

Mr. Chairman, I say that this Act was conceived in iniquity, because it is contrary to pledged troth. One would think that, lately, we were living in Russia or rather that we were living in Berlin. We might believe we are being guided, governed by Boche government.

Did not this Government promise through its prime minister, on February 8, 1916, when he proposed the resolution demanding the extension of the Parliamentary term, was it not understood that no other matters would be dealt with save those arising out of the war and the settlement of which was necessary with a view to the successful ending of this war and towards helping on the Allies' cause?

On February 8 1916, I read at page 624 of Hansard:

Coming back from Great Britain, impressed with that conviction, I sought an opportunity of conferring with my right hon. friend on the other side of the House (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) as soon as was possible after an illness from which at that time he was unfortunately suffering. I had a conference with my right hon. friend on the 14th October and, later, on the 2nd November. Certain correspondence took place between us with which, as we agreed, neither he nor I need trouble the House or the country at the present time. Generally speaking, the discussion which took place between my right hon. friend and myself was along these lines; as to the advisability of an extension for one year after peace, or for one year absolutely; the avoidance of any general election during the war; the proposal that by-elections should not be contested in the meantime and that each party should retain the seats it now holds, or had held previously to the vacancy.

Undoubtedly, it must be on account of that promise that the Government hastened to fill, in the Senate, the vacancies created by the demise of some senators.

And he adds:

The suspension of party warfare during a war which obviously threatens the existence of the Empire; and, lastly, the restriction of legislation to matters arising out of the war, or occasioned thereby, or directly connected therewith, except possibly minor matters or matters of urgent need and unavoidable necessity as to which I would desire to consult with my right hon. friend.

Well, I say that this Act is an outrage to the pledged word, and I ask the Government and all those who support them, whether the passing of this iniquitous law necessarily proceeds from the war, if the purchase of the Canadian Northern is a product of the war and if it is the war which has brought about the insolvency and the bankruptcy of Mackenzie and Mann; I wish to state in pursuance of the agreement made, that the right hon. prime minister should have consulted the right hon. leader

of the Opposition. Has he done so? No. However, Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann must be assisted, cost what it will, and money is needed for the electoral campaign. Never mind the country's financial conditions; never mind if, to-morrow, after this deal is concluded our debt may be more than two billion dollars; never mind the after-the-war problems, let us forget our present crisis; the question is, before all and above all, to save the situation of Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann and of our friends, to the country's detriment.

The province of Quebec, that province which is the nightmare of the English provinces and specially of the province of Ontario, did not allow herself to be caught in Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann's snares; she turned a deaf ear to their proposals. The province of Quebec has not guaranteed any of the Canadian Northern debentures, as stated the other day by the hon. prime minister of the province of Quebec, Mr. Gouin:

The province of Quebec has not guaranteed the debentures of any railway company in this country (acclamations), whilst in the other province, they were being endorsed for 20, 30 and even 50 million dollars. And now that these railways are built, some of them being in bankruptcy or on the verge of insolvency, the Government, who have no longer the confidence of the country, are going to get us into debt for 700 million dollars of which the province of Quebec will have to pay the largest portion. It is not 25 millions they are saddling us with, it is a sum of over 100 million dollars. I know what I am talking about.

The question is quite settled if we consider in what way the hon. Minister of Finance has floated his last one hundred million loan in Washington. Is it not a fact, Mr. Chairman, that under the administration of the hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) Canada had access to the European markets and could find the required capital at a rate of interest of 2½ per cent? You may probably tell me that the economic conditions are not the same. Quite true, I grant, but the difference between 2½ per cent and 8 per cent is also very large. The country's credit must be at a very low ebb, if on a hundred million loan we can collect only \$96,250,000, and this representing 8 per cent if we add to the interest a commission of 1½ per cent.

Mr. Chairman, when I say that the Canadian Northern company is insolvent, I speak knowingly. I shall not refer to the company's big lines, but I will point out that this railway crosses, in two places, the county of Two Mountains which I have the honour to represent; it passes at St. Scho-