

tion, just to prevent the discussion of one of the most important measures submitted to this House. On this side, Mr. Speaker,—I mean on the Liberal side—the leaders do not gag any one. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, true to that principle of freedom of action, has given all possible latitude to those of his partisans who think they should follow their mind and their conscience's dictates, as free men, and part from those who, conscientiously also, while relying upon the rights of the people whom we no longer represent here, believe they should differ from those who are opposed to submitting this most important question to the sovereign people of this country whom apparently it is the intention to gag.

When he submitted this conscription Bill for its first reading, the Prime Minister stated that we needed a greater number of men, because enlistment was ebbing; hence, the need for immediate conscription. Well, Mr. Speaker, if the Allies need more men, is it a necessity that Canada should contribute them, and that, in order to do so, selective conscription should be established in this country? I say: no. If the democratic countries, just as interested as the United States and Canada may be, do their duty as well as the latter has done heretofore, there is no need for conscription. When the United States, who are just entering this conflict, will have given the Allies their aid in the same proportion as Canada has done, they will necessarily have some six or eight million men up against the Huns; a sufficient number to settle them for good.

Under such circumstances, why should Canada have conscription when, with a good voluntary recruiting system, we might continue what we have been doing ever since war started, and thereby creating a feeling of admiration for Canada's generosity towards the Allies as well as towards the mother country.

For all the reasons I have just given, Mr. Speaker, I shall support by my vote the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition, and I shall oppose, also by my vote, the second reading of the Military Service Act of 1917, inasmuch as we do not any longer hold any mandate from the people who, alone, have the required authority during these most critical times for us, and who must be consulted. This consultation would restore peace in the country, put an end to the uneasiness now existing among the people of the Dominion and put a stop to that feeling of animosity which unfortunately, is growing from day to day

between the English and French speaking Canadians. Before taking my seat, I appeal to the Prime Minister to withdraw this measure which would certainly be a source of trouble in the country, should it be enforced.

Mr. J.B. BOURASSA (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, it is past two o'clock and the cock will soon be crowing, consequently, I will be very short. A few days ago, the hon. member for West Lambton (Mr. Pardee), when speaking about conscription and as to the referendum, stated that this world was full of paradoxes. In our present circumstances, this is particularly true, but I think it might also be true to say that everywhere, among nations as well as among individuals, there are many points of similarity. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, in 1914, we have seen a man rise up before the nations of Europe. He had not consulted his people. He had not consulted his allies, but alone, standing by himself, he said to Europe: Liberty is no more, independence does not exist, the treaties mere scraps of paper, I shall set up a throne to autocracy, which I will build upon agonizing democracy and upon it I shall dominate the world. Again indeed, Mr. Speaker, we have also seen in our country another man rise who had not consulted the people, and we heard him say to Canada: I alone represent liberty; I alone represent independence, I alone represent right in the country—the constitution scraps of paper; thus imitating the overseas Kaiser. We can therefore say that we also have our own Kaiser here, in Canada.

I have asked myself, Mr. Speaker, what right the Prime Minister had, in the name of Canada, and without consulting the electors of Canada to promise to give 500,000 men. I have studied, Mr. Speaker, I have considered the question on all its sides, and I have not been able to understand the why and the wherefore, except, Mr. Speaker, that it would have been a dream. I wondered if we had not been struck by the magic wand of a mischievous fairy in the service of the Government, if we had not been thrown back for ages and centuries to that distant era when there were no subjects, when there were only serfs and a master who could dispose of their wealth, of their blood and of their flesh, to suit his fancy.

Now, must we accept this situation such as offered us? Who is asking for 500,000 men? Is it England? If I did correctly understand what has been said of late, never did England ask the Prime Minister to contribute 500,000 men; if I well understood