

*War Effort—Government Policy*

we endeavoured to place before the house what we felt were the real issues confronting the country at the present time. We did so first of all through a subamendment moved by the leader of this group on November 27, and then to-day by an amendment to the main motion which I moved a few hours ago.

I would remind the house that we stated quite clearly in that subamendment and in that amendment our feeling that a vigorous war effort requires the elimination of all distinctions between drafted and volunteer personnel and the total mobilization of all resources of Canada, material and financial as well as human. The house is well aware of the difficulty that we had, as well as the difficulty that other members had, in drafting amendments in such a form that they would be satisfactory to Your Honour so that the house might be able to vote on these real issues. It appears that all efforts along that line are fruitless as matters stand. Therefore, when it comes down to the final question of being asked to vote on what we regard as a meaningless motion, we feel that we have the right to endeavour to amend that motion so as to take out of it the double-barrelled aspect that was there in its previous wording.

The hon. member for Richelieu-Verchères suggests that the motion in the amended form, leaving out the words "its policy of", is without meaning. In a sense the hon. member is right. It is not now a vote of confidence in the government. It becomes rather a pious resolution of the house to the effect that we will agree to aid the government in maintaining a vigorous war effort, and then close this session and go home. But I point out that if the motion now may be in that sense only a pious resolution, it is considerably different from the motion in its previous form. The Prime Minister placed it on the order paper and cannot get away from the fact that it asked for a vote of confidence in the government on its terms, and it was worded in such a way that a vote against it could be misconstrued as a vote against the maintaining of a vigorous war effort.

Now that the words "its policy of" have been deleted, if that is the case, the government has bowed to the arguments presented all over the house against the form of the motion and is prepared now not to ask for an unlimited vote of confidence but to accept the passing of the motion in its amended form as an end to the proceedings we have had here these last two or three weeks. If this resolution passes in its amended form it will mean that the house is saying to the country: We were not prepared to vote con-

fidence in the policies of the government; we were against those policies for certain reasons which we made clear on the floor of parliament, but we accept the fact that P.C. 8891 has been passed; we accept the fact that at least something is being done about meeting the need for reinforcements, and we also accept the fact that our attempts to present our amendments on the floor of the house have been in vain.

I wish to say, with due respect for my good friend the leader of the opposition, first of all that I should like to offer a comment on his criticism of our leaving in the motion the word "maintaining" with reference to a vigorous war effort. He tries to bring down his part of the house with the suggestion that it is incorrect to speak of a vigorous war effort having been in effect thus far. I suggest that in his supreme effort to criticize the government for all he is worth he is casting a reflection on our soldiers, sailors, airmen, on our farmers and industrial workers. They are the ones, together with the people of this country, who through their taxes and savings have made it possible to build up a vigorous war effort. We feel that no reflection should be cast on them.

Again, it seems to me—and I will put it in the simplest language I know—that the Progressive Conservative party in this house is just plain sore. They had the supreme hope that in this issue of reinforcements, for which the government is to blame—there is no doubt about that—they had been provided with something that would give them a talking point which up to that time they did not have anywhere in this dominion. On the basis of this issue they counted heavily on their ability to inflame prejudice in this country, and it seems to bother them to think that the result of this two or three weeks' sitting of parliament may be a lessening of some of those divisions that have grown up, or at least a partial settlement of the problem, with the result that the kind of thing they were counting on has been taken away from them. The Progressive Conservatives seem to want the privilege of going on inflaming sectional interests and prejudices as a basis for trying to gain some political capital; but we much prefer to respond to the kind of appeals that have been made in this house by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Lapointe) and others, together with the sort of appeal that was made by the leader of this group when he spoke of his visit to Dieppe, in endeavouring to get the people of Canada to work together