

INTRODUCTION

Section 1.—Canada and the War

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.

General Organization.—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. The Department was established on Apr. 9, 1940, when the War was entering a more active phase with the German invasion of Norway.

After the special session, 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 Army 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, 1940, by which time action had been taken to put it into effect. On the same day, the first contingent of the Canadian Army landed in Great Britain.

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. xxxii to xli.

Parliament met again in regular session on Jan. 25, 1940, but it was dissolved the same day. A general election was held on Mar. 26. The new Parliament assembled on May 16, 1940. The climax to its legislative action consisted in the introduction and passage, during the third week in June, of the National Resources Mobilization Act, authorizing the Governor in Council to require "persons to place themselves, their services and their property at the disposal of His Majesty in the right of Canada as may be deemed necessary or expedient for securing the public safety, the defence of Canada, the maintenance of public order, or the efficient prosecution of the War, or for maintaining supplies or services essential to the life of the community", with the exception that persons could not be compelled to serve in the armed forces outside of Canada and her territorial waters.