

taches more importance to the result of elections to this House than to the actual task of winning the war. Our men at the front are in deadly earnest in that task, and I believe they voted as they did because they realized that in the Government they had an Administration which was disposed and determined to support them by every means within its power. In that estimate of the intention and attitude of the Government they will find they were not mistaken.

My right hon. friend was good enough to tell us that although there is a very considerable majority supporting the Administration in this House, the Government has not the moral support of the country. I do not know by what warrant my hon. friend undertakes to speak for the country in that regard. With all deference and respect to him, I venture to say that there never has been any Government of this Dominion since 1867 which has had the moral force of the country more strongly behind it than the Administration which is in office to-day.

My right hon. friend alluded to an Order in Council of the 3rd of December last by which the Minister of Militia was authorised to discharge persons notwithstanding that their exemption might have been refused by the tribunals. I am rather of the opinion that the Minister of Militia and Defence, as head of the military forces of this country, has that right without any Order in Council; but the Order in Council which was passed on that occasion was precisely in line with the principle enunciated when the Military Service Bill was introduced into this House last session. We endeavoured to safeguard the Administration of that Bill in every way. We endeavoured to safeguard it by making provision for a great number of tribunals throughout the country, by the provision of appeal tribunals, by the provision of a Central Appeal Judge. Perhaps we provided too many tribunals. The Act may require amendment. Perhaps it would have been better to create a simpler procedure. But we were breaking new ground, and we desired that every community in this country might realise that its rights would be adequately protected. The hundreds of tribunals, scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific, were composed of men upon whom new duties had been imposed and their decisions were not consistent; they varied. I am not saying that by way of criticism. Nothing else could have been expected. The Minister of Militia and Defence, under

[Sir Robert Borden.]

the Order in Council in question, had a certain right to discharge men if he came to the conclusion that their service was of more value to the people of this country in the occupation of agriculture than in bearing arms at the front. As a matter of fact, he has not discharged any men at all, but he has given to some men leave of absence for a certain period in order that their work in the industry of agriculture may be carried on to the great good of this country. That is the whole story from first to last, and I am perfectly content to leave our action to the judgment of the fair minded majority of this House.

I do not propose to deal further with the issues of the recent election, but it might be worth while for me, before speaking of the programme of the Government as outlined in the Speech of His Excellency the Governor General, to inform the House of what has been accomplished by this Government during its period of office. It was formed on the 12th day of October last, and if one eliminates the period during which its members were engaged in the election contest, it will be seen that there has been a period of something less than four months for actual work of administration. I submit to the House that the record which this Union Government has made during that time is one that can be presented to this House and to the country with some confidence. A great many of these matters to which I am about to allude have already been made public, but I hope the House will bear with me if I make a short resumé in order that we may realize all that has been done during the brief period since we assumed office.

In the first place, we have formed two committees of the Cabinet. One of those committees is presided over by my hon. friend the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Rowell), who is vice-chairman; I am nominally chairman, but the labours have very largely devolved upon him, and I do believe the country owes him a debt of gratitude for the enormous amount of work which he has accomplished in so short a time, and for his services to the public in many matters to which I am about to refer. The War Committee of the Cabinet was established for the purpose of co-ordinating the efforts of the several departments of the Government in the prosecution of the war. It was desired by means of that machinery to ensure the maximum of effort with a minimum of expenditure, and generally to throw the full power of Canada into the war. The Order in Council creat-