time, Members were constantly troubled by anxious parents and wives, themselves the recipients of letters from their men folk overseas, full of vague allegations of mismanagement and wrongdoing. The problem of responsibility to Parliament of the Overseas Minister was never satisfactorily solved.

117. Hughes' assertion about the expansion of the Overseas Ministry became a refrain of the Opposition and by the summer, he was claiming that there were 1200-1500 people doing work that Carson had managed with 50.<sup>308</sup> Such allegations were to make Argyll House a symbol of bureaucratic conceit and mismanagement in the Canadian mythology, not without some measure of truth, but the exact degree of truth was made more difficult to uncover simply because there was also no one in Parliament to present the Ministry's case. When the Prime Minister sent Hughes' latest charge to London in August,<sup>309</sup> an answer was ready, pointing out that the staff in December, 1916, under Carson, had been 134 officers and 566 other ranks while in August, it had become 139 officers and 486 other ranks. There were other economies as well. 11 training brigades had become 6 and a cavalry brigade had become a cavalry regiment. Cleveland House and the Hotel Cecil, for which Canada had paid, had been given up in exchange for quarters provided free by the British Government.<sup>310</sup> There were other economies as well but this aspect of the story was not completely presented in Parliament.

118. The status of the Overseas Minister as well as of the Parliamentary Secretaries for External Affairs and for Militia and Defence rested only on Order-in-Council and the Government planned to establish all three by means of an omnibus bill. The resolution, calling for the appointments to last until the end of the first Parliamentary session after the war, allowed a salary of \$7,000 to the Overseas Minister and \$5,000 to each of the Parliamentary Secretaries. When it was introduced on 7 August 1917, it gave an opportunity for Members to examine the novel concept of a Minister entirely away from the centre of Government. It also gave Hughes a chance to rehearse his grievances. Since these had become monotonously repetitive, it is evident that they caused the Government less alarm. It was the question of information which most aroused the Leader of the Opposition. Laurier complained that there were now two ministers of militia and he could get information from neither.<sup>311</sup> Other Liberal members raised the point of the salary, observing that Perley had never sought re-election under the Independence of Parliament Act.<sup>312</sup> Sir Sam Hughes maintained that Sir George Perley had sacrificed everything to the British since 1914 and hence was responsible for virtually every misfortune which had befallen the Canadians. He also made a point of involving the many Members of Parliament whom he had appointed as colonels but who had since been returned to Canada as surplus: "I challenge any Member of this House who has taken a battalion overseas to stand up in his place and say that he has received satisfactory treatment from the Overseas Militia Office in England." He then told of a poor mother who had taken two months to discover that her son was dead while his own inquiries had produced the information in two days.<sup>313</sup>

119. On the Second Reading, E.M. Macdonald, a future Liberal Minister of National Defence, opened with his view that a civilian like Sir George Perley, trained only in business and civil life, could not possibly direct military matters. It was a possibly refreshing change from the common Canadian viewpoint that a business-man is a fount of all knowledge.<sup>314</sup> Rodolphe Lemieux, a prosperous lawyer, spoke with horror of the "leap in the dark" as "too great, too serious a departure from the spirit of the British constitution and of British institutions..."<sup>315</sup> His concern, it emerged, was with the electors of Argenteuil who had seen so little of their member. Sir Sam made another contribution in which he again attacked Perley and asked "surely we can get some ornamental position for him where he will not be a menace to the nation." He also found time to digress slightly and to describe General Gwatkin as acknowledged by the British to be unfit for the position he now held. That was why he had picked him, Hughes explained but he had been mistaken: "I was right in the fact that he did not know much but I was wrong in thinking he would not interfere."<sup>316</sup> On August 18th, after about two full days of debate, the bill was carried on division.

120. The failure of the House to come to terms with the novel principle involved in the Bill is disappointing but hardly surprising. In part, members did recognize the issues when they spoke of divided authority and the problem of obtaining information. What neither party chose to do was to launch a frontal attack upon Hughes and his administration, the real cause for the radical change. For the Conservatives, it would have been to attack themselves and William Pugsley was ready to remind Sir Robert on his past praise for the ex-Minister of Militia. For the Liberals, there was the usual lack of definite information. There was also a wise tactical reluctance to attack a valuable ally in their assault on the Borden Government.

121. If the Opposition had analyzed the problem more thoroughly, they might have devoted more attention to the link between the Minister of Militia and the Overseas Minister for it was here that friction would have seemed most probable. Difficulties did arise but they seem to have been kept under control by the mutual respect of the two Ministers and by the continuing supervision of the Prime Minister. Perley and Kemp were well known to each other and Perley had welcomed the latter's appointment as a guarantee that there would be no friction.<sup>317</sup>

122. While the military responsibilities of the two Departments were clearly distinguished, Perley remained, as High Commissioner, the London agent of the Militia Department. One of the first instances of a difference between Kemp and Perley was founded on the difficulties the latter experienced in making arrangements for the acceptance of Canadian war material and the pressure the former was experiencing to produce an accounting for Parliament. Kemp could not understand why weapons, like the Savage Lewis Gun, ordered in Canada by the Imperial authorities and manufactured according to Imperial design, were not allowed to be used at the Front. It was an embarrassment to the Government and Kemp had felt obliged to furnish Premier Hearst of Ontario, whose Government had purchased a number of machine guns for the forces, with a statement that the machine guns were, in fact, being used at the Front. Kemp had also asked Perley to dispose of 200,000 greatcoats which had been ordered but which, due to an over-estimate of wastage, had become surplus. Kemp maintained that the pattern was almost the same and the quality even better than the coats provided by the British. This was a surplus which it would be hard to justify after the war and he could not understand British reluctance to



eliminate a debt in this way. Finally, there were the Ross Rifles, withdrawn from the Canadians, but perfectly good. The Government was under contract for a further 100,000 Ross Rifles from the factory and he proposed that the British Government must have need of them somewhere in the Empire. The Minister could not understand why Perley was unable to persuade the British Government to get him out of his difficulties. As Sir Robert Borden was leaving for England in early February, Kemp gathered these and other complaints into a long memorandum in hope that the Prime Minister, himself, might be able to obtain satisfaction on the other side.<sup>318</sup>

123. When the Prime Minister raised these questions in England, another side of the problem was explained to him. The Savage Lewis Guns were not suitable because subsequent modifications of the British pattern had prevented the parts from being interchangeable. It was proposed to use them in a minor theatre of war. The negotiations for purchase of the greatcoats were proceeding but the British considered the Canadian cloth, with a cotton warp, to be inferior to their own. The Ross Rifles in the hands of the Canadians overseas were being exchanged without cost to Canada and negotiations for the sale of the further 100,000 rifles had been postponed until this delicate arrangement had been completed. In a letter of explanation prepared for Perley by Brigadier-General McRae, there was a concluding paragraph of restrained indignation:

...May I be permitted to refer to the note of impatience which is discernible in the letter from the Hon. The Minister of Militia and Defence. Appreciating that it is quite impossible for the Hon. The Minister to have a true appreciation of the result of two years' bad administration and the problems which it has left for us to clear up, the desired results cannot be obtained without much patience. Matters of this kind must follow regular procedure and if in the end we are successful in disposing of these problems to the credit of the Government and without loss to the Canadians, we have reason to feel well repaid for our patience.<sup>319</sup>

124. Borden brought with him to England two Cabinet Ministers, Robert Rogers and J.D. Hazen, who were put to work to supplement Perley's efforts to obtain satisfaction for Kemp, an undertaking which Perley approved providing that they check with him first to prevent any overlapping.<sup>320</sup> During the Prime Minister's visit, another issue arose which emphasized the difference between Perley's need to achieve efficiency and Hemp's need to satisfy political pressures. Having decided to gratify the military ambitions of its wealthier and more influential supporters, the Conservative Government was now in a position that it could not allow these men to proceed to the Front. Perley and his Adjutant-General tried to solve the problem of surplus officers by directing that no more complete units should be sent overseas and that all officers sent with drafts should be prepared to serve as lieutenants. On March 5th, Thacker finally asked the Militia Department to send no more officers at all and warned that even lieutenants who came over would be required to revert to the ranks to go to the Front. While this might have settled the question to the satisfaction of the Overseas Ministry, it provoked a strong protest to the Prime Minister from Kemp:

...Whole matter should be reviewed. These officers have raised their units in good faith and when their battalions are taken away from them on the eve of sailing they become disappointed and resentful against Government. A large number of troops are

about to embark and there are indications of great unrest among the officers, as well as the men, because of what appears to be a breach of faith on part of Government. My opinion is that even though it may be necessary to sacrifice something we will be obliged to readjust instructions which have been sent out from England. Should be glad if you would take matters up with Perley and his staff with view of making some suggestion which will enable me to pursue a policy with the battalions that are about to sail which will more nearly approach what they think is fair politics.<sup>321</sup>

Perley was obliged to accede to arguments expressed in terms of political expediency but he could only warn Borden that, despite every effort to find places for the surplus officers, there were still many left over, and if more were sent from Canada, more would have to<sup>322</sup> be returned, with the heart-burning further distributed.

125. During his long stay in England, from February 22nd to May 5th, Borden had considerable opportunity to see the progress which had been made in the re-organization of the Overseas Forces. He also heard many criticisms that the Minister was cold and bound up in the routine of his office, lacking the human touch. Such observations were undoubtedly caused in considerable part of Perley's efforts to remove the Ministry from the expansive era of political favour and patronage which had prevailed under Hughes and Carson. Borden might appreciate the improvement but he would not have been leader of the Conservative Party if he were not also sensitive to the hurt feelings of his supporters, many of whom were found in the discontented ranks of the surplus officers, others of whom had been displaced in the re-organization. He recommended that Perley should engage a few diplomatic and resourceful assistants who would receive and mollify callers who were so often disappointed office seekers. He also suggested that he appoint a confidential secretary who would make enquiries and keep the Minister in touch.<sup>323</sup> With recollections of the many officers whom Hughes had so notoriously used as his spies, it is unlikely that Perley greeted the last suggestion with much enthusiasm but after Borden had returned to Canada, the Overseas Minister wrote to Kemp to ask him to suggest someone to serve in this capacity. He wanted a:

... trustworthy, tactful and reticent officer who does not talk too much and would assist me with those having troubles and grievances and generally smooth over difficulties. Hard to define his duties but they will be important. He should be man of experience not too young and Conservative but not too partisan.<sup>324</sup>

Kemp proposed a number of names, all Toronto Conservatives<sup>325</sup> but when it became evident that Premier Hearst of Ontario was pressing for the appointment of William Price,<sup>326</sup> Perley seems to have dropped the matter, possibly suspecting that an assistant appointed in such a way would not prove much of an asset in dealing with other job—seekers.

126. Channels of communication formed another difficulty which occasionally arose between the Ministry in London and the Department in Ottawa. When he learned of a change of command in the Corps. Perley informed the Prime Minister on the 9th June but the Minister of Militia had to cable two days later to find out what had happened to Byng and who was now in command of the Corps.<sup>327</sup> In the midst of the Conscription crisis, Borden asked Perley to arrange with the War Office that the Governor General would cable direct to the War Secretary

to discover the number of reinforcements which the Canadian Corps would require per month and that they would send back a reply, endorsed by both Currie and Turner, direct to the Governor General.<sup>328</sup> Perley protested at this by-passing of his Department:

... Have endeavoured in every way arrange so that we could exercise Canadian control over our own forces in all matters administration and policy and you know what difficulties we encounter in so doing. Our Senior Officers should know what reinforcements we are likely need and inquiry regarding same direct from Canada to War Office might appear to them as deviation from policy of administration which we advocate.<sup>329</sup>

Borden pointed out, as might have been expected, that the arrangement was only being made for its effect on public opinion and Perley made the necessary arrangements.<sup>330</sup> It was to eliminate these and other misunderstandings that Perley recommended to the Prime Minister in a letter of 26 July 1917, that either Kemp might come over for a visit of a few months or McCurdy, the Parliamentary Secretary, might commute back and forth across the Atlantic, dividing his time between the two sides of the ocean.

127. The Construction Crisis had further repercussions in London, where Perley was feeling increasingly reluctant to continue in an office which had never particularly appealed to him. During the Prime Minister's long visit to England, the question of Perley's status as Acting High Commissioner had been raised. Borden was quite unwilling to introduce a bill in wartime which would give effect to Perley's request to be both High Commissioner and a member of the Cabinet. He was also convinced, after reference to Sir Andrew Bonar Law, that Perley's status as a member of the Canadian Government was unquestionably higher than if he had been simply High Commissioner.<sup>331</sup> Sir George was annoyed at his failure to concede the point. Somewhat later, the Prime Minister overlooked Perley's candidate for a vacancy in the Senate. In Argenteuil. In Argenteuil, this would be regarded as a proof of the Member's political impotence and Perley had sufficient experience of the riding to know that it made his own re-election unlikely. With these grievances weighing on him, aggravated by eight months of work and responsibility, he sent a long letter to the Prime Minister on 24 June 1917. In it, he pointed out the unlikelihood of his being able to retain his seat and proposed, on condition that the Prime Minister still wanted him to continue in the Overseas Ministry, that he be given an Ontario Senate seat. He was, after all, from Ontario, and his transfer would make it possible to give Quebec a more active representative in the Cabinet. If he was not wanted, as Minister, then he might be appointed high Commissioner, with a change in the stature to allow him to remain in the Cabinet. Then he could go out of office if the Government were defeated. His final suggestion was that he be appointed High Commissioner in the usual way and he would continue in the Overseas Ministry until the election, when a new Minister could be sent over.

I am sorry I cannot talk this over with you but I think I have written you all that is in my mind. I am of course in your hands and only anxious to act in whatever way I can be of the greatest assistance in this terrible struggle. In case of an election, I shall have to decide whether to go home for it and if I have been of service over here I thought you might like to confirm my status here or so arrange that I need not continue to have a constituency to look after which is so difficult when three thousand miles away.<sup>332</sup>

128. Borden made no reply to this letter. It arrived as negotiations were beginning for the formation of a Union Government, a process which was to last the whole summer. Besieged by calls for Senate appointments and aware that he would have to find considerable room in his Cabinet for Liberal Unionists, he did not forget that Perley might offer him a measure of flexibility. A second message from Perley reached the prime Minister a few days before the session ended, on September 14th:

After careful investigation have decided unwise contest Argenteuil considered it my duty to stay here and carry on. Besides that French feeling made situation that county most difficult anyway Senatorial appointment and other causes have greatly reduced my reliable workers. ...Wish therefore you could give me reply my letter June twenty fourth so that exact reason my not running can be told our friends ... In my opinion best solution make me High Commissioner appoint another Overseas Minister. Am finding this additional work too heavy carry on permanently. Would of course help whoever you made Overseas Minister if he wished me to do and in that way he could probably attend session for a few weeks each year.<sup>333</sup>

The cable was sent at a time when Perley was feeling depressed and unhappy. Within a few weeks of sending it, he had news from his constituency that prospects were improving and that the Wartime Election Act would be very helpful.<sup>334</sup> Recovering his spirits, he immediately asked Borden to defer action<sup>335</sup> and then withdrew his virtual resignation in a letter on October 9th:

Am not fully in touch with situation in Canada and feel should not have expressed definite opinion in that cable. My short holiday has rested me greatly. Have had strenuous year but our organization is now working well and am now prepared continue my present work here if you think best. It has been represented to me that my leaving Cabinet now might be misconstrued and that change in Overseas Minister just now might prejudicially influence soldiers' vote. Am most anxious do everything possible assist you and our cause in this great crisis, When you have decided what you would prefer my doing hope you can give me chance considering same when will endeavour meet your views.<sup>336</sup>

129. It was too late. Working from Perley's cable of September 14th, Borden had considered the Overseas Ministry vacant. On October 5th, Sir Edward Kemp had consented to accept it and this made room for Major— General Sydney C. Mewburn, a Hamilton lawyer and a Liberal, to become the Minister of Militia.<sup>337</sup> Perley received the first news that his reconsideration had been in vain in somewhat cold telegram from Borden on October 13th:

Have arranged your appointment as High Commissioner in view of your strongly expressed desire but it may be necessary within six months or a year to make different disposition with regard to it. ...<sup>338</sup>

The remainder of the message intimated some of the other displacements which were to be necessary in the formation of the Union Government. Perley was hurt and discouraged to receive an appointment for which he had been so eager in such a way and he expressed his feelings in a long reply to the Prime Minister:

Your secret cable of the 13th has made me feel badly as you have evidently appointed me High Commissioner against your own judgement and when you had some other plan in mind in regard thereto. Since I have been in public life I have always held myself ready to do whatever would be of the greatest help to you and wish you had acted in this instance regarding me as you yourself considered wisest. I appreciate exceedingly the confidence and friendship you have always shown me, and although in this instance I did express an opinion regarding myself I still expect you to make the decision as you thought best in the public interest. Any time that your opinion and mine have varied, I have usually found you were right.

I have been under a heavy strain for a year. I have said little about it but the military organization here was in very bad shape and I really did not know myself what a mess it was in. I imagine that no one can ever realize what I have gone through in putting it right except those immediately around me. No money could have tempted me to do it in peacetime and I only tackled it out of loyalty to you and desire to do my utmost in this war. At the same time the work was most interesting and from now on will not be nearly so heavy. I think Kemp will find things in good shape. I will do anything I can to assist him.

I am better now but my nerves were rather poor when ~ cabled you last September 14th. It was a mistake and I am sorry.

.....

I regret being out of the Cabinet and I had hoped you would arrange to make this office into a portfolio. As you know I think that would be the most satisfactory arrangement and so far I have no desire to live here permanently.<sup>339</sup>

Already preparing for a better election campaign, Borden found no time to reply to this letter until November 3rd when he explained that Perley had mistaken his meaning, that he had merely accepted the alternative which he believed Perley wished most ardently and that, in the turmoil of cabinet making, there was always a possibility of changes. Perley was thanked for his loyalty but no further commitments were made to him.<sup>340</sup>

130. Since the new Minister of Overseas Forces had to regain his seat, Perley continued his work in the Ministry.<sup>341</sup> His major responsibility, however, was to organize the voters in the Overseas Forces on behalf of the Unionist Party. As a Minister, he had been involved in a variety of political undertakings, ranging from recommending newspapers with a wide circulation at the Front for use as Unionist advertising media<sup>342</sup> to advising on a proposal to appoint a senior general, either Currie or Turner, to the Cabinet as a means of attracting the soldier vote.<sup>343</sup> As High Commissioner and no longer a Minister or even a candidate for Parliament, Perley was reluctant to act as a political agent, and used this as an excuse to make another appeal for Cabinet membership.<sup>344</sup> It was quickly turned down by the Prime Minister who added that if he did not choose to work in the election, he should make up his mind quickly and other arrangements would be made. If the Government lost, it would be Perley's duty to resign in any case.<sup>345</sup> That

settled the matter and the High Commissioner, assisted by Lord Beaverbrook and Hector McInnes, a lawyer from Cape Breton Island, threw themselves into the election arrangements.

131. The 1917 election overseas clearly indicated that if a measure of efficiency had come to the Overseas Forces, political considerations had not been abandoned. For the period of the election, military considerations fell second to electoral advantage. A certain discretion was imposed by tradition and by British regulations which forbade meetings in military establishments and which set a standard for military non-involvement but the limitations were small. Despite an unsatisfactory reinforcement situation, the 5th Division was held together until after the voting.<sup>346</sup> Many senior officers had been active politicians in the Conservative interest before the War and nothing seems to have prevented them from influencing their men. A widely broadcast claim which was certainly not refuted during the campaign was that a Unionist Government would give every member of the First Contingent a furlough in Canada.<sup>347</sup> The Canadian Daily Record, a tabloid widely distributed among the troops, offered space for advertising by both sides but its was managed by Lord Beaverbrook and its news from Canada was arranged by the Government. On December 10th, seven days before polling day in Canada, Perley could report with modest pleasure that the job was done:

I am happy to say that the vote is pretty well polled and I believe the result will be satisfactory. When I got your message saying you were sending no one over and asking me to do the best I could it seemed a big additional load but fortune favoured me. Hector McInnes was here and when I talked it over with him and said he must stay, he promptly acquiesced and set to work to arrange a committee and an organization. He has worked early and late and to good purpose and cannot be thanked too highly. His office managed the leaflets and similar literature and he got in touch with the newspapermen.

Beaverbrook has managed the Press campaign splendidly. He has worked at it early and late and every newspaper except a couple have backed the Union Government strongly and given much space and in several cases special editions to explaining the points at issue. The Mirror and the Express have been particularly helpful but the Mail has done us a lot of good. Beaverbrook has also helped with the expenses and in fact has been most keen and enthusiastic.

Then Hogarth\* has worked night and day here and Sims in France. Sims you know -- He is one of our best and is an ardent supporter of the Government as well as being most capable and satisfactory in his work at G.H.Q. Hogarth is specially to be remembered as he has ambitions to be in Parliament and would have returned to Canada for that purpose if he had not been asked to remain here. He is reliable and you must bear him in mind for Ontario in the years to come.

The burden had been borne by the four officers but the favourable atmosphere for the Government was of longer creation:

The foundation had been laid during the past twelve months as I have endeavoured to make the force feel that everyone gets fair play irrespective of politics or

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\* Brig.-Gen D.M. Hogarth, D.S.T. and future Q.M.G.

favoritism. That made it possible to organize on such short notice as I think McInnes will tell you. A year ago there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction but I shall be very much surprised if the vote over here is not very strongly in your favour.<sup>348</sup>

132. Outside Quebec, Sir Robert Borden's National Government achieved a remarkable electoral success, rather to the surprise of the Prime Minister who had certainly not anticipated his good fortune and who had expected that the military vote might well be necessary to secure him a majority. Although he had officially ceased to be Minister, Perley's electoral services really marked the climax of his services with the overseas forces. Although he had not managed to impress his personality on the Overseas Forces, his achievements had been substantial and they had been appreciated by most senior officers. In a letter written on 15 December 1917, Currie could say:

... a most wonderful improvement has taken place since your appointment as Overseas Minister of Militia and on turning over that office to your successor you must be conscious of having done more than well.<sup>349</sup>

#### SIR EDWARD KEMP BECOMES MINISTER

133. As soon as he was re-elected in Toronto East, Sir Edward Kemp set out for England. An Atlantic crossing in winter is inevitably an ordeal but in addition, all doors on the ship were kept open in view of the submarine danger, and Kemp spent his first two weeks in London recovering from pneumonia. Upon his recovery, he did not find much to restore his spirits. The mood of London seemed to him to be more pessimistic than at any time since the war began. The food shortage was also critical: "I meet many people who are well able to pay for all the food they can obtain, who admit to me that they are not getting sufficient nourishment."<sup>350</sup> His first reaction to the organization which he was inheriting was that it would need changes:

I find the organization here somewhat peculiar in many ways, as it does not follow along the lines altogether, of any organization of similar character either here or in Canada. It seems to have evolved out of a situation which developed in the early stages of the war. I intend to make some changes which I think will be of advantage, and cause things to run more smoothly.<sup>350</sup>

His first concern was to obtain a satisfactory office for himself. He was astonished to find no accommodation waiting for him. Apparently Sir George Perley had never really moved from the High Commission.

134. Kemp's notion of his role as Minister was very different from that of Perley. The latter was anxious to achieve unified direction and civilian control but his personal inclinations did not lead him naturally to detailed administration and he seems to have been content to leave Turner in full charge military affairs in England. Kemp, a more self-confident, even pompous man, possessed considerable energy and self-assertion. He had also a year of experience in the Militia Department in Ottawa and it is evident that he sought to reproduce a similar organization in London. As a full-time Minister, he had no inhibitions about the amount of control he was going to seek.

135. Some of the problems the new Minister faced were of long standing, particularly the question of surplus officers. Kemp had no difficulty in deciding that they must be sent back to Canada and, in his first the Prime Minister he announced that he had initiated a further comb-out. However, both he and the new Minister of Militia were all too well aware of the political consequences of such a policy. Most of the indignation inevitably concentrated itself on Argyll House. Picturesque language like that from Major A.T. Hunter, a Toronto Lawyer, was enough to disturb General Mowburn:

Those of us who returned superfluous in France to be disposed of at the English Base found an atmosphere more fetid than ever. We found that Argyll House reeked with the smell (sic) of the Toronto Tory kennel. It is true that there were ornamental officers who were supposed to deal with personnel. But these knew no more about the personnel than you know of political "discretion". I took the trouble to find out who were running the machine. General Turner is not; he is a locked-up fetish.

.....

This Argyle House cabal is too thick for either a decent Liberal or a decent Conservative. I travelled back on the Missanabie with say 150 surplus officers fresh from their experience in callous insult. To say that they were peeved would not express it. If the steamer had lost her coal, she could have put a few of these gentlemen below the boilers and come home on her own steam. Their experiences will not be forgotten or forgiven even when senile decay sets in.<sup>352</sup>

This letter is quoted at length as the first of a series of attacks on "Argyll House" as a symbol of bureaucracy which were to grow in intensity through the years. Kemp quickly accepted the viewpoint of his senior departmental officials. Turner explained that he had seen many of the officers personally on several occasions and he had given the task of settling the grievances to Major Montague, the assistant Military Secretary, None of the officers were in a good frame of mind and all of them, he pointed out, seemed to have grievances.<sup>353</sup> Kemp's decision was that "a careful and studied reply" in this sense should be given to Mewburn.<sup>354</sup>

136. Kemp's sensitivity to what he interpreted as interference with his Department is evident in his reaction to a Canadian Press report of December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1917, that Newburn and Rowell would be visiting England to investigate the welfare and efficiency of the Overseas Forces. "It is confidently expected, it is stated here, that some marked improvements will be effected in consequence."<sup>355</sup> The newspapers only reached Kemp in early January but he complained immediately to the Prime Minister. Such a visit would certainly be theatrical and it would equally certainly place him in a humiliating position. If the report was not inspired, it should have been promptly contradicted by the Government.<sup>355</sup> New burn denied any responsibility for the rumour and later acknowledged:

It made me very hot when I read it and it was very embarrassing to me. I tried to ascertain from Mr. Rowell, at once, the author of it, and how it came to get into the paper



but could not get any direct information. I think he must have had something to do with it." <sup>356</sup>

Kemp accepted Newburn's denial but his wrath was not appeased: "I cannot find language to describe my contempt for such tactics, and I intend to insist upon an explanation regarding the same. .... This stab was the cheapest and lowest-down thing I have come across in all that time." <sup>357</sup>

137. Almost from the moment of his taking over, Kemp was involved in the controversy over the reorganization of the Canadian Corps. As a result of the terrible losses of the Battle of Passchendaele, it was no longer possible of Great Britain to provide sufficient reinforcements for her armies in France. Somehow, the number of troops had to be reduced. An ingenious solution was adopted, to reduce the number of infantry battalions in each division from four to three. In this way, the formal total of divisions was sustained but the units which suffered the most casualties were reduced. It was also argued that, at some time in the future, the Americans might provide sufficient infantry battalions to restore the divisions to their old strength. Since the Canadian Corps generally abided by the establishments set for the British Army, it was assumed that it would follow suit. Of course, with the introduction of conscription, Canada would have no need to reduce her manpower at the front. Instead, by the mere addition of six battalions from England, the new organization would allow her to have six divisions at the Front. These, in turn, could be organized in two corps, under a small Army Headquarters.

138. This idea appealed to a lot of people, It appealed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir William Robertson, who conceived his responsibility to stretch little farther than the sending of every possible man and boy to France to fight the Germans. It delighted many Canadian officers, both in France and England, who saw themselves sharing in the gentle rain of promotions and staff appointments which re-organization would bring. To none did it appeal more than to Garnet Hughes and to the supporters of the ex-Minister. Sir Sam had always talked of creating a Canadian Army in France and his son, during Christmas of 1917, had wagered Currie any odds he wished that the Fifth Division would be going to France. <sup>358</sup>

139. The British do not seem to have imaged that the re-organization would not be carried out. On the very day, January 11<sup>th</sup>, that Robertson's formal proposal for the change reached Kemp, General Turner was in France, leaving copies of the War Office memorandum and making inquiries about possible staff officers for a second Corps. <sup>359</sup> The Overseas Minister, himself, was prepared to accept the new arrangements. He was subjected to the flattering attentions of Garnet Hughes's friends, including Lord Beaverbrook and he was easily impressed about the efficiency of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division and the waste of leaving it in England. As a Minister of Militia, he had been involved in the debate about its future. In November, 1917, the Prime Minister directed that it should be broken up <sup>360</sup> but this decision, as has been seen, was postponed during the General Election. Now it was further delayed by the proposed change in organization. On January 7<sup>th</sup> and again on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Kemp asked for more time before a final decision was made. <sup>361</sup>

140. In Canada, the Prime Minister found that conscription had not solved the manpower problem. It took some time before the men who were drafted could be turned into soldiers. With the submarine problem and the shortage of shipping, it even took a long time before they could

be conveyed across the Atlantic. At the same time, there were heavy criticisms that convalescent soldiers were being sent to France while the fit men of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division rested in England. On January 17<sup>th</sup>, he again virtually ordered that the Division be broken up.<sup>362</sup>

On the 25<sup>th</sup>, he at last received an explanation of the proposed changes. Sir Edward Kemp explained the British manpower problem and the reorganization of the divisions. His inference was that Canada would have no choice but to conform. The question was whether the Canadian Government would authorize an increase in the number of divisions. Since the artillery for five divisions was already in France, the increase would amount to no more than 8,000 infantry and 5,000 men for the other arms. In view of the emergency, he was prepared to favour the extra effort.<sup>363</sup> The Prime Minister had little choice but concur in his Minister's recommendation but his reply was un-enthusiastic:

Having regard to present conditions we feel that the increase proposed by the War Office involves a supply of reinforcements during the next twelve months which it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to provide. On the other hand we thoroughly realize that in the presence of a tremendous enemy offensive such as seems imminent it is our duty to put forth an effort even beyond that which it may eventually be possible to sustain,

You are therefore authorised to carry out the proposals of the War Office if you are convinced that the necessities of the situation imperatively demand it. We shall do our utmost to provide reinforcements which will keep the six divisions up to strength but the War Office must distinctly and positively be informed that we do not and cannot give any absolute undertaking that this will be possible. In that case it may be necessary to reduce to few divisions of ten battalions each, which is practically the strength which has been maintained since the Canadian Army Corps was officially constituted.<sup>364</sup>

141. Kemp was chastened by the Prime Minister's note of warning. He had already been made aware of the Corps Commander's strung opposition. On January 11<sup>th</sup>, after Turner's departure, Currie sent Kemp an urgent invitation to come to France. "This question involves so much and influences so greatly the fighting efficiency of our Expeditionary Force that I feel that I should explain to you personally my views in all their detail."<sup>365</sup> Having fought the Corps as a unit through the summer and autumn battles and having devoted his energies and imagination to the reform of its supporting arms, he was bitterly opposed to the break-up of what he regarded as an effective fighting machine. He did not look forward to the probable winners of the certain scramble for promotions which would follow an expansion of the Canadian force, chief among whom would be Garnet Hughes, a man whom he regarded as unfit for the command of a division in the field. Finally, Currie was annoyed that the proposed re-organization had been arranged to a great extent, without his knowledge and without consulting him.<sup>366</sup> In opposing the idea to the Minister, he sought to emphasize the team spirit of the Corps and the damage to euprit de corps which would result from disorganization. Above all, he emphasized the wasteful overheads, the artillery, administrative and other ancillary services which the new formations would require and the no less than ten additional staffs which would be necessary in a force where trained staffs were already at a premium.<sup>367</sup> Currie had no feeling that his arguments had had any impact on Sir Edward until he was called to London on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. With the Prime Minister's telegram

before him, Kemp also was feeling the problems involved. On the other hand, there was immediate political pressure in England. Sir William Robertson attempted to enlist the support of the Colonial Secretary and of Sir George Perley. Beaver-brook sought to get Lloyd George to intervene. Any one of these three might have been sufficient but all left the matter to Sir Edward Kemp.<sup>368</sup> When Currie arrived on February 5th, he brought with him the opinion of Sir Douglas Haig. The Commander in Chief had told him that the change in the Canadian Corps was neither necessary nor desirable at that time. He had further said that if the re-organization was carried through, Currie must be promoted to General and given command of a small Army headquarters to command the force. On February 6th, Currie met with Kemp, Turner (who shared his views)<sup>369</sup> and Walter Gow. At the end of the interview, his objections were embodied in a long and powerful memorandum<sup>370</sup> in which he reiterated his arguments about the wasteful overhead of staffs and services and the unfortunate effect on the cohesion and morale of the existing Corps and went on to suggest, instead, the attachment of 100 more men to each of the existing infantry battalions, a proposal which, *inter alia*, would give 1200 more men in the line than would an increase to six divisions. It may have been the mathematics of this idea or, more probably, it was the influence of Sir Douglas Haig, but on February 8th, Kemp cabled Borden to let him know that the re-organization proposed by the War Office would not be accepted.<sup>371</sup> To both Borden and Lord Derby, the Secretary of State for War, he sent a memorandum, based on Currie's, to explain why the changes would not be made. After a delay of some weeks, while the War Office sought Haig's official approval, the matter was dropped.<sup>372</sup>

142. The refusal to add two new divisions to the force in France left the two problems of surplus officers and the 5th Division unsolved. On the very day that Currie had argued so effectively against the re-organization, Kemp had received a telegram from the Prime Minister asking that a third of the positions in the new divisions be reserved for officers in England while those officers who had reverted in order to get to France should be permitted to come back with their old ranks.<sup>373</sup> Now the surplus officer problem was more intractable than ever for the British had to find places for the field officers from the 145 battalions which they had been obliged to eliminate.<sup>374</sup> On February 28th, the Adjutant General reported to Turner that 3050 men of the 5th Division were on their way to France and that the remainder were being dispersed to the reserve battalions.<sup>375</sup> The disposal of Garnet Hughes proved more difficult. Turner offered him the command of the largest training camp in England but Hughes demanded to return to France. He confronted the Minister with the demand that Major-General Lipsett, commander of the 3rd Division and originally a British officer, should be recalled from France and that he should go out in his place. Kemp was unwilling to approach either Currie or the War Office with such a request although, just to make sure, he checked with the Prime Minister.<sup>376</sup> Borden was no longer prepared to do anything for the Hughes clan and Garnet finally found employment without pay in the War Office.

143. Although he had finally opposed the re-organization of the Corps, Kemp soon felt that his own Ministry should be re-organized. His predecessor had established a system at a time when urgent executive action was required. Long before he had been appointed, Perley had expressed his view that what was required was unified leadership and, in giving Turner complete military authority, that is what he had sought to achieve. Sir Edward, on the other hand, was willing to take over the executive authority personally and he also sought to reproduce the organization with which he had become familiar in the Militia Department in Ottawa. Another problem, of

longer standing, was the machinery of communication with the forces in France, a large proportion of which -- railway, forestry and administrative troops, were outside the Canadian Corps. By setting on foot proposals for an Overseas Military Council and for a Canadian Section at General-Headquarters, Kemp made important changes in the machinery of his Ministry. Although both projects were undertaken simultaneously, for simplicity's sake, we shall deal with them separately.

#### THE OVERSEAS MILITARY COUNCIL

144. In some respects, the organization of the Overseas Ministry was analogous to the Militia Department before 1904. Until the Militia Act of that year, the command of the Militia, under the Minister, had been given to the General Officer Commanding in Canada, a British officer who had been given the Canadian rank of major-general. In 1904, the unique authority of the General Officer Commanding was replaced by a Militia Council composed of the senior staff officers of Militia Headquarters and of the Deputy Minister and the Accountant and Paymaster-General from the civil side of the Department. It was a corresponding change which Kemp was now anxious to accomplish although he was conscious of the need to obtain the understanding and co-operation of other members of his Ministry.

145. The officer who stood to lose most authority was General Turner. As has been seen, he had been given somewhat vague additional powers during the previous June as a consolation for being denied a chance to command the Corps but, because of their vagueness, they had never been effectively exercised and his title remained General Officer Commanding Canadian Forces in the British Isles. Kemp examined the relations of his senior officers and discussed his proposals with him. The result of his analysis and his conclusions were presented to the Prime Minister in a long telegram on 2 April 1918:

... I have no hesitation in recommending that Council with advisory powers only should be organized without any further delay. Matter has been under very careful consideration for more than three months and has been carefully considered with principal officers here and in France.

The difference between Kemp and Perley's view of the Ministry was made evident:

Organization which existed after an Overseas Minister was appointed and up to the present time must be considered as tentative although a step in advance. I discovered soon after arriving that there was friction between Corps Commander and our Liaison Officer\* who represented Minister in France also between former and C.O.C. London. Besides this there was absolute lack of co-ordination between different important branches which led to inefficiency and perhaps what was of more importance there was lack of appreciation of what was understood by constitutional methods as against Military control. After three months of persistent efforts I feel the views of officers have somewhat changed for the better in this respect. Turner was appointed G.O.C. troops in British Isles. He brought with him from France, naturally, the idea of absolute military

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\* Lieutenant-Colonel R. Manly Sims.

control whilst as matter of fact situation in England is civil as well as military and more nearly approaches conditions which exist in Canada with respect to military matters.

Kemp then pointed out that there were over 50,000 troops in France outside the Corps. They could hardly come under Currie and Turner was unsure of his responsibility for them. There were matters of policy to be decided for the Corps:

Commander claims he is entitled to feel that such matters have had the consideration subject to proper military advice of Minister. On other hand G.O.C. British Isles feels that he should not be asked to communicate with Currie on matters of policy as though they were his own views. It is most desirable that we should maintain our forces in France as far as possible as an entity that they should not be absorbed in British units and lost sight of and their efforts unrecognised and unrecorded in Canada.

The problem, he admitted, had caused him great anxiety. Resignations had been threatened but he preferred to heal breaches and overcome difficulties. The co-operation of both the War Office and Haig had been obtained:

The object of our reorganization is to bring about greater efficiency and to do away with petty intrigue uncertainty and suspicion which have been current. Some improvement has to be made otherwise I would not like to predict what may happen. Matter has been carefully gone over with officers and they have practical agreed to new policy which includes Military Council being adopted.

Since the change was being urged in the shadow of the German spring offensives, Kemp felt obliged to satisfy the Prime Minister of both the urgency and the acceptability of his proposals. He also stressed that the Council would not be an executive body:

Bear in mind that Council is advisory only. It relieves the Minister practically of no responsibility but it will be of much assistance to him and his Deputy Minister and all concerned in forming substantial organization to deal with important problems which otherwise are dealt with unfortunately by individual judgement and assist in bringing about coordination of work of different administrative branches in London which are unavoidably in six different localities separated from one another in some instances by two or three miles. It will also be of advantage in providing continuous record proceedings on questions of importance which is now lacking. If there is any other method of overcoming very many difficulties some only of which I have referred to that present themselves here I would be glad to have suggestions.<sup>377</sup>

146. Such strong feeling reflects an opinion firmly arrived at but it also was the result of another struggle for power, in this case against the Minister himself. As a pale reflection of the agitation then current in British military and political circles and which culminated in the removal of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, there were those who felt that the Canadian Overseas Forces should be under strictly military management. This was the system which had been used by the Australians and new Zealanders. Each of these countries placed their forces under General Officers Commanding in Chief in the Field, (both of them British) who reported

directly to their respective Defence Ministers, Those who were opposed to the Minister's plans drafted a memorandum embodying their proposals and presented it to General Currie with the suggestion that he should become General Officer Commanding Canadians Overseas. The virtue of the idea, in the minds of its advocates, would be that such an officer would be able to eliminate the intrigue and petty scheming. In fact, by moving behind the Minister's back, they merely added to it. Currie sent the memorandum to Kemp with the note that he would give his opinion in it if asked, He also refused to meet with those responsible for it.<sup>378</sup>

147. General Turner also backed the Minister. In an undated memorandum, probably written in the middle of April, he noted the advantages of a Minister as including access to the British Secretary of State for War, power which neither a Canadian Deputy Minister of Commander in Chief could claim. He also pointed out the differences between the Australian and the Canadian situation. The former had few units in England and their training was performed under the British. Almost half the Canadians Overseas Forces were concentrated in England. One third of the Canadians in France were outside the Corps but the Corps Commander was fully occupied with his immediate responsibilities. Finally, he suggested that a reference to the High Commissioners of Australia and New Zealand might prove that their system had not been an undivided success.<sup>379</sup>

148. Once the principle of a Military Council was accepted, it remained to decide which officers would give membership. Initially, Kemp proposed that it should include Turner, the General Officer Commanding, Thacker, the Adjutant General, Hogarth, the new Quartermaster-General, an Accountant-General and the Director-General of Medical Services, General Foster. The Prime Minister at first questioned the inclusion of the General Officer Commanding since the original Militia Council had been established to eliminate the appointment and he suggested that instead there should be an Inspector-General. He also recommended that the Director-General of Medical Services should be an associate member, rather than a full member of the Council. There should also be an associate member to represent the Overseas Forces in France. Because of the importance of selecting the right people, he asked that the decision should be postponed until he came to Britain himself.<sup>380</sup> It was in response to this communication from Borden that Kemp sent his urgent message of the 2nd of April from which considerable passages have already been quoted:

Question of whether or not certain officers should be members Council is comparatively of small importance. So far as General Officer Commanding British Isles is concerned he will occupy Chief of Staff not General Staff as you have it. Suggest Chief Paymaster be made associate member Council but think Accountant— General should be member also. Director Medical Services as he has great responsibility his branch involving expenditure vast sums of money and touching other branches at various points appointment on Council of representative overseas forces in France has been carefully considered. It is desirable for present to postpone this for further consideration.

I strongly recommend that you pass Order in Council and. consider it tentative in sense that whole matter can be reviewed and any necessary amendments made after you arrive here and matter has been fully considered.<sup>381</sup>

On the 8th, after another exchange of telegrams, Kemp made the further amendment that the Director-General of Medical Services would only be an associate member. Mewburn, in Canada, was anxious because his Director General was not a member of the Militia Council. Kemp also asked the Prime Minister to sign the order himself.<sup>382</sup> The report was submitted to the Cabinet on the 10th and passed on the 11th.<sup>383</sup> On that day, Rodolphe Boudreau, the Clerk of the Privy Council, advised Kemp that the Council had been authorised with the Minister as Chairman and the Deputy Minister as Vice-Chairman. The Members would be the Chief of Staff, Adjutant-General, Quartermaster-General and Accountant-General and Associate Members would be the Director of Medical Services and the Chief Paymaster. The selection of officers to fill the appointments would be up to the Minister.<sup>384</sup>

149. Despite the urgency with which he had asked for authority to establish the Council, Kemp does not seem to have felt impelled to organize it in haste. He was undoubtedly preoccupied with the simultaneous negotiations for the establishment of a more effective liaison with France. In any event, a secretary was selected, Major Gordon S. Harrington, a young Nova Scotia lawyer who, despite his youth, had already served as Mayor of Glace Bay for two years before the war and who was destined to become the premier of his province. On May 1st, Kemp informed the new Secretary of State for War, Lord Milner, that Turner's new designation would be Chief of Staff, Overseas Military Forces of Canada. His duties were defined as:

- (1) To act as First Military Member of the Overseas Military Council, and Chief Military Advisor to the Minister, Overseas Military Forces of Canada.
- (2) To consider and formulate recommendations in connection with proposed policies or suggested changes in policies emanating from any formation of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada.
- (3) To supervise, under the direction of the Minister, the administration of Canadian units in the Field, other than the Canadian Corps.
- (4) To supervise, under the direction of the Minister, the administration and training of the Canadian Forces in the British Isles and to co-ordinate the work of the Staff therein.
- (5) Such other duties as may be delegated to him.<sup>385</sup>

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, Turner received a note from the Minister announcing that the first meeting would be held in his office on May 14<sup>th</sup>. He enclosed a memorandum setting out the composition of the Council and a few of the regulations which he had drafted for it. The Council would be assembled at the summons of the Minister. Memoranda would be submitted to the Secretary, indicating the point of reference and including a brief statement of the facts. From this, the Secretary would prepare an agenda. After the meeting, the Secretary would prepare precise of the submission and of the decision arrives at which would be sent to the members concerned.<sup>386</sup> Such a crisp and efficient procedure reflects the practice of the Militia Council in Ottawa and was in striking contrast to the secretarial mismanagement of the Acting Sub-Militia Council.

150. At the first meeting, all the members of the new council were present except Walter Gow, the Deputy Minister. Committees were appointed to look into the Administration of a number of departments with a particular view to promoting economy. Another investigation was ordered to discover the costs to Canada of reciprocal loans of personnel between the British and Canadian forces.<sup>387</sup> There was a lapse of a month and a half between the Council's first and second meeting, cause in all likelihood by the preoccupation with the Prime Minister's visit. The second took place on June 27th and they continued at frequent intervals thereafter. There appears to have been no set date for meeting. Three were held in July, three in August and twenty seven had been held when the Overseas Ministry terminated in London operation in September of 1919. In a press release, the function of the Council was described as ensuring adequate consideration and facilitating "the despatch of questions of importance which come up for decision. Uniformity of policy will be maintained through records, which will be kept up by means of Minutes, of the proceedings of the Council." 388 In its lifetime, some 434 decisions were formally reached. Of the concerns of the Council, one may refer to its own report:

The subjects considered from time to time have been so varied in character as not readily to admit of classification. Generally speaking, the decisions which Council has been called upon to give have related to organization and policies, financial and other relations with the British Government, expenditures of an extraordinary nature, the write—off or charge to individuals of losses of public property, pay and allowances, establishments of all units and formations, and confirmation of all promotions and appointments within the O.M.F. of C.<sup>389</sup>

The best proof of the satisfaction which his new organization was to give the Minister was that it continued in energetic operation until 19 September 1919.

#### THE CANADIAN SECTION, GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

151. The struggle over the re-organization of the Canadian Corps had made Sir Edward Kemp aware, early in his career in the Overseas Ministry, that his channels of communication with Currie were unsatisfactory. As important was the problem of the control of the 40-50,000 Canadians outside the Corps, employed in Forestry, as Railway Troops, in Hospitals, depots and a wide variety of ancillary services. There was also the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, forming part of the British Cavalry Corps. Although they were Canadian units, they seemed to him to have lost their Canadian identity. Quite as important were the many individual Canadians who were serving with the British, particularly with the newly created Royal Air Force. The problem was not new. In September of 1917, Brigadier-General Thacker, the Adjutant-General, had prepared a memorandum for Turner in which he analyzed the problem and suggested that, as the major concern for these men came within the realm of his department, he should be made Officer in Charge of Administration for the Canadians in France outside the Corps.<sup>390</sup> Although this proposal had not been accepted and consideration of the problem had been postponed both due to the acting capacity of Perley after the middle of October and the preoccupation of the election campaign, the issue was re-opened in late November and December in an exchange between the Ministry and the War Office. Perley had been satisfied with his own appointee, Colonel Manly Sims, and he had been grateful for his election services. Unfortunately, his relations with Currie



were not so satisfactory. On March 11th, Currie sent a long complaint to the Ministry about the control and management of visitors to the Front, one of the chief responsibilities of the Representatives. He asked that, in future, the permission of the Corps be obtained before they were sent over to him.<sup>391</sup> A week later, there was a second letter, suggesting that correspondence between the Ministry and the Corps should no longer have to pass through Sims.<sup>392</sup>

152. After considerable consultation with senior officers in England and France, the Minister evolved the idea of a Canadian Section to be attached to General Headquarters in France, to perform the same function as the Canadian Representative, but with a greater authority, and also to assume some responsibility for the Canadian formations and units outside the Corps. The clearest formation of the proposed reform obviously came from Gow in a memorandum to the Minister dated 11. March 1918. He called for the establishment at Second Echelon of General Headquarters of a Canadian Section under a Brigadier-General. It would include representatives of the Adjutant—General, the Quartermaster—General, the Director of Medical Services and of the Chaplain and Dental services. It would come under Turner in London and it would have authority over the Corps (except for military operations) the Lines of Communication troops and the Canadian section of the Base at Le Havre.

This would limit the necessity of the Canadian Corps going through the 1st Army and thence to G.H.Q. to such matters as affected the conduct of military operations in the field only. It is believed that this would have the full sanction of the War Office, as it had been repeatedly intimated that it is only in matters affecting military operations that it is felt G.H.Q. must be consulted.

Gow emphasized that success of the plan would depend on the co—operation of all concerned in it and the officer selected to command the Canadian Section would have to be persona grata with Currie.

One clear—cut point emerges from consideration of the present conditions and that is that the sooner the situation is recognized and the remedy applied, the better; otherwise matters will grow steadily worse and chaos ultimately result.<sup>393</sup>

On March 29th, a letter was sent to the War Office under Harrington's signature which acted as formal notice to the British that new negotiations would be necessary with the Canadians:

The question of the reorganization of the administrative machinery of the Canadian Forces, more particularly so far as France is concerned, has been the subject of a very thorough consideration and a general conclusion has been come to as to what is best suited to meet the situation.

I am directed to send you herewith a chart\* which shows, it is thought clearly, what is proposed. This does not depart in principle from existing arrangements, and the proposals but forward in the Acting Deputy Minister's letter of November 27th, 1917. It is believed that the changes suggested will place the administration of the Canadian Forces both here and in France on a sound and logical basis.

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\* See appendix "D"

It has been thought advisable to send the chart direct to the War Office in the first instance, so that it can be examined from the War Office point of view and that as speedily as possible thereafter a conference should be held as suggested in your letter of 18th December 1917 when the details arising out of the general proposals can be discussed. It is obviously impossible at this critical stage of operations in France to think of attempting to hold a conference with the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief there at present.

Having regard to these circumstances, it is essential that the present functions and powers of the Canadian Representative at G.H.Q. 2nd Echelon be fully recognized and maintained pending the ultimate adoption of the new organization. I am therefore directed to request that a communication in this sense may be despatched without delay to the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief in France.<sup>394</sup>

153. The conference requested by the Canadians took place on April 2nd at the War Office. Representing, the Canadians were Kemp, Turner, Thacker and Major Harrington. The British Director of Staff Duties, accompanied by representatives of the most affected directorates, received them. Kemp explained that the chart was not intended to claim a right to interfere in operations. All that the Canadians wanted was the power to control such matters as appointments and promotions in the Overseas Military Forces of Canada. Each of the British officers present made their own reservations. The Director of Personnel Services reminded Kemp that since the Canadians were under the Army Act for discipline, the responsibility for its administration rested with the Commander-in-Chief. The Deputy Director of Operations insisted that Haig be allowed to send reinforcements where he thought fit and Kemp conceded the point. He also insisted on the right of the Commander-in-Chief to be consulted on the senior appointments and this, also, was accepted. The Assistant Military Secretary asked whether Imperial Officers serving with the Canadians would be replaced without reference to General Headquarters and Kemp explained that application would be made by the Corps Commander through the Commander-in-Chief. Finally, the Deputy Director of Staff Duties asked that details of establishments should also be passed through General Headquarters and this, also, was accepted.<sup>395</sup> As a result of the conference, it was agreed that a letter would be drafted by the War Office for the Commander-in-Chief. The letter was signed and sent on April 4<sup>th</sup> to the Overseas Military, where it received close study:

With reference to War Office letter No. 121/Overseas/5125/S.D.2/ dated 10<sup>th</sup> January 1918, I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that another letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1918, having been received from the Canadian Ministry regarding the extension of Canadian control over the Canadian Forces in the Field, a Conference to discuss the matter was held at the War Office between representatives of the office and the Canadian authorities and copies of the letter and proceedings of the Conference are attached herewith.

I am to say that there appears to have been some misunderstanding both in this office and at G.H.Q. France as to the changes which the Canadian authorities wished to introduce, but this has been cleared up by the Conference.

The Canadian authorities do not wish to interfere at all with military operations or discipline, the changes which they wish to introduce being unimportant matters.

On all important matters, e.g. discipline, allotment of reinforcements, establishments, appointment of senior officers, etc., the Canadian authorities welcome the check afforded by recommendations being sent through G.H.Q.

The Canadian authorities point out that the duties at present undertaken by the Canadian Representative at G.H.Q. France will be performed by the Officer in charge of the Canadian Section at G.H.Q. in addition to his other duties as shown on the attached chart. This officer will receive the orders of the Minister of Overseas Military Forces of Canada and he will act as the channel of communication between the Minister and the Canadian troops.

I am to say that, under the circumstances, the Council has decided to agree to the proposals of the Canadian authorities.<sup>396</sup>

The letter was subjected to significant amendment by the Canadians. For the phrase "unimportant matters", was substituted "in matters affecting only the organization and administration of Canadian troops." The next paragraph: "On all important matters, e.g. discipline, allotment of reinforcements, establishments, appointments of senior officers, etc.", was replaced by:

On important matters such as allotment of reinforcements, in emergencies, establishments, appointment, of General Officers and those which from their relation to military operations should properly receive consideration from G.H.Q. France, the Canadian authorities will welcome the assistance offered by recommendations sent through G.H.Q. France.<sup>397</sup>

The letter, with these alterations, was returned to the War Office and, on April 16<sup>th</sup>, was sent to Haig. So far, the arrangements had been conducted by Harrington who had been acting as Deputy Minister. When Gow returned near the end of the month, he was not altogether pleased with the demands which the Canadians has made and wished to make it even clearer that the control of organization and establishments was a Canadian matter and that G.H.Q., even in emergencies, only acted in an advisory capacity.<sup>398</sup> He appears to have been pacified for on April 29<sup>th</sup>, he wrote to the War Office to say that if the text of the letter to Haig was the same as the Canadians has asked, the subject was closed.<sup>399</sup> On May 4<sup>th</sup>, he reported to Turner that he had been given this assurance.<sup>400</sup>

154. There remained the problem of establishing the Canadian Section and working out the means of consultation. A memorandum probably prepared by Harrington for the Minister and dated April 12<sup>th</sup> indicates the policy which was to be followed. When matters of administration and organization had an effect on operations, there would be a conference between the Commander-in-Chief and the head of the Section:

The Canadian Section will be the unofficial channel of communication through which the Minister expresses his views to the Commander-in-Chief. Similarly, it will afford a channel of unofficial communication between G.H.Q. and the Minister.

The appointments of General Officer would be referred by the section to G.H.Q. and informal approval would be obtained before the recommendation also went to the Minister when his unofficial approval would also be obtained. When both approvals had been secured, the formal recommendation would pass through Corps, Army, General headquarters and Army Council channels to be published in the Gazette. The head of the Section would have discretion on what other matters would be brought to the attention of General Headquarters with the exception of establishments. A formal recommendation would always accompany them. Matters which did not affect General Headquarters and on which a policy had been already established by the Ministry could be dealt with by heads of branches of the Canadian Section. The Section would have executive administrative control over Canadian units outside the Corps on all matters save policy and establishments.<sup>401</sup>

155. With the German offensives creating a crisis in France, Kemp refrained from establishing the Canadian Section immediately. However, on 6 May 1918, he visited Montreuil and had a brief conference with Haig, delivering a copy of Harrington's memorandum and promising to return later with a more detailed statement of the proposed functions and composition of the Section. This task was immediately set on foot. At the end of May, Harrington visited France to consult with the officers at the Corps. On May 31st, he saw Brigadier-General Webber, the Brigadier-General, General Staff, and on the following day, he saw Currie himself. Once he had appreciated that the head of the Canadian Section would not be senior to him nor would he exclude him from consultation with the Commander-in-Chief, Currie had accepted the idea of a Canadian Section with enthusiasm, seeing in it a further step in the establishment of an autonomous Canadian force. He therefore welcomed the memorandum and explained that if it did not work out satisfactorily, it would be a matter for Canadians to settle later as a question of internal government.<sup>402</sup> Armed with Currie's approval, it was possible to send the memorandum and a further copy of the Canadian diagram to Haig.

156. The memorandum began with a General Statement:

For matters of military operations the Canadian Forces in the Field have been placed by the Canadian Government under the Commander in-Chief, British Armies in France. For matters of organization and administration, the Canadian Government still retains its full responsibility regarding its Forces. Matters of organization and administration frequently have a direct bearing on military operations and discipline and vice-versa and it is therefore considered that where they have such bearing these matters should be made the subject of conference between the Canadian authorities and the G.H.Q. To meet this situation in the most effective manner a Canadian Section has been formed at G.H.Q.

The status of the Section was set out as a Branch of the Ministry and "directly responsible to the Ministry for the efficient performance of the function and duties confided to it." The staff was to perform such functions as the Ministry might direct and was to consist of representatives of the

Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, the Military Secretary, the Medical Service, the Chaplain Service and the Pay Corps. The function of the Section were listed in some detail. The Section was:

- (a) A direct channel of communication between the Ministry, O.M.F.C. and G.H.Q. and vice-versa.
- (b) A channel of communication between the heads of Canadian formations in the Field on the one side and the Ministry, O.M.F.C. and G.H.Q. on the other side and vice-versa in each case, for such matters as may be designated from time to time by the Ministry .O.M.F.C., within the general principles specified above and outlined in the attached chart and letter.\*
- (c) Responsible under the Ministry, O.M.F.C., for such supervision as may be charged to it by the Ministry O.M.F.C. over the various Canadian Administrative Services and Departments in the Field, such as - Medical, Dental, Pay, Ordnance, Veterinary, Postal.
- (d) Empowered to take such executive administrative action as may be determined from time to time by the Ministry O.M.F.C. regarding the control of personnel of the Canadian Forces in the Field, in accordance with the policies and establishments which are agreed upon by the Ministry, O.M.F.C., the War Office and G.H Q.
- (e) Responsible under the Ministry, O.M.F.C. that when questions of policy, organization and administration which, from their relation to military operations should receive consideration from G.H.Q., and all questions of establishments are referred to it, they are submitted for consideration at G.H.Q. and that such matters are accompanied by any necessary explanation regarding the local Canadian conditions, if any, which make it desirable to effect a departure from the existing British regulations and establishments; and to submit to the Ministry all such questions accompanied by the full views expressed thereon by G.H.Q. and the heads of the Canadian Formations and Departments concerned.<sup>403</sup>

This memorandum led to a further controversy with the British, this time with General Headquarters. Lieutenant General Herbert A. Lawrence, Haig's Chief of General Staff, wrote on June 23rd to request a comprehensive series of amendments. He asked that it be made clear that matters of discipline would have to be referred to the Army in which the Canadian Corps happened to be serving. Appointments of Brigadier-Generals and higher officers should be submitted to General Headquarters in the form of recommendations to the Commander-in-Chief and the appointments of General Staff Officers Grade 1 should be sent as notifications. Since the British administrative and supply departments had not been relieved of their responsibility for the Canadians by the memorandum, he asked that any transfers or changes in the skilled officer personnel of the Canadian Services and Departments be referred to General headquarters before the change was made. Also, no change in the scale or method of issue or return would be made

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\* The Canadian chart (Appendix "D") and the letter to Haig of April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1918 were attached to the Memorandum.

without reference to General Headquarters and the approval of the Quartermaster-General. Further, questions of storage and care of all articles issued, powers of local purchase and write-off would all be governed by the relevant British regulations.<sup>404</sup> Lawrence's requests were not well received, to judge from the blue-pencilled comments on his letter but the letter in reply was more conciliatory. The notification of change and appointment of Service and Department officers was a new request by the British and it was ignored in the reply which simply reassured the British authorities of Canadian gratitude for the assistance afforded by General Headquarters in allowing the recommendation for the appointments of General Officers to pass through them.<sup>405</sup> General Lawrence appears to have let the matter rest.

157. The officer selected to command the Canadian Section was Brigadier-General J.F.L. Embury, an officer who had distinguished himself in command of the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade. He was also a reliable Conservative, a perennial candidate for the Party in the years prior to the War and one of the Conservative scrutineers overseas in the 1917 Election. In announcing the appointment to Lord Milner, Sir George Perley explained that, in addition to being recommended by Currie and Turner, he had just been appointed a Judge of the King's Bench of Saskatchewan, and hence he would bring judicial as well as military qualities to his new appointments. Embury was in Canada on leave at the time of his appointment but he was expected to be able to return in early July.<sup>406</sup> On his return to England, Embury and the Minister worked out a memorandum to guide him in his new responsibilities. There were, they decided, three clear principles:

- (1) That the will of the Canadian Government through its responsible Minister, is supreme in all matters relating to Canadian Forces and Canadian Personnel.
- (2) That in matters relating to Military operations, there has been delegated to the Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, control of all Canadian Troops under his Command with respect to military operations.
- (3) That the Officer Commanding the Canadian Corps shall not have the Corps's personnel or policy interfered with without his consent. In cases where differences arise which cannot otherwise be disposed of, the matter shall be referred to the Minister for decision.

The memorandum then systematically dealt with the possible conflicts between the various principles.

In cases where the first principle and the second principle come in conflict, the matter in question shall be settled by liaison between General Headquarters and the Representative of the Minister in France, and in case of failure to adjust the matter, then by conference between the Minister and the War Office.

Dealing with cases of conflict between the first and third principles: in all cases where agreement cannot be arrived at by liaison between the Minister's Representative and the Corps Commander, the matter shall be referred to the Minister for decision, whose decision is final. To go further, there shall be no power in the Headquarters Section of the

Minister in France arbitrarily to make changes in the organization of personnel of the different larger organizations in France, such as Railway and Forestry, except after consultation with the Officers immediately commanding them and in case of conflict which cannot be settled by liaison between the Minister's Representative and the Officer Commanding, then the matter shall be referred to the Minister.

There must be a clear recognition by the G.H.Q. Section in France of the fact that it is wrong in principle to interfere in the internal government of a homogeneous body of troops without first consulting its Officer

Next, in case of conflict between the Canadian Corps and General Headquarters, it is the desire of the Canadian Headquarters, it is the desire of the Canadian Authorities that, as far as possible, the Canadian Corps shall be a homogeneous body. Where the desire of the Canadians to control themselves conflicts with the desire of the Commander-in-Chief, then this is, as a rule, a matter which affects the Government of Canada, and as such should be taken up with the Commander-in-Chief by the Minister or his Representative. On the other hand, there will be cases in which it is desirable that the Corps Commander should take the matter up direct with the Commander-in-Chief, but if proper liaison is maintained between the Corps and the Minister, through his Representative, there can be no room for misunderstanding in such cases.

The memorandum belatedly added a fourth principle:

... It is essential that all questions be approached in a spirit of mutual trust and good will, and that a sincere desire shall prevail to work in common accord for the efficiency of the whole.<sup>407</sup>

158. Embury took over in the middle of July. Currie, who had earlier made a protest about the possibility that the appointments of Service and Departmental senior officers in the Corps might be taken out of his hands,<sup>408</sup> was now satisfied that Embury would be able to work in close accord.<sup>409</sup> The financial arrangements for the Section were, in principle, those which had been arranged for Sims in view of the expensive responsibility for visitors.<sup>410</sup> The Section, somewhat to the alarm of the Ministry in London, grew at a healthy rate. "It is urged with great respect," Embury wrote on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, "that this Section should be given more scope than that suggested in the initial stages of its career, and until the time for putting forward proposals for a Permanent Establishment shall have arrived."<sup>411</sup> The provisional establishment which was approved on October 3<sup>rd</sup> allowed 16 officers, 73 other ranks, 11 cars, 3 motorcycles and 7 horses.<sup>412</sup> Institutional pathology would suggest that a longer life would have made the Section the rival in size, if not in power, of the Ministry in London. The Minister had been anxious to have the Section established by a Canadian-Order-in-Council for, as he explained to Sir Robert Borden in a letter of 22 July 1918:

I think ..... that it is desirable to have an outline of the organization placed upon record, in order that such an important matter as our relationship with the British Army in France may be thoroughly understood by the Government generally.<sup>413</sup>

The necessary Order-in-Council was passed on 22 September 1918, establishing the Section and confirming the diagram which Kemp had used so persistently to explain his claims.

159. The Canadian Section continued to grow and function until the end of the War when it assumed even greater responsibilities in the demobilization of the Corps and the adjustment and settlement of Canadian affairs in France. Kemp was very pleased with his creation and commented after the War that:

after the Canadian Section at G.H.Q. had been working for a short time, it became apparently to the Imperial authorities that the new departure was a great success, and they expressed their entire satisfaction with the arrangement. It was of great use to General Currie and the Corps. There was splendid co-operation in every way and it resulted in more efficiency, less delay, and greater satisfaction generally.<sup>415</sup>

#### THE OVERSEAS MINISTRY UNTIL THE ARMISTICE

160. Although considerable of the Minister's energy had been devoted to the establishment of the Overseas Military Council and the Canadian Section at General Headquarters, the routine business of the Ministry had continued to demand his attention. Life in England, itself, had its difficulties. He complained to the Prime Minister about the food, reporting that he could not get bacon for his breakfast and occasionally not even butter. His major undertaking in February was the breaking up of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division, a difficult experience both because of Office opposition and the 460 officers who were suddenly made surplus. Only the subalterns and a few of the captain could be employed as the British also found themselves with a sudden surplus of about 4500. He had, he reported, interviewed all the officers who had asked to see him and had shown great patience. He also had to struggle with officers in the Ministry who did not sympathise with his efforts to make the organization more efficient:

In the administration of the Overseas Forces there is, of course, as in all armies, an organization which branches off in all directions. Ours is all the more complicated because of the fact that we move our troops to our first base in England, from there to our second base or bases in France, and from there to the Corps at the Front,

The men holding the more responsible positions have in the past for the most part taken very little interest in public affairs in Canada. The most of these men have been here three years or more and the more of military life they have seen, the less likely they are to appreciate such a thing as Public Opinion in Canada.

One of my greatest difficulties is to endeavour to instill in their minds that all we have done has been done by the grace of public opinion. As I say, some of our best men, and men holding the most responsible positions, have, it seems to me, grown into a frame of mind where they appear to give it no consideration whatever.

It continued to be a grievance to the Minister that there had been no office or accommodation for him on his arrival:



As an illustration of how little it was thought that a new representative from the Union Government was necessary, I might point out that there was altogether insufficient and inadequate arrangements made for an office in which he might house himself and his staff. Ever since my arrival I have not been able until very recently to procure same, and in this alone I have been greatly handicapped.<sup>416</sup>

161. Although he might have difficulty in making his senior officers sufficiently conscious of the power of public opinion, Kemp shared with them their indignation at the growing volume of attacks which were made on the Overseas Ministry and, in particular, on the Headquarters in London. Many of these were made in Canada, by officers who had returned from France and England whose tales were the more difficult to contradict because of the deference automatically accorded the returned sold and the dubious role of officialdom appearing in its own defence. Lieutenant John Quinney opened a correspondence in the Ottawa Citizen entitled "Slackers in Khaki" in which he took his readers on an imaginary tour of Argyll House, telling them of an amateur golf champion of Manitoba who had won promotion by teaching senior officers the game on the links at Hyth. He reported some of the excuses that officers could plead to avoid going to the front and report that the sons of politicians were given protection.<sup>417</sup> Quinney was followed by Corporal White who had spent a part of his convalescence in the Pay Department in London and who declared that only a few non-commissioned officers in the Department had ever served in France.<sup>418</sup> It hardly counteract the public impact of their testimony for Kemp to write to Borden that Quinney had been court martialled and reprimanded and that his courage had been reported upon as below average or that White had borrowed money from a large number of people without repaying it and that his own father had written to Colonel Ward to say that his son had "a screw loose".<sup>419</sup> The Manitoba Free Press took up the cry that officers at Argyll House were wearing red chevrons which had been reserved for the heroes of Mons.<sup>\*420</sup> The Toronto Saturday Night wrote a very strong editorial on Argyll House in which it advised the Union Government to investigate the establishment:

It begins to be borne in on the powers at Ottawa that this institution is pretty rotten - it does what it pleases, spends what it likes and is under no sort of control whatever.

Sir Edward Kemp was dismissed as a new and ignorant had at the London game.

Argyll House has been able to do its worst because there has been no efficient supervision of it since the war started. The War Office, following its usual practice of not interfering with the colonials, shrugged its shoulder and told Argyll House to run its own show. The Government at Ottawa never seemed to know anything about it when asked - Argyll House not considering itself answerable to the people at home - and now matters have been made a little worse by loading it with an overseas Minister of Militia and dividing the authority which should centre in Ottawa.

There was no question from whom the criticism had come:

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\* A red chevron was granted to all those who had gone overseas in 1914. British authorities ruled that this included colonial troops who had left their own country.

So many returned officers have brought nothing but complaints about Argyll House - its favouritism, its extravagance, its tragedy, its tuft-hunting, its colossal dunderheadedness that the Union Government may presently take it in hand and give it a turn-over. If the Government doesn't grant a probe, it's a safe bet that some of the big newspapers will do it on their own account and give the news an edge that Ottawa wont like.<sup>421</sup>

Parenthetically, one might note a message from Major W.R. Creighton, General Mew burn's secretary, to Everett Bristol, Kemp's secretary, that Saturday Night was, in fact sending over a Mr. Henry Cads by to write about Argyll House.<sup>422</sup> Kemp did not hesitate to defend the officers of his Ministry for he was aware of the effect on their morale of criticisms to which they could not reply. On 20 March 1918, the Prime Minister was sent a resounding statement which he read in the House of Commons on the following day:

May I direct attention to the fact that the officers in charge of this responsible work at Argyll House are men of high reputation. They are Canadian citizens whose names for the most part are household words in Canada. Generally they have abandoned occupations at great sacrifice to perform a service for their country, Heads of Branches have seen service at the front and they are continually pressing claims to be freed from onerous, difficult and exacting tasks with which they have to deal at Headquarters in order that they may return to the Front. I do not hesitate to characterise this propaganda, having in view the difficulty of these officers at this distance in protecting themselves, as being not only cowardly but unjust. I would thank you to call public attention to the matter.<sup>423</sup>

The Minister also took steps to meet the criticism of officers sheltering from service at the Front and of an enormous and purposeless headquarters. A report of 26 March 1918, announced that the staff of Argyll Louse had been reduced to 75 officers and 266 other ranks, a further report on April 4th indicated that only nine officers who were fit for service had not been at the front.<sup>424</sup> It was followed by a memorandum, undated, that in future service in the Ministry would be reserved for those who had spent a minimum of 6 months service in the Field, forward of Third Echelon and that the rule would not be departed from save en the authority of the Minister.<sup>425</sup>

162. Criticism did not stop as a result of the Minister's sharp retort. In Parliament, it was led by Hughes although the late Minister's failing powers were very evident in his repetitions, his confusions over dates and other well-known details and by the constant recital of the same personal grievances. The Overseas Ministry remained a consistent target of the ex-Minister. In the Finance debate on 5 May 1918, he described it as a waste of money, on a par with the Dominion Police and the War Lecture Bureau. The figures he had been given about its strength the previous year he described, despite some interference from Mr. Speaker, as a deliberate falsehood. Of Turner, he said that he had warned him that he was committing military suicide. No man carry on his work under such a Minister. Instead, Turner's career had been blighted. In one of many abusive sallies against Currie, Hughes described him as an officer who had "no more conception of a democratic army than a hen of logic". The ex-Minister also suggest that Turner would have made "a magnificent Corps Commander" as he had not sent his men against

machine guns.<sup>426</sup> The question of furloughs for the survivors of the First Contingent became a popular issue in Parliament since many members suspected that this promise, however originated, many have brought them many votes during the General Election.<sup>427</sup> The reinforcement problem made agreement difficult, particularly as neither the Australians nor the New Zealanders had managed to arrange leave for their men.<sup>428</sup> Eventually, about 1,000 married men and those with other compassionate reasons were permitted to come back to Canada. Further leave was prevented by the crisis of the Spring offensive and the understandable reluctance of many of the men on furlough to return to France as soon as they discovered that married men were not being conscripted.<sup>429</sup>

163. Hughes also raised the issue of surplus officers and blamed their treatment squarely on the Overseas Ministry:

It was only when the overseas ministers were appointed that those men had their battalions taken from them and they were thrown out. I never in my life saw anything like the way they were treated. Non-commissioned officers would sometimes take the battalions away from the colonels who had brought them over. In my time, they were treated with courtesy in every solitary instance.

C.C. Ballantyne, who had commanded a battalion and who had been one of the victims of this process, had since become Minister of Marine and Fisheries in the Union Government, and he replied for the Government that he had understood the position perfectly. He was overborne by Sir Sam who recalled that, on his return, Ballantyne had been "one of the most wrathful men I ever met."<sup>430</sup> There was no suggestion from the ex-Minister as to how else the problem of surplus officers might have been solved.

164. Whatever the difficulties of the Ministry and whatever the criticisms aroused by it, Kemp seems to have held the confidence of the Prime Minister. When Borden visited England in June, 1918, he reported to his colleagues in Ottawa that he realized more fully than before the great difficulties with which Kemp had contended and the "really fine results which he has accomplished."<sup>431</sup> The Prime Minister had an equal respect for Currie and it was from the Canadian General that he received, on June 12th, a detailed and highly critical account of the situation at the Front. His account was repeated to both General Smuts and Lloyd George. Currie's views seem to have made a particular impression on the British Prime Minister, possibly because they were so closely akin to his own.<sup>432</sup> Currie's view of England was possibly even less flattering than his opinion of the command in France but this was reserved for a rather later letter to N.W. Rowell, President of the Council in the Union Government and the leading Ontario Liberal. Commenting on the rumours which were turning into attacks on his war leadership, Currie traced them to London:

We have still there, and have always had, certain officers of high rank who, despite that rank and despite the honours which they have been accorded, have been a positive harmful influence to our overseas organization. There are officers now there of very high rank who, if they performed the proper function of their office, would have more than enough to do to keep them busy; yet, it seems to me, they spend most of their

time visiting hospitals and convalescent depots, where they pat the wounded on the backs and commiserate with them generally.<sup>433</sup>

165. The Prime Minister had initially been accompanied only by Arthur Meighen and Frank Calder of the Cabinet and by three provincial premiers but, at the beginning of July, he was joined by Newburn and Ballantyne. Kemp began to experience again the difficulties which Sir George Berley had faced the previous year of underemployed Ministers invading his sphere of responsibility. Newburn and Ballantyne went to France where they seem to have made an indifferent impression on Haig.<sup>434</sup> While in England, Newburn seems to have been kept busy dealing with numerous small personal complaints which various military petitioners brought to the Prime Minister's attention<sup>435</sup> but Ballantyne undertook negotiations with the Admiralty and the Ministry of Shipping on behalf of Canadian troops. This led to a clash with Kemp who claimed the field as a responsibility of his Quartermaster-General. An appeal to the Prime Minister seems to have sustained his case.<sup>436</sup>

166. On August 17th, the Prime Minister and his party were seen off on the Mauritania and only a few weeks later, Kemp, himself, returned to Canada, feeling in need of a rest.<sup>437</sup> Colonel Walter Gow, whose health was little better, was left in charge. Unfortunately, Gow was not satisfied that he would have the powers to discharge his responsibility and he sought some proof of delegation. On the eve of sailing, he approached the Minister with a form of release for Kemp to sign which stated that Gow had been delegated "all and singular, the powers and authorities possessed by me" as Minister under the Order-in-Council of October 28th, 1916, which had established the Ministry.<sup>438</sup> He proffered another, similar from which he said Sir George Perley had executed for him. Kemp refused to sign until he consulted the Prime Minister and Gow was left in some doubt as to the extent of his authority. From Ottawa on September 17th, Kemp cabled Gow that the Prime Minister regarded the proposed delegation as both unconstitutional and inoperative and suggested that frequent cable communication would serve the same purpose.<sup>439</sup> The Deputy Minister did not sense Sir Edward's impatience and telegraphed in return that the Ordinance which authorised a Deputy Minister also authorised that he be given full delegation of powers. As it was, he would require the Minister's prior approval for any act he performed. "Without delegation I have no more power than man on street.... Am daily holding myself out as having authority Which apparently I do not possess."<sup>440</sup> This was a very extreme view of his position and Kemp sought to reason with him:

Cable was not intended to convey strained interpretation as you take them from or to alter in slightest degree situation as it has existed only intended that you should refer to me important matters which in your judgement might be necessary requiring prompt action. Premier on holiday will consult him again when he returns. Stop. Am confident your functions or actions with approval Minister are generally similar in character to other Deputy Ministers. Stop. Whatever formalities have not been complied with or may be necessary will have attention, Stop. Ministry having been carried on for nearly two years existing conditions think can be safely continued for short time without prejudice to any interest particularly as Government is agreeable.<sup>441</sup>

Gow remained dissatisfied and immediately replied that the situation in other Departments was different as they were in Ottawa and another Cabinet Minister was always appointed to act for a Department when the regular Minister was away.<sup>442</sup>

167. Gow's insistence led the Minister to refer again to Borden, pointing out that he had declined to execute the delegation of authority and he was not sure that Perley had ever actually signed one. There had already been a number of exchanges of cables between himself and Gow on other matters and the machinery had worked as well as it did in London:

I explained to him before leaving that all he had to do was to carry on the way he was doing. he appears, however, to take a very peculiar view of the situation. He does not seem to realize that the Minister himself is responsible to Parliament and the Country and that it is really upon the Minister that the full responsibility falls for all that he does as well as anyone else.

The trouble, in Kemp's view, was with Gow who had spent, after all, seven months of the previous twelve, away from his work and who had, on his return to England, given evidence of "a somewhat petulant, if not unsympathetic frame of mind".<sup>443</sup>

168. When he returned to England in the middle of October, Kemp was not in the best frame of mind himself, to receive a long complaint from the Deputy Minister against General Turner. It was evident that the Chief of General Staff had no more regarded Gow as surrogate Minister than had Kemp himself, and he had arranged promotions, authorised the sending of two officers on visits to Canada, changed the distribution of motor cars which had been established by the Minister, saying only that his arrangement would stand until the Minister should return from Canada and, finally, he had arranged a memorial service at St. Margaret's, Westminster and had presided over a dinner to commemorate the arrival of the First Contingent in England, to which the Deputy Minister had not even been invited.

It was only the strongest sense of my duty to you which made it possible for me to continue until your return. Some of the incidents are trifling enough of themselves but in the bulk indicate an attitude of mind on the part of General Turner towards the position which I have had the honour to occupy which created an impossible and intolerable situation, and by reason of which I have asked you to relieve me from my duties.

My relations heretofore with General Turner have been the pleasantest possible, and I can only regard his action as a straight challenge of the right of civil control over the military. It is a case of the King and the Army against Parliament over again. The Civil Power over the Army must be supreme; if General Turner's attitude arises by reason of any animosity towards myself, that is easily cured by my withdrawal, but if he is resentful of the exercise of civilian control by the Parliament of Canada over the Forces of which he is a member, the situation takes on a different aspect and is one with which you will doubtless deal.<sup>444</sup>

Turner had little difficulty in explaining his action. He had sought to make promotions which were urgently requested by the Corps Commander and which were in line with precedent. When

the Deputy Minister had protested, There had been a reference to the Minister. The redistribution of cars had consisted of sending one additional car to each of three areas on the urgent requests of the respective General Officers Commanding. The dinner of which Gow complained was merely the monthly dinner of the Pay Department, presided over by Brigadier-General Ross, which had been arranged to coincide with the 14th of October.

The last paragraph of this memorandum (from Gow) illustrates graphically Colonel Gow's intent for mischief and endeavour, during your absence to arrogate to himself supreme authority. I am responsible in all matters military to the Honourable the Minister and leave judgement of the work performed during the last two years in England to his decision.<sup>445</sup>

The Minister's decision was to accept Colonel Gow's Resignation and to replace him with Colonel G.S. Harrington, who had served as Acting Deputy Minister during Gow's long periods of absence and who was on the best terms with the Minister. With this change, on October 31st, the final major event in the administrative history of the Overseas Ministry in wartime had occurred. The record of the demobilization is another story.

#### AN ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIMENT

169. The establishment of a Department of the Government under a Minister of the Cabinet permanently absent from the Capital had no precedent in Canadian administrative history and it has had no successor. The Canadian Government in the Second World War certainly resorted to no such organization. It is therefore of value to re-examine why the Ministry was felt to be necessary and, equally, why the experiment did not commend itself to a second try.

170. When assessing the experiment, the first question which seems valid is to ask what the Minister of the Cabinet might be expected to achieve in 1916 that a competent administrator, armed with the authority and confidence of the Government would have failed to achieve. The answer is remarkably simple. Only another Cabinet Minister could have eliminated an incompetent and untrustworthy Minister of Militia from a responsibility which was being demonstrably and egregiously mismanaged. The strongest and most competent administrator could not have executed the necessary reforms in the Overseas Forces and yet remained under Sir Sam Hughes. The ex-Minister's subsequent role of critic in Parliament was proof enough that he either did not understand the difficulties which his mismanagement had made or, more probably, that he never have mortgaged his pride and self-esteem to see them put right. Since the Prime Minister only acquired the courage to force the Minister of Militia's resignation after he had established the Overseas Ministry, the Atlantic seemed the clearest sort of frontier in dividing the responsibilities of the Militia Department.

171. A second quality which a Cabinet Minister could bring was prestige. We have already referred to Perley's remark about the stature of a Cabinet Minister in the eyes of the average Canadian. It required political prestige and a firm reliance on support to remove unfit senior officers in London, to settle the problem of surplus officers and to end the battle for spoils which often seems to have been the dominant principle in the promotion of General Officers. To some extent, Sir George Perley seems a sacrifice to this struggle for the Prime Minister, in his

memoirs, indicates that he had already come to regard him as something of a political liability despite his acknowledged good work. Sir Edward Kemp had even more difficult decisions to make in settling the Fifth Division and the command of the Corps but the War seemed to have entered a grimmer stage and he retained the confidence of the Prime Minister. If Perley was partially overborne by political pressure how much weaker might a non-Ministerial appointee have been. Only a Minister, too, would have had the right of access to British Ministers, the quality which Turner, in his memorandum, considered so important. With the different nature of the Commonwealth in 1939, it does not seem prima facie, that such a relationship would have seem so appropriate.

172. The third quality which a Cabinet Minister can bring to a Department is an attribute which has been discussed by the late Dr. R.M. MacGregor Dawson and which might be described as the analytical capacity of the intelligent outsider. By 1916, it would have been difficult for the Prime Minister to introduce a non-Cabinet authority who had had no contact with the Overseas Forces. If he had selected Currie or Turner, their initial prestige might have been greater but it is not obvious that military experience was necessarily the best training for such an essentially administrative responsibility. Moreover, even if such an officer were able to achieve an intellectual, analytical independence, could he have divorced himself from the ties of friendship and faction which had become so important in the Canadian Expeditionary Force under Hughes?

173. There were, then virtues of politics, prestige and detachment which helped to make the notion of an Overseas Ministry successful. What were the disadvantages? Inevitably, perhaps, Argyll House came to be a very unpleasant symbol in the minds of many Canadians who served overseas. Much of this was inevitable and much of the virulence of the feeling faded with time. The sentiment might have been stronger without a Minister constantly at hand to remind officers of the political aspect of their decisions. It was a common feeling in all armies. One of the better known Australian Army songs of the First World War is devoted to the "badgers" of Horseferry Road, the Australian equivalent. Certainly under Kemp, accusations that the denizens of Argyll House had shirked front line service were statistically inaccurate. That they lacked sympathy for soldiers from the front is a more general complaint but one difficult to evaluate from the criticisms were general and vague and the rebuttals were fortified with the mixture of abuse and statistics well known to any ex-perienced bureaucracy. One can only feel with confidence that a continuation of the Carson era would have brought much heavier attacks and they would have been well merited.

174. Criticism of Argyll House was criticism of a headquarters qua headquarters. A criticism raised by contemporaries against the appointment of a Minister was that he was absent from Parliament. Although the Minister of Militia sought to represent him, he was not quite satisfactory This became particularly true under the Union Government when the Opposition Liberals would have had to direct their attacks at an old ally, Major-General Newburn. Jacques Bureau, for one, refused to do it:

Why should there be two departments in one, and why should one man, if I may use the expression, wear the harness, draw the coat, be exposed here to all the criticism, and yet have no control over the other man." <sup>446</sup>

He was not satisfied by the Prime Minister's explanation with the accounting system nor with the news that the Auditor-General was satisfied. A Canadian Cabinet Minister also has a representative function as the spokesman for an area or a religious or linguistic group. Sir George Perley, during his long absence overseas found this aspect of his duties impossible to perform and the absence of a Quebec representative from the Cabinet did not pass unnoticed in Canada.

175. In the circumstances, these criticisms, for all their constitutional validity, do not outweigh the very real achievements of the Overseas Ministry in the circumstances. The circumstances, of course, should not have been allowed to occur - a Minister too powerful to be removed by too inefficient to fulfill his responsibilities, a system of appointments and promotions built on patronage and an organization run on the benign principles of benign good fellowship. The Overseas Ministry did not eliminate politics from the Overseas Forces but that might well have been an impossible transformation. Instead, it proved that politics could be an adjunct to efficiency.



DRAFT REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OVERSEAS MINISTRY

Ottawa  
22 September, 1916

TO: HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE GOVERNOR GENERAL IN COUNCIL

The undersigned has had under consideration the subject of the administration of the Overseas Forces of Canada, and the direction and control of the expenditure abroad in connection therewith. In view of the unexpected length of the war and the unprecedented efforts which are being exerted by Canada in common with the rest of the Empire for the defence of His Majesty's Dominions, and which it is unnecessary here to recapitulate, it is apparent that adequate measures should be taken to provide for the situation which has arisen and is developing. Moreover the expenditure necessarily involved in the organization, maintenance, equipment and direction Overseas of these forces, is very great, and there is especial reason for using every effort to assure not only the highest degree of efficiency and most thorough and prompt co-operation of the Overseas forces of Canada with those of the Mother Country, and of the other Dominions of the Empire, but also the most economical careful administration of the means which are appropriated for the purposes.

The Prime Minister is informed that before the first day of November next the forces despatched by Canada for overseas service in Europe will number not less than 256,000.

Enlistment is proceeding; there are large forces in training in Canada which will be despatched as soon as they are prepared, and the responsibility connected with the raising, equipment, training, outfitting and transporting of these troops is in itself so great that it seems advisable to relieve the Department of Militia and Defence of the administration of the forces Overseas and to establish a ministry in London, immediately in touch with His Majesty's Government and conveniently situated with relation to the theatre of effective operations, to be charged with the administration of the military affairs Overseas for which your Excellency's Government is responsible as well as the expenditure connected with those affairs and the negotiations and arrangements incident to that branch of the service.

For these reasons the undersigned recommends for the sanction of Your Excellency, in the executive of the powers conferred by the War Measures Act, the draft regulations or ordinance herewith submitted.

Humbly submitted,

Prime Minister.

## ORDINANCE FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS MILITARY FORCES OF CANADA

1. There shall be, so long as the present European war continues, and thereafter until otherwise directed be the Governor in Council, a Minister of Overseas Military Forces of Canada, who shall be charged with the control of and shall be responsible for the administration of the affairs of the military forces of Canada in the United Kingdom and on the Continent of Europe; the ordnance, arms, ammunition, armouries, stores, munitions and habiliments of war belonging to Canada in the United Kingdom and on the Continent of Europe appropriated for the use of the Overseas military forces of Canada, and all expenditure incurred in the United Kingdom or elsewhere in Europe for or in respect of the Overseas military forces of Canada; the aforesaid powers and duties of administration to include, without limiting their generality, all powers and duties in connection with the troops, property and expenditure aforesaid theretofore exercised or charged upon the Minister of Militia and Defence.
2. The Minister shall for the convenience of administration, and in order to expedite the transaction of the business with which he is charged, ordinarily reside and discharge his duties in London, and in urgent matters of importance which would generally be subject to consideration and direction, upon the Minister's report, by the Governor in Council, the Minister may, if the time or means for communication do not admit of antecedent authority from the Governor in Council, sanction provisionally such measures as may seem to him advisable, subject, however, to report and the confirmation of the Minister's action by the Governor in Council.
3. The Minister shall moreover be charged with the negotiations on the part of the Government of Canada, as occasion may require, with his Majesty's Government, in all matters connected with the government, command and disposition of the overseas forces of Canada, and such arrangements as may be advisable for co-ordinating their operations and services with those of His Majesty's troops, and generally for the purpose of utilizing the Overseas forces of Canada in the most effective manner for the purposes of the war.
4. The Minister shall moreover execute such further powers and perform such other duties as may be from time to time conferred upon or assigned to him by the Governor-in-Council.
5. The Minister may for the purposes aforesaid establish such organization as may be found necessary and adequate, and he may, subject to the approval of the Governor-in-Council, appoint such Officers and clerks to assist in the work of his Ministry as he deems necessary, with such grades in the Civil Service of Canada as may be prescribed, and such officers and clerks shall not be subject to examination under the Civil Service Act.
6. There may be an advisory council, consisting of such members as the Governor in Council may appoint, to advise the Minister as to matters relating to the affairs and property hereby committed to his administration.
7. All recommendations of the Minister for submission to the Governor-in-Council shall be transmitted through the President of the Privy Council.

8. Until Parliament otherwise provides the Minister shall hold his office, commission or employment without any salary, fees, wages, allowances, emolument or other profit of any kind attached thereto.

9. The expression "Minister" shall, for the purpose of this ordinance, if there be nothing repugnant in the subject matters of context, means the Minister of Overseas Military Forces of Canada.



**MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION OF THE SUB-MILITIA COUNCIL  
AS ORIGINALLY PROJECTE BY HUGHES**

**Chairman of the Overseas  
Sub-Militia Council**

Maj-Gen J.W. Carson C.B.

Agent and Representative of the  
Honourable the Minister of  
Militia and Defence

**The Military Representative of the Department  
of Militia and Defence at the Front**

Brig-Gen L.G.F.M. Lord Brooke C. de C.,  
C.M.G., M.V.O.

**Deputy Minister**

Col. A.J. McRae

**Chief of the General Staff**

Brig-Gen R.G.E. Leckie

**Adjutant-General**

Col F.A. Reid

**Quartermaster-General**

Col G.P. Murphy

**Director of Pay Services**

Lt-Col J.G. Ross

**General Officer Commanding  
Shornecliffe Command**

Maj-Gen S.B. Seele C.B.,  
M.V.O.

**General Officer Commanding  
Canadian Training Division,  
Shornecliffe**

Maj-Gen J.C. MacDougall C.M.G.\*

**General Officer Commanding  
Training Division, Bramshott**

Brig-Gen. F.S. Meighen

(OC 318(1). 35751)

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\* MacDougall was promoted to this rank in August, 1916, with effect from September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1915. (Carson File, 6-Mc-153)

MEMORANDUM OUTLINING THE COMMAND AND CONTROL  
OF THE OVERSEAS MILITARY FORCES OF CANADA

1. The Overseas Military Forces of Canada is that portion of the Canadian Military Forces which has been organized, equipped and sent overseas to co-operate with troops from other parts of the British Empire in defeating the common enemy. This force is therefore an entity and it is to the interest of Canada and the British Empire at large that it should be regarded and respected as such under all circumstances, both by the Officers in charge of its components parts and by the British Military and Civil Authorities.
2. Where military forces are acting in conjunction within approximately the same area, independent commands are a well-recognized source of weakness. The Canadian Government, having in the field a force numerically far weaker than that of the British Government, decided therefore, in so far as military operations were concerned, to place under British authority that portion of its force which from time to time might be stationed within the fighting area. Consequently, the Canadian Corps Commander is directly responsible to the British Command-in-Chief in connection with all military operations.
3. The Canadian Government has in no respect abrogated its unquestionable right to control and administer its own forces. Questions of policy and general administration (apart from military operations) including appointments, promotions and the granting of commissions within its Overseas Forces, remain therefore in the hands of the Canadian Government and are dealt with by the Minister of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada.
4. The Minister has constituted the General Officer Commanding Canadian Forces in the British Isles his chief military adviser in all matters appertaining to the organization and administration of the Overseas Forces. Questions of policy and administration, including appointments, promotions and the granting of commissions through the General Officer Commanding Canadian Forces in the British Isles, who, in so doing will record in each instance his recommendation.
5. As already arranged with British General Headquarters all recommendations affecting policy or administration, including appointments, promotions and the granting of commissions, which may originate from the Canadian Corps or from any of the other Canadian Formations or Service's will be submitted to the Overseas Minister for final action, and no notification with respect thereto (except acting promotions) will appear in Orders until the Overseas Minister shall have approved the same.
6. In the event of vacancies occurring in senior appointments, such as the Command of Divisions or Brigades, Brigadier-General, General or Administrative Staff, General Staff Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, or any equivalent administrative position, the Canadian Corps Commander or the Officer at the head of the other Canadian Formation or Service concerned, will, before making any official recommendation, consult officially with the Overseas Minister through the Canadian Representative at G.H.Q.
7. In considering their recommendations for Staff as well as other appointments, the Canadian Corps Commander and the heads of the other Canadian Formations and Services will, as far as military efficiency permits, make their selections from among officers of the Overseas Military Forces either in the field or in Great Britain. It is considered by the Canadian Government that after more than two years of war experience, suitable Canadian Officers should be available for every position in the Canadian Forces. If, particular instances, this is not at present the case, the Canadian Corps Commander and the heads of the other Canadian Formations and Services concerned will at once take steps to insure the selection and training of Canadian Officers for such appointments. British General Headquarters has already concurred in the institution of this policy and it must be put into effect forthwith.

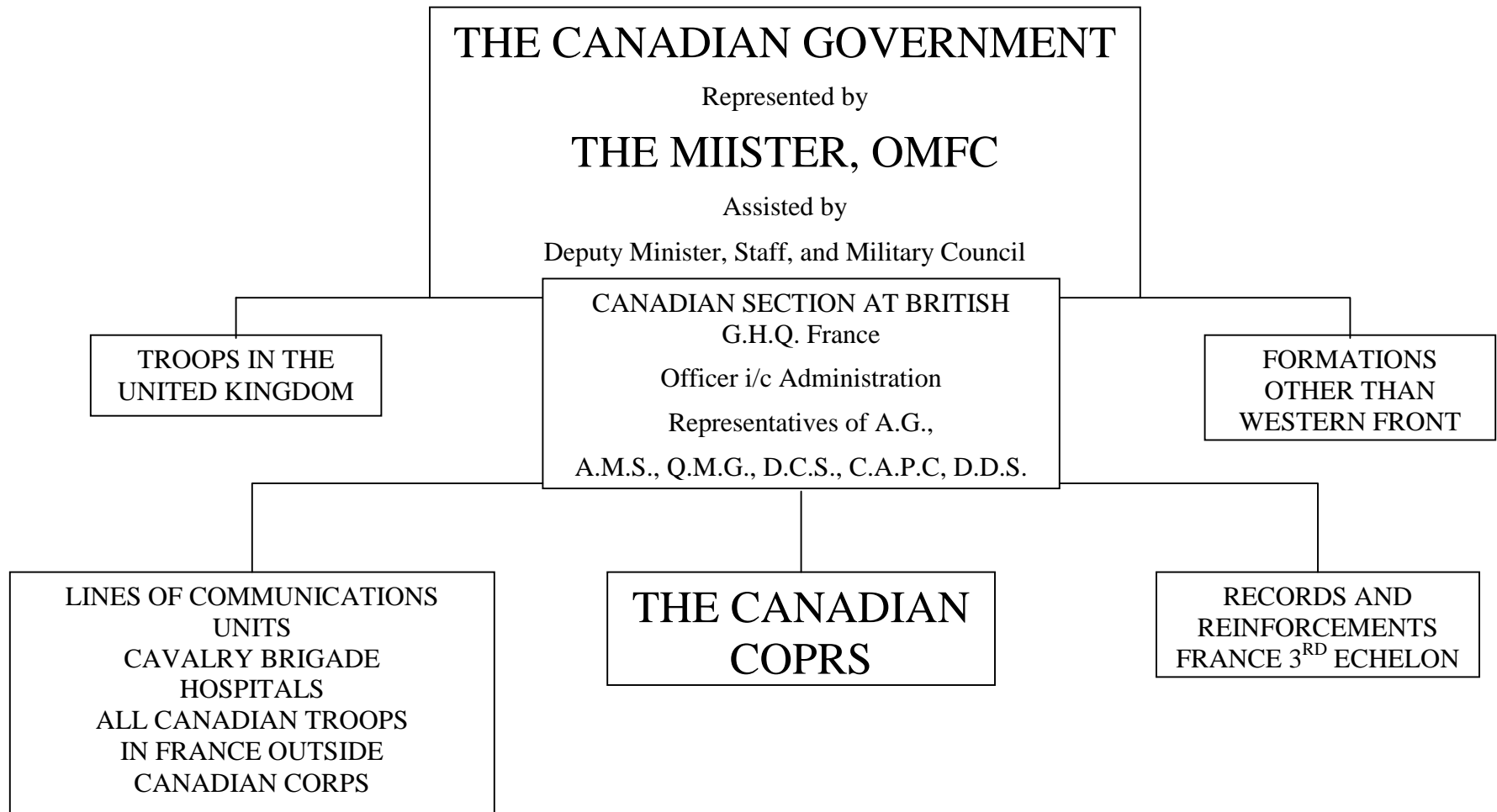
8. In his capacity as chief military advisor to the Overseas Minister it is essential that the General Officer Commanding Canadian Forces in the British Isles shall be constantly and closely in touch with conditions in the Field. Arrangements will therefore be made for him to visit the war zone at frequent intervals. As the delegate of the Overseas Minister, he will be authorized to discuss with the British General Headquarters all matters of policy and administration connected with the Canadian Forces in the Field, and also to take up such matters directly with the Canadian Corps Commander or the heads of the other Canadian Formations or Services concerned. He will further from time to time report to the Minister upon Canadian units in the Field which are not included in the Canadian Corps.

9. It follows from the above that the appointment of General Officer Commanding Canadian Forces in the British Isles is the senior military appointment in the Overseas Military Forces of Canada.

O.S. File 10-8-

7 d/14 June 17

DIAGRAM OF THE OVERSEAS ORGANIZATION



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