

way we shall avoid the devastation and destruction that go with first line trenches, and we shall accomplish all that we could accomplish were we to defend ourselves upon the shores of Canada. With this difference: our being compelled to defend ourselves upon the shores of Canada would mean our being defeated in Europe and if we were defeated in Europe there would be no use in attempting to defend ourselves in Canada from the aggressions of a power like a victorious Germany.

My right hon. friend has said, in his speech on the second reading of this Bill, that he has never feared and does not now fear an invasion of Canada. Well, I do not know how he can say that. I think the right hon. gentleman is mistaken in his belief. I recall an occasion not more than six months prior to the declaration of war when the right hon. gentleman, taunting Sir Robert Borden because of his Naval Emergency Bill to give three dreadnoughts to Great Britain, used these words:—

Emergency? Who speaks to-day of emergency?

Twelve months have passed since my right hon. friend the Prime Minister introduced his measure.

The Naval Bill.

Twelve months and more have passed since that time when he saw the German peril. He saw Germany almost ready to jump at the throat of Great Britain. He saw clouds on the horizon; he saw these clouds rent by lightning; he heard the murmurs and rumbling of distant thunder. But my right hon. friend to-day may live in peace. The atmosphere is pure, the sky is clear. . . . The German peril has disappeared, if indeed there ever was such a thing.

That was only six months before the war. My right hon. friend had a great deal more ground and reason for making that assertion than that the German peril had disappeared than he has for saying to-day that he sees no danger and has no fear of an invasion of Canada, and that since the beginning of the war he never had any such fear. I think I am quite safe in making that statement.

I will now come to the question of conscription. I have always maintained that the bogey of conscription in advance is much more unpopular policy than conscription actually put into force. We have to-day 400,000 men who have voluntarily conscripted themselves, and all that the present Bill asks is that 100,000 more, by intelligent selection, should join the 400,000 and go across the seas and help to do their bit to bring this war to a successful conclusion. That is all that the Bill means, the

careful selection of 100,000 more men, men who can be spared, men who are not required in those avocations and occupations which are essential to the winning of the war. I would like to place upon record a few quotations from some of the British statesmen who have spoken upon this question. First of all I would like to give to the House the words of the Right Hon. Mr. Balfour, because we have had the pleasure of hearing him in this House, and I know when he spoke he made a most favourable impression upon all the members. Mr. Balfour, speaking upon the occasion of the introduction of a Conscription Bill in the British House of Commons in January, 1916; referring to those who were opposed to the principle of conscription, said:

Let them remember they are living in a world of fact and reality; that we are face to face with great perils, and that great sacrifices are demanded of us. Let them not go forward, and in obedience to what I cannot help regarding as merely speculative difficulties deny to the Government what the Government think is absolutely necessary for the conduct of the war, and without which the Government cannot possibly carry on that war with any hope of success. These are considerations which I most earnestly press upon their minds. This is not a debating society dealing with abstract resolutions. This is not even a great legislative assembly, legislating for all time. All you are asked to do is to help the Government to give adequate support to the forces of the Crown during a period which cannot, measured by the life of nations, be long, the period of this war, which may be but a few months and may be more, but which cannot be long even compared with the life of Parliament. Surely for the moment you can abandon these abstractions. Deal with the situation as you find it, acting on the advice of those who, whatever their shortcomings, whatever their failings may have been, at all events have greater knowledge from their very position, of the facts of the case, and of the necessities that have to be met than any private, unofficial member of this House can possibly have.

Then Mr. Asquith, speaking on the same occasion, said:

Will any general sympathy be felt for men, for the most part still young—all of them under forty-one—who, unable to bring themselves within any one of these exemptions after full opportunity of presenting their case, are required to do what every one recognizes to be their duty as a matter of moral and national obligation in the time of greatest stress in all our history.

And then Mr. Bonar Law used these words:

When this war broke out I felt as strongly as those who had taken the most active part in what is called the National Service movement, that our method of raising recruits by the voluntary system was not a good method for such a war as this. I thought it was not