

INTRODUCTION

Section 1.—Canada's War Effort

On Sept. 1, 1939, when the German army invaded Poland, it was announced that Parliament was summoned to meet in Emergency Session on Sept. 7. On Sept. 3, as soon as it was learned that the United Kingdom and Germany were at war, the Prime Minister announced that the Government would recommend to Parliament that Canada place herself at the side of Britain; he also outlined the steps that had already been taken by the Government to meet the emergency. By the War Measures Act of 1914, all necessary power was available to the Government to meet such circumstances as this latest outbreak of hostilities had precipitated. By Sept. 10, Parliament had assembled and acted, and a state of war between Canada and Germany was proclaimed by His Majesty The King.

The General Organization of Canada's War Effort.—The immediate steps to organize the war effort were taken under authority of the War Measures Act of 1914. The Militia, Naval Service, and Air Force were placed on active service, and certain other provisions were made for the defence of the coasts and for internal security. The "Defence of Canada Regulations" and other emergency regulations were brought into force and the censorship organization was established.

At the emergency session of Parliament, measures were enacted to make financial provision to meet the immediate costs of the War and to provide for the creation, when necessary, of a Department of Munitions and Supply.

Several months of what might be termed the organizational phase of Canada's war activity followed. Immediate consideration was given to the most effective way in which Canada could make her maximum contribution to the War. Consultations were held with the Allied authorities and their views were learned. Certain programs were announced and put into operation immediately. These included the preparation of two Divisions for overseas service and the doubling of the strength of the Canadian naval service. Representatives of the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand came to Canada at the suggestion of the United Kingdom, and conferred with the Canadian authorities on the establishment of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. The Agreement on the details of this plan was signed on Dec. 17 (see p. xxxii), by which time action had been taken to put it into effect.

On the economic side, organization proceeded equally rapidly. The creation of an effective economic war organization was, from the outset, an essential part of the war effort. This is dealt with in detail at pp. xxxiii-xliii.

Parliament met again in regular session on Jan. 25, 1940, but was dissolved the same day. A general election was held on Mar. 26. By the time the new Parliament assembled on May 16, 1940, the War had entered a new and much more active phase. Germany had successfully invaded Denmark and Norway in April, and on May 10 had commenced the 'blitzkrieg' against Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg and France. Holland was conquered, and the Germans had broken through into France the day before Parliament met. Parliament acted quickly to meet the new emergencies. A war appropriation of \$700,000,000 was the first measure passed. The powers of the Department of Munitions and Supply (established Apr. 9) were revised and enlarged in the light of experience and necessity. British orders for equipment and munitions from Canada were greatly accelerated. All aircraft, equipment and munitions that could possibly be spared were rushed to the United Kingdom in answer to her urgent requests. The diversion of equipment and of personnel to the United Kingdom necessitated some revisions in the Air Training Plan, and the construction of aerodromes in Canada and other work related to the Plan were accelerated.