

portant question that I have ever had to consider has inspired me to say what I have said.

In conclusion, let me just say one word as to what has been called the constitutional lack of power of this Parliament to pass this Bill and the absence of a mandate on the part of its members. I wonder if hon. members remember what happened in January, 1916, and I wonder if their memory goes a little farther back to August, 1914. In August, 1914, nobody could question the mandate of this Parliament and nobody could speak of this Government as being moribund. I do not feel quite so shocked about that expression as the hon. member for Montcalm thought I ought to. The best of us, even my hon. friend from Montcalm himself, will come some day to be in a moribund condition and still he marvels that we do not rise in wrath at the very mention of it. I do not know what we are expected to do or to say when we are described as a moribund Government as we have been by the leader of the Opposition. Well, we have to stand that epithet. Could this Government be described as a moribund Government in 1914? Had this Parliament a mandate in 1914? What did this Parliament do in 1914? We had a three or four days' session. I think we all look back with pride and pleasure to those three or four days because in that three or four days' session we realized to the full the condition which the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Maclean) the other day recalled to us as having been described by an English poet in words put into the mouth of a Roman of old lamenting the disappearance of those days "when none were for a party and all were for the State." In those four or five days we realized that. I hope that we will still, notwithstanding the difference of opinion that exists between us as to this particular measure, be in that frame of mind. There could be no doubt about it at that time and what did this Parliament, then in the full enjoyment of its mandate, under the impulse of that common sentiment, realize? Was it wondering about the rights of the people, was it wondering whether it should have a referendum, was it anxious even about the rights of the people's representatives? Not a bit. This Parliament did at that time, and under the inspiration of the impulse that prevailed then, something that was absolutely unprecedented in the annals of Canadian Parliaments and, I am not quite sure whether one could not safely say, in the annals of any British Par-

liament. Parliament then handed over to this Government, that was not moribund then, absolutely its entire legislative powers in so far as matters pertaining to the war were concerned. Conditions were so critical that the people's representatives were willing to forego their control over legislation and to hand it over to the Government, a Government that had not been elected to deal with these matters in particular. Parliament then realized that what would be necessary would be prompt action and it thought it was worth while to sacrifice even the right of the people to make their own legislation through their own representatives in order to ensure that needed action would be taken at the proper moment and that there should be no delay. That is what Parliament did then, a live Parliament, a Parliament that had an unquestioned mandate. I am not going to claim now that the Government might do what it chose. I think it might have done what it believed to be right, but this Government, in carrying out its duty, has been truly conservative in the exercise of its powers. But, I have referred to their wide scope as indicating what this Parliament in the vigour of its life, when its mandate was undoubted and its motives of the highest, thought it proper to do on behalf of the people. It was absolutely like the action that the earliest democratic peoples realized, in very ancient times, to be the proper action in like conditions. We all know that when the State was in peril, when the enemy was at the gate, when civil commotion threatened, in the old Rome of the Republican days, the people, ever jealous of their rights, stood not upon them, and the Senate said to the consuls: Take care that nothing of evil befall the Commonwealth. *Caveant consules ne quid detriment Republica capiat,* and left to them the plenitude of power.

And in virtue of what Parliament did then, in the full vigour of its life and unquestioned mandate, I venture to say the Government might have proceeded upon the authority so conferred to enact the present measure. We have not sought to do so, nor would we dream of going that far. I refer to the legislation merely to show what this Parliament thought was the proper line of action in the day of its fullest vigour. In 1916 what did this Parliament do? Parliament voted that it was desirable that, though, under our written constitution our mandate expired in October last, the mandate of Parliament should be extended for another year, and to-day the