

now before the House, I have only to say that we have a Franchise Act already and that we do not require any Franchise Bill at all. The measure which has been introduced is not at all an improvement in the Franchise Act which we have on the statute book. I think it is a distinctly retrograde step to interfere with the Franchise Act which we already have. However, that is only by the way. As to the motion of my hon. friend from Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) you, Sir, have taken the objection that the matter of munitions has been very often discussed during the present sessions. It has, but it has never been discussed from the point of view that is now raised by my hon. friend from Pictou. We have discussed this matter from different points of view but it now takes on an entirely new aspect from the fact that we are threatened with a suspension or cessation of the manufacture of munitions. That is the point to which my hon. friend wants to call the attention of the House. If it be true that the manufacture of munitions is about to cease in Canada, may I not suggest to you, Sir, that there is no subject of more importance to-day not only to the Imperial forces and the Imperial cause but to the Canadian people themselves than the matter which has been brought to the attention of the House by my hon. friend. Everybody knows that the manufacture of munitions is about the only industry living and prospering at the present time in Canada and if it ceases altogether economic questions of the greatest importance must be taken into consideration. It is for these reasons that I say that the motion of my hon. friend is perfectly in order. It directs the attention of the House to the question of munitions from a point of view from which it has not been considered before and it is highly desirable that we should have the consensus of the House on this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Objection is taken by the right hon. the leader of the House (Sir George Foster) to the motion presented by the hon. member for Pictou. It is my duty to ask the House to decide whether it will accept the objection taken by the right hon. the leader of the House or whether it will permit the hon. member to proceed. Objection having been taken, I will ask those hon. members who support the motion to rise in their places.

And more than twenty members having risen in their places:

Mr. SPEAKER: I call upon the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) to proceed with the motion.

Mr. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I have no apology to make to the House or the country for directing the attention of Parliament this afternoon to this important matter. We have on various occasions in the past, when questions of this kind have come up for discussion, been told that they were not proper matters for the consideration of Parliament. I do not know upon what ground that suggestion is made because any one who follows the deliberations of the Imperial Parliament has seen that the methods of producing munitions and the arrangements for their supply are subjects often discussed in that Parliament. No subject has engaged the attention of the British Parliament to the same extent as this question of the organization of the nation for the purpose of obtaining its munition supply. In every nation which has engaged in this war, in every overseas dominion that has played its part at the front and has had anything to do with furnishing supplies, either food supplies or munitions for the purpose of enabling the fight to be effectively carried on, the problems of this service have always been regarded as of the first importance. In view of the fact, Sir, that we have been told that this country should be congratulated upon the wonderful part it has played in providing munitions of war in the past, when we are reaching a stage when the industry and the production are being absolutely menaced, if not actually and completely effaced, I am surprised that the leader of the House should venture to say that this is not a matter of prime importance.

My right hon. friend the leader of the House seems to be one of those gentlemen who, after they have expressed themselves with regard to the war, with that broad Tory spirit which has always been characteristic of him, think that, no matter what the views of other hon. gentlemen may be as to what Canada should do in the war, they have no right to open their mouths. I have as much right to express my opinion as to what Canada should do in this war as has the right hon. gentleman, or any other hon. gentleman.

What are the facts in regard to this matter? Shortly after the war began this country was supposed to be in no position to produce munitions. There arose this great industry at a time of the great depression in Canada in the fall of 1914, which has given employment to thousands of men and women throughout the country. As the result of that industry, we have been able to send to Great Britain thousands of shells