

Government to feel that, although restrictions were coming along, as long as they obeyed the law of the land their vested rights would be protected, and honourable gentlemen will remember that for several years prior to the outbreak of the war the Ontario License Commission had insisted on—and very properly so—a very high standard of hotel being kept by those who held licenses, with the result that many of these people were forced to spend whatever profits they might have made, and even go into debt, in order to comply with the requirements of the law and the orders of the License Commission. Therefore, I say, that had I had the opportunity in 1916 to have voiced what I have just said, I would have done so. I do not want the House to misunderstand me or to think that it is my intention that the people of the liquor trade should be handed out large sums of money, but I do think that, in ordinary decency, when you confiscate or expropriate or whatever you like to call it, at least when you take people's property away from them and their means of existence, which was a legal business, surely this great Province of Ontario is big enough and British enough to pay for it. I have in mind the fact that for years the liquor traffic of the Province had under government control become a monopoly, which was one of the reasons, I think, for the extraordinary antagonism to the Liquor License Act as it stood.

I desire in passing to refer to the remark made by my honourable friend, the member for Northumberland, this afternoon. I wish I had had the common sense to have voted with the Opposition on the policy of abolishing the bar as outlined by the recent leader of the Opposition, Mr. Rowell. To my mind, it was the sound and proper thing to do. The people of the Province have absolutely no use for the open bar, but I still think the people of the Province have some idea of their rights as British subjects and citizens of this country. Some honourable gentleman speaking here this afternoon said that the great reason for the passing of the Ontario Temperance Act legislation, now on the statute book, was the monster petition presented to the Prime Minister and the Government in the year 1916. I frankly repeat to-night what I said in caucus in 1916, that it rankled deeply in my heart that, when the Prime Minister received that great delegation, he and his Government thought it represented the whole of the people of Ontario, so much so that, if I remember rightly, someone in the delegation actually cross-examined the various ministers as to their individual attitudes on the particular subject. I frankly say to this House, I am only here for a short time and when I have finished my speech to-night I have to return to duty in Ottawa, and the fact that my seat may be vacant for the greater part of the session does not mean that I have run away from what I shall have said to-night. It merely means that I am still on duty and have to return, having obtained sufficient leave to come down here and, on the first opportunity I have had, state my mind on this subject as a public man and as a citizen of Ontario. The subject matter of the speech which I shall make is one on which I have thought a great deal and on which I still think I am right.

My portion in this war has been very small, but I have had the privilege of serving some six months at the front, and on my leave to Canada, in 1917, I was retained here on duty, but during the period I spent in France amid the horrors of war and human suffering and misery and war's levelling effects, I felt that if I survived and returned I could never again view affairs through the same coloured glasses as I did in 1914—before the war. I feel, Sir, that most of us are changed—that our mental attitudes are quite different from the mental attitudes we held prior to taking whatever small part each one of us has in that great struggle. Someone has said to-day, in speaking of the liquor traffic, and of the fact that amendments to the O.T.A. are mentioned in the Speech from the Throne that they would like to have a notion of what the Government's intentions are in that matter. I too, Sir, should like to know, but like many hundreds of thousands of people throughout the Province, I, in company with them, must await the time until the Government, in its wisdom, or otherwise, decides to bring down whatever measure they think will meet the will of the people. As I have already stated, the great issue in the 1914 election was the abolition of the bar or otherwise. At that time we had in the Province, as leader of the Conservative party, a man of marvellous personality and tried faith, a man whose vision was clear and who had in the greatest degree a fund of common horse