

them on the matter of a referendum, I fully recognize that they have for years fought a fight that has been as full of patriotism and as full of Canadianism as has been fought by any group of men in this House. All I can say to them is that, although I disagree from them, I believe their convictions to be as honest and as earnest as my own, and honest and earnest convictions are always worthy of respect.

Of the referendum let me say just a word. It may seem a paradox for me to say what I have to say, yet the world is to-day full of paradoxes. There is not much logic to-day. What is stood by to-day is knocked down to-morrow in the way of opinions. The true reason why I am not in favour of a referendum is that I believe that, in the present moment of unrest, it is not desirable. The Government made a promise that conscription would never come. It has thrown suddenly into the political and national ring the widest and biggest question that the people of Canada, or their representatives, have ever had to consider, without any preparatory education to bring the people's mind to a state of calm and sober judgment. Under these conditions I believe that the referendum would be defeated, and I fear, with that defeat, the door would be shut absolutely in the face of recruiting and in the face of all other kinds of conscription which ought to be made. You may tell me that the opinion of the people should rule; you may tell me I am going against the will of the people, I say in answer that along these lines and others, the people of the Dominion of Canada are to-day asking to be led, and not to do the leading. So it is that I must vote against the amendment proposed by my revered leader.

Sir, this is not a time for party recrimination. I have desired and endeavoured to keep absolutely away from the flavour of it. Yet it must be recognized that mistakes have been made. Let us be quite fair, let us be quite frank with ourselves. Mistakes have been made; there has been lack of recruiting leadership, there has been lack of organization; there has been lethargy; there have been blunders in administration, and I am sorry to say there has been the strongest sort of partisanship in this crisis. It appears to me that there has been an absolute failure to rise to the possibilities and the necessities of national and patriotic service. We have not done it, we have not got out of the rut. We have not literally raised ourselves by our own boot straps as we ought to have done.

[Mr. Pardee.]

What has been done cannot be undone; but the mistakes, the blunders, the lethargy, the failure to give leadership, which, more than anything else, have contributed to the situation which confronts us now, must be atoned for by the most vigorous, honest and consecrated effort on the part of Government and Parliament from this time on. The Canadian people must be assured that henceforth the members of the Government and of Parliament, the men who have assumed the tremendous responsibility of calling citizens to the colours by compulsion, will themselves consecrate all their energies, all their abilities, all their endeavours, to the cause for which they demand that their fellow-citizens shall fight.

I would say to the Government, earnestly and sincerely, that when to-day we are here voting for the conscription of men, we should also conscript other resources of the people of Canada. This Government and this Parliament will be accused, and rightly accused, if we bring not forth further conscription of wealth and of resources. It must not be said that we, sitting here calmly in our places in this chamber, are willing and content, by a mere yea or nay, to spill the blood of the youth of Canada, but that we are afraid to spill the rich man's money. I may be told that there has been part conscription of wealth to-day, by reason of the business tax, but I do not think the pocket of the rich man in this country has yet been touched.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. PARDEE: Go where you will, north, south, east and west, and you find every evidence of a surplus of wealth. The Government is absolutely bound, in duty and in fairness to the men who to-day in the trenches of France are protecting that wealth, to make those rich men give out of their abundance for the sustenance of the soldier. Whether the Conscription Bill will pass or not I cannot tell. I have concluded to ask this Government a thing that is dear to me, something I cannot disabuse my mind of, even though I vote for the principle of the Bill.

The Prime Minister has asked members of this side of the House for suggestions. May I meet that request by earnestly urging the national advisability of preceding the operation of the Bill by a last big and sincere appeal to the patriotism of young Canadian manhood to voluntarily come forward to back their brothers at the front. Under direct and real Government leadership in this respect—and with the conscien-