

in the very least, impaired, for we have been told by members of the Government that production is almost as essential to-day to the winning of the war as some other forms of military service. I would make a suggestion to the Solicitor General. We have just had from the Minister of Finance (Sir Thomas White) a declaration of the policy of the Government with reference to the conscription of wealth. The Government has taken exception, very reasonably, to the broad term "conscription of wealth" being used to such an extent and so irresponsibly as to upset certain classes of our people in the Dominion by making them believe that their own savings would be conscripted. The statement that the minister has made will allay public anxiety along that line to a large extent and will ease the minds of a great many people. I am not asking the Solicitor General to make any specific declaration that agriculture should not be conscripted—I do not want him to do that—but, could not he give some assurance that when the rules and regulations are drawn up for the purpose of carrying out this Bill agriculture will be looked upon from the point of view solely of the productive needs of the country and treated accordingly.

Mr. MEIGHEN: My hon. friend will see that, inasmuch as these regulations are promulgated first by the central appeal judge, it would be improper on my part to even indicate what regulations that authority should recommend. At the same time, I can say that there seems no reason to doubt that the requirements of this Bill can be filled without taking such men from agricultural pursuits as would reduce agricultural production.

Mr. PARDEE: Say that again.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Without taking such men from agriculture as will reduce our agricultural production.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: I suppose that statement would apply to other productive pursuits such as fishing, lumbering and mining?

Mr. MEIGHEN: I see no reason at all for believing that the production of this country cannot be fully maintained and the requirements of this Bill filled as well.

Mr. PROULX: The central appeal judge will be pretty well governed in making the regulations by what is said in Parliament. We pass the law; we are the representatives of the people and we should say who should be exempted from this conscription. If Par-

[Mr. Pardee.]

liament affirms the principle that agriculture is such an important industry and so necessary in the carrying on of this war that those engaged in agricultural pursuits should be as lightly touched as possible by conscription, the central appeal judge will be pretty well governed in framing the regulations by the opinion of this Parliament. I approve of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Chambly and Vercheres (Mr. Rainville). In certain subsections and clauses different occupations are mentioned such as financial and other occupations whilst the agricultural occupation is mentioned only in the preamble of the Bill. Agricultural occupation is as useful, if not more useful than, financial or professional occupation.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Where are the other occupations mentioned?

Mr. PROULX: In subsection (d) of section 11:

(d) That serious hardship would ensue, if the man were placed on active service, owing to his exceptional financial or business obligations or domestic position;

Mr. MEIGHEN: That class mentioned in subsection (d) does not relate to occupation, but to obligations. It may be that the peculiar obligations under which a man is, domestic, financial or business, are such that he should be accorded special treatment in the interests of the community.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: As to the individual man.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is, it would be a serious hardship and would likely inflict hardship on others if that particular individual, owing not to his occupation but to his obligations were taken.

Mr. PROULX: Farmers have large obligations. Many of them have large mortgages on their farms.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Then they would come under that clause.

Mr. TURRIFF: It seems to me that the wording of the clause is very fair as it is. I represent almost wholly farmers, and I should not like to see them especially singled out and exempted. I think any tribunal would surely see that production of food of any kind would be of such great importance to the Allies that a man who, by staying on the farm this year could produce a couple of hundred bushels of wheat for export next year, is worth more to the British army, to Canada and the Allies generally, on the farm than