

necessary for the Government to enact such patriotic legislation. That is all very well. But let us now come to these gentlemen's actions. When it became known that the Government intended increasing the burden imposed upon wealth, and tax business and industrial profits on a larger scale than was the case last year, immediately these same gentlemen organized a delegation to come to Ottawa and beg the Government's favour. When these gentlemen, who are all of them exempt from military service, discuss the expediency of imposing conscription upon the people and of compelling the poor and the labourer to enlist and defend to a certain extent, the very wealth of these privileged classes, their patriotism runs high. But, when it comes to put out money to pay the expenses and the small wages of those who by this legislation will be coerced into active service, it is readily seen that their patriotism is only measured by the closeness of their fobs.

A great number of reasons, Mr. Speaker, have already been given against the passing of this Bill. I will not repeat them. But it might be added, I believe, that this Act shall be absolutely nugatory and ineffective and that, besides, it is antinational.

I say that this Act will be nugatory. Canada has, until now, made a splendid effort which has commanded from every nation of the world a deep admiration and has brought to her most deserved and cordial congratulations.

Canada's intervention in this war was surely proper. Why? When the declaration of war came as a clap of thunder in the serene sky of Europe, England was taken by surprise. Her fleet was ready to meet any foe on the seas; but her army was not in a fit condition to fight against a serious foe on land. She had not enough soldiers to effectually fill the part she had to play in this war. She needed the aid of her colonies; and every one of them rose up, ready to give the required co-operation. What has been the result of that intervention? It was secured for her an expeditionary army that contributed to the first victories over the Germans in the foreign land of France. Thanks to the intervention of the Canadians, the Australians and the inhabitants of all other colonies, England had the time to organize her forces; she had the time to prepare for the fray; she had the time to impose compulsory military service.

Now, when she is able to line up for battle several million men, it seems to me that our effort should abate; that we must think of the preservation of equilibrium in

our economical conditions, and that we should not, without due consideration, spread misery and ruin throughout our territory.

Moreover, this compulsory military service law is useless, because England, who has adopted a similar one, has not applied it in all its strictness; it is applied with all possible discretion inspired by the most motherly feelings. A large number of people have been exempted from military service. Every one admits the fact, for it has been stated by an eminent personage in British politics that there are almost three million men in England, affected by this law, who have not yet been sent into active service. More than that, the compulsory military service law does not apply to Ireland. We are called disloyal because we object to compulsory military service in Canada. Are we not right, Mr. Speaker, after the splendid effort our country has made? If we are disloyal, I would ask what word we could use to qualify the action of Ireland who has quite a number of representatives in the British Parliament.

They now propose to enlist some 50,000 or 100,000 men. Is not that an insignificant number when the intended effort of the United States is taken into consideration? It seems to me that before a mere colony like Canada is compelled to destroy all her industrial, agricultural and commercial organization, before she is reduced to the point of sowing misery in her own territory, the autonomous countries, who will reap all the immediate benefits at the end of the war, should at least make as large sacrifices as this colony has already made. It is averred that when the United States shall have raised an army as large as that of Canada, in proportion to their respective populations, German militarism will have been annihilated, and Germany and her allies utterly defeated.

All our efforts should tend toward a more absolute necessity than enlisting men: agricultural production. In so doing, we would give a better and a more practical aid to the Allies' cause than by sending over a contingent of some fifty to a hundred thousand men, a mere drop of water in the ocean—if we consider the innumerable quantity of soliders now fighting on European soil and the still greater number of those who are preparing to join in the conflict.

Conscription is, moreover, an anti-national measure, because it detracts from the merit and nobleness of Canada's effort. After enlisting more than 400,000 men in