

85 BTY 15 COAST (RES)
MAJ ART COWAN MLC
HOWARD SACEN
CORRESPONDENCE
- FROM SACEN'S
FRAND-JINGHTON
BARBARA MCBRIDE

O T T A W A
11th February 1942

A. J. Cowan, Esq.,
553 Granville Street,
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Art:-

I received your letter of January 24th in due course and it was a great help.

I think I have started something here which may result in more adequate defences on the coast. Several of the B. C. Members supported me to a degree in their speeches. Yesterday Colonel Ralston spoke, and although I had expected that he would attack me he did not do so; instead, he called me over after the speech and we went out and had a man-to-man talk for over an hour. The result was that he asked me to go this morning and talk to the Chief of Staff and the three of us have had another hour or more; I think some benefit will follow. When I return to Vancouver I will tell you all about it and in the meantime I shall not let up in my efforts and it would be a great help if you would follow the same course at the coast. Be sure to write me further when you have information or suggestions.

Yours sincerely,

PS. Your letter of yesterday came in after I had dictated this - and was very cheering. The party is in a tragic position - nois, hunger - ^{HC/P} but on the other hand the ^{HC/P} show signs of waking up - I'm keeping quiet in do wake up - then I may be able to ^{HC/P} imply something

553 Granville Street,
Vancouver, B. C.

Jan. 24, 1942.

Howard Green, Esq., M.P.,
Parliament Buildings,
Ottawa, Canada.

Dear Howard:

I am sorry I did not see you before you left, as I had something more I wanted to "get off my chest".

In the first place, I have found general approval of the idea of removing the Japanese from the coast. As a matter of fact, I have not found a single person who is in favour of keeping them here. The general unanimity of opinion may be due to the general feeling against the Japanese and the fact that it is the popular thing at the moment. However, if you examine it as dispassionately as possible, it seems to be the only safe thing to do.

The newspaper dispatches today seem to indicate that there will be a secret session of the House. I think it is most important that you be ready to "go to town" if such a session is held. It is important, not only from the viewpoint of Canada, but also as far as you are concerned yourself. I think that you should have at your fingertips everything concerning the defense of the Pacific coast. If I can assist in getting any information which you may want, please let me know and I will do my best to get it. I think that you, as the only Conservative member from Vancouver, should be prepared to take a leading part in the debate and that you should insist that you be heard. I want to emphasize the following points:-

1. That every country in the world, with the exception of North and South America, which thought it was safe, has been attacked. Even Australia, which a few months ago seemed as safe as Canada, is now hurriedly arming for defense. /K

2. That all of these countries which have been attacked have had the same complacent feeling about the war that Canada now has.

3. That the government and the men in charge of

us
military affairs have continually lulled/to sleep, examples of which are as follows:-

(a) Ian McKenzie telling us that Vancouver is the sixth best fortified city in the world.

(b) The Chief of General Staff a few weeks ago telling us that the defenses which were planned for the defense of the Pacific coast some four years ago are now nearly complete, and that everything is well in hand, that there is nothing to worry about. K

4. That for years, artillery officers have been telling the General Staff that mobile artillery is essential for the defense of this area. No steps were taken until after the declaration of war with Japan when a regiment of artillery was hastily brought in from Alberta. They had only recently been recruited, had no training and would have been absolutely useless if they had had to do any fighting.

5. That up until the declaration of war with Japan, there was absolutely no anti-aircraft on the Pacific coast. One battery that I know of, and possibly some others, has been brought in since. I doubt if there is any anti-aircraft defense of any of the airfields of British Columbia and certainly, there is no anti-aircraft defense of the cities. Such guns as have been brought in are the Bofors, which have a ceiling of 4,000 yards.

6. The plan for the defense of the Pacific Coast is completely out of date. The batteries are in fixed positions in accordance with the best traditions of the British army and only can fire in one direction. No doubt in the past it has always been considered "unsportsmanlike" for the enemy to attack from any direction except that to which the guns were pointing.

7. The defenses of Vancouver I have already explained to you and you are quite familiar with them.

I would suggest that the following are necessary precautions to take for the defense of the Coast:-

1. The male Japanese be removed from the coastal areas.
2. All men be required to serve in either the A.R.P.

the reserve, or the active force.

3. The plan for selective service be that all able-bodied young men be conscripted for service anywhere and that they be specially trained in new methods of attack. (I have lots of ideas about this but will not bother you with them now).

4. The next classes be conscripted and posted to reserve units for special training for the defense of Canada. In this connection, a start has already been made in Vancouver. This training, of course, would be at night and on week-ends and would not disturb the person in his ordinary occupation. The organization should be on similar lines to that of Switzerland and the units on being called out would go to their definitely allotted posts.

5. The last class would be the A.R.P. They should be completely organized and a sufficient amount of equipment brought here to completely equip them.

6. It should be emphasized that the Reserve, Home Guard, or whatever it is called would be called out only in case of invasion or attempted invasion. As far as British Columbia is concerned, all business would be at an end as we would literally be the front line and every man should have some job to do.

7. The support of the women must be obtained. At the present time, unless a woman actually has relatives in the service, she is not interested and she even complains if her husband spends a couple of nights at the armouries trying to fit himself to defend the country. Women must be made to see that they will be made to suffer more than anyone else if we lose this war.

8. Every man, no matter what he does, can afford to spend two nights a week training, either in the army or the A.R.P. All ~~paragers~~ should be eliminated. The people of England organized themselves when they had to and there is no reason why we cannot. Incidentally, did you see that service in the Home Defense in England would be compulsory after February 14th.

9. That the Reserve or Home Defense units be fully equipped and trained at once. We have a nucleus with the Reserve forces now. The active force and the General Staff should be forced to assist in the training and they should cease to look upon us merely as a nuisance.

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10. That up-to-date defense plans be formulated and that ammunition and equipment be on the ground not miles away as it was on December 7th last.

Jan. 30, 1942.

The above was dictated almost a week ago, but I got tied up in Court and didn't have an opportunity to finish it. Today's headlines tell me that you have already "gone to town". More power to you! The Sun newspaper has a front page editorial headed "Questions rightly raised by Mr. Green." You, no doubt, will see it within a day or two. It seems that the secret session is on its way just as I predicted. Actually, the situation has improved to a certain extent. The American rifles which we have, have all been tested and just recently ~~we have been supplied with ammunition for them. The men have not yet had an opportunity of firing them but plans are being made for going to the range just as soon as the men have passed their Toet (tests of elementary training) of these rifles.~~ With regard to paragraph 4 on page 2, I am not quite sure whether my statement about having had no training is correct. If I were you, I would hesitate to use that point.

informally
In order to get some real ammunition, I think that you should ask for a return of the Parade states of the units on the coast. I have seen the artillery ones, but it is ~~important~~ for me to get copies of them. They, however, should show the actual status of the men, namely, whether they are enlisted for service anywhere or whether they are trainees for Home Defense only. As I recall it, the Parade state that I saw showed one column headed "Enlisted" and another column headed "H.D." This, I think, means Home Defense, and refers to the trainees brought in here from other parts of Canada. I do not know anything about the active service infantry battalions which have been training here, but I suspect that a considerable number of them are trainees. Certainly, the men who are in the hotel at the present time look and act as though they were. ~~You should also ask for a return of the Parade states of the Reserve unit. They will show you that practically all are 50% under strength.~~ You also could get the monthly return of the men who are attending parades. My battery, for instance, was down to approximately a strength of 53 and my average attendance was

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somewhere between 35 and 40. The attendance at my parades, incidentally, has been much better than the other batteries in the Brigade. I think that you would be safe in saying that the actual attendance is not above 75% in any unit and probably nearer 50%. On December 1st, the total strength of our unit was 201. Our original strength was 357 but that was recently increased to somewhere around 430. One reason for the decline was due to the fact that last Spring we were told that we would only be paid up to 50% of our strength and we actually went to camp on that basis. As it happened, we took almost exactly 50% of our strength to camp so that we were all paid but, owing to the fact that the men would not be paid, we made no attempt to recruit further. Later on in the Fall, this policy was changed and we were told that we would be paid up to 100% or thereabouts. When we tried to advertise for recruits, however, we were not allowed to do so. Our real difficulty goes back to the vacillating attitude of the government and I think the whole blame can be put on them.

I will try to write you again on Monday and give you some further details, but I want to get this in the mail to you now as I have delayed too long already.

I wish you the best of luck and can assure you that I hear nothing but favourable comments on the stand that you have taken.

Sincerely yours,

Art