

clared in the United States was this famous committee named?

Mr. CROTHERS: I do not remember; very shortly after.

Mr. VERVILLE: I think it was before.

Mr. CROTHERS: No, I do not think it was before. For some time compulsory service was distasteful to the people of England, but they finally found that conscription was absolutely necessary in order that the ranks at the front should be filled. Every European nation participating in this war has adopted compulsory service. United States, that great democracy to the south of us, has adopted compulsory service. Away back in 1865, fifty years ago, at the time of the Civil War, they had compulsion. Abraham Lincoln made many drafts upon the people for military purposes during the course of that war. It was implied in August, 1914, that the time might come when compulsory service would be necessary in Canada. Let me repeat what the Prime Minister said at that time:

Let me say that while we are now upborne by the exaltation and enthusiasm which come in the first days of a national crisis, so great that it moves the hearts of all men, we must not forget that days may come when our patience and our fortitude will be tried to the utmost. In those days let us see to it that no heart grow faint and that no courage be found wanting.

These are the days that are upon us now. Are any hearts growing faint? The right hon. leader of the Opposition thinks that the hearts of the people are growing faint. He says that while they were all in favour of going into the war at its commencement in August, 1914, and of continuing it to the end, they have changed their minds; they want a referendum. The right hon. gentleman wants to ask a slacker in British Columbia or in Quebec whether he wants to be coerced into fighting. What sort of answer would he get from such persons? It is an insult to the people to suggest that they want to quit at this hour. Everybody hates a quitter; everybody admires perseverance; everybody admires the person, party or Government who will stand up for what is right in days of stress as well as in days of peace and plenty. The proposal that has been made would, if accepted, declare to the world that we are quitters. It would be an everlasting shame to the people of Canada if anything of that kind should occur.

Some picayune criticism has been made of the Government in connection with this war. Certainly mistakes have been made;

the man who makes no mistakes, makes nothing. On the whole, the people of Canada have done well in recruiting. We are proud of the work that most of the men have done; of some we are not so proud. We are proud of the work that all the women have done. We are proud of the young men who have gone to the front and have covered themselves with glory for the sake of humanity. But we are not living in the past. The question is not what has been done, but what shall we now do? The question is not whether our sires fought valiantly at Queenston Heights or Chateauguay—some people think we should live on that as long as possible—but whether the sons of those sires have inherited the heroism and the valour that enabled their fathers to do credit to themselves and to their country on the field of battle. If the spirits of our sires who fought at Queenston Heights and Chateauguay hover over us to-day; God grant that they do not look down upon any degenerate or recreant sons.

A very extraordinary position was taken by the member for Edmonton. I am bound to say that I was amazed at the position which he took while speaking in this debate. When the hon. member was making some objection to the details of this Bill—and he, an ex-minister of the Crown, knows perfectly well that at this stage it is only the principle of the Bill that should be discussed, and that the details may be altered in committee—the Prime Minister said to him:

I really did say, in introducing the Bill and again to-day, that we would be very glad to have suggestions which would improve the Bill. If my hon. friend is so strongly opposed to the provision which we have suggested, would he be good enough to give us the benefit of his suggestion as to what the provision should be?

The Prime Minister says to my hon. friend (Mr. Oliver), an ex-minister of the Crown, a man who has been in public life for many years: This Bill is not like the laws of the Medes and the Persians; it may be amended in detail when it reaches the committee stage; you object to some of the details; what do you suggest instead? This is the reply of that statesman from Edmonton:

Mr. Oliver: Really I do not appreciate that as being my function.

No; a great war is on; our boys at the front are dying by the thousands; hundreds of them are coming home as cripples, and yet the hon. member does not deem it any portion of his duty to make sugges-