

what has been said in France and what has been printed in France, Canada will not need to contribute 500,000 men. And, besides, that balance of a total amount of 500,000 men which they ask us, what does that represent in the present conflict where we are fighting together, or against one another, some twenty millions of men; and if that total of 100,000 should have no influence upon the result, we would be forced to admit that this balance of the 500,000 men which, before two months, six months or a year are over, may perhaps be raised to two or three hundred thousand men, will be useless; that we are needlessly depriving Canada of these men.

There are, at present, so we are told, more than 100,000 of our men in England. For more than a year, these men have been over there; that is to say that, for over a year, the country has been deprived of their help, agriculture has been deprived of the aid of a great part of these 100,000 men, trade has likewise been deprived of the help of these 100,000 men, and, yet what can they have done for the Allies' cause? What good have they been to the Allies, since they have not yet been at the front? And those other 100,000 men they are asking us, when will they reach Europe? Before 100,000 men can be landed in Europe, it will take at least one year, and that also means that for one year our country will be deprived of the labour of these 100,000 men, and that means moreover that the Allies will not have the aid of these 100,000 men before another year. That would be, you must admit it, unfortunate, both for the farmers and for the manufacturers of our country. In short, we should not deprive farming of its necessary hands, nor our mills and factories of the labour essential to their activities. I might say the same thing as to our commercial firms and here, perhaps, it might not be out of order to inquire as to what would become of our important firms such as, for instance, the Ames, Holden & McCreedy Company, of Montreal; it is safe to say, as for the latter, in particular, they would no longer be able to realize, within a year, about 120 per cent, net profits.

This compulsory Military Service Act is put before the country and then they give, as a reason, that the province of Quebec has not done her duty. We should then infer that this conscription Act would have the province of Quebec as its object, and that, to quite an extent. Can these gentlemen yet wonder why the province of Quebec has not contributed just as many men as they

[Mr. Bourassa.]

would like to see on the fields of battle? Ever since the war began, or rather, as I should have said, ever since 1911, there has been lacking in the province of Quebec an essential element, I might even say an indispensable element for the success of recruiting; that element was the trust that this province should have had in her rulers. Deceived in 1911, deceived ever since, deceived by all and more especially by the Government leaders, Quebec has come down to the point of asking herself in whom she may trust. The Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) has declared before this House and before the country that there would be no question of conscription in Canada; during the session of 1916 he again asserted it explicitly. He may probably answer us that events have changed, that since 1916 circumstances have become so serious and the future so gloomy that he has been compelled to modify his opinion. But, Mr. Speaker, in the course of January last, could not the Government then realize the situation. Through the seconder of the Address in reply to the Governor General's speech (Mr. Descarries) did not the Government inform us that there would never be any conscription in this country, and after this declaration has any member of the Cabinet stated that the hon. member for Jacques Cartier had unwisely spoken or that he had not expressed the whole truth?

I would ask those hon. members who, ever since the war started have never ceased to abuse us, if they would have acted any other way than the province of Quebec has seen fit to do. No, Mr. Speaker, for some time there has passed over the province of Quebec a storm of abuse of every description; a storm of hysterical abuse and I do beg you to believe, Mr. Speaker, that I use the term "hysterical" to be decent and in order to not apply the true name to the sickness now affecting the men who attack us. That sickness, if I can judge of it by the way some of the members of the right are behaving, has become a chronic one. When some of those gentlemen speak of the province of Quebec and of the French Canadians, you can see hatred depicted upon their faces, and their eyes sparkle with joy at every abusive word uttered against us; and when I hear them vomit this abuse, I always imagine I hear the sounds uttered by a Hun pirate who, after having sunk the ship, cries and yells out to his gunners the order to sink the life boats also. They pretend that the province of Quebec, in particular, and Canada, generally, have not