

National Registration.—One of the earliest problems to receive attention at the hands of the Unionist Government, after its return at the general election of December 17, 1917, was that of more fully and intelligently utilizing Canada's man and woman power in the prosecution of the war. Recognizing that any plan devised to give effect to this desire should be based, as far as possible, upon accurate information as to the number of workers available and the capabilities of each, the Government decided to proceed at once with a national stocktaking of the country's human resources. For that purpose an Order in Council under the War Measures Act was passed on February 22, 1918, constituting the Canada Registration Board under the chairmanship of the Hon. G. D. Robertson.

The regulations shortly thereafter issued by the Board called for the registration of every resident of Canada, male or female, of sixteen years of age and upwards, exception being made only in the case of certain classes whose registration would clearly serve no useful purpose. The act of registration consisted in presenting one's self in person at an authorized place of registration, there answering various questions as to name, residence, age, country of birth, country of allegiance, physical disabilities, present and regular occupation, name and address of employer and farm experience, certifying by signature that the answers set down were all truthful, and finally securing a certificate of registration.

To make adequate provision for the registration on a single day of approximately 5,000,000 people was a task of no mean proportions, involving as it did the drafting of regulations designed to meet every situation likely to arise in an undertaking for which there was no Canadian precedent, the creation of a field organization of 120,000 workers, the careful instruction of every one of those workers in the respective duties to be discharged, the printing and distributing of proclamations, regulations, instructions, cards and certificates in two languages and the education of the public as to the requirements of the law and the penalties provided against defaulters. But despite the immensity of its task and the infinite detail of its work, the Board registered the people of Canada on June 22, 1918, exactly four months from the date of its establishment.

The total registration on June 22, 1918, was 5,044,034 (2,572,754 males and 2,471,280 females). Subsequently, through the medium of the post offices, there were registered 202,749 additional persons who, after registration day, either attained the age of sixteen or were discharged from military service, or who for valid reason were prevented from registering at the time required. Adding these returns to the results for June 22 gives a grand total of 5,246,783. An estimate previously furnished by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics as to the number of persons in Canada who would be required to register set the figure at 5,426,356. The results secured by the Board show, therefore, that the law was fully observed by 96.7 per cent of the estimated registerable population.

Upon the completion of this task, the cards were shipped to Ottawa, where, under the direction of officers of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, a staff numbering 500 at the maximum was employed in