

CANADA

The Debates of the Senate

OFFICIAL REPORT.

SPEECH

OF

HON. N. A. BELCOURT

SENATOR

ON

The Military Service Bill

In the Senate of Canada, Ottawa, Friday, August 3, 1917.

On motion of the Hon. Sir James Lougheed, that Bill 75, an Act respecting Military Service, be now read a second time, and the motion of Hon. Mr. Bostock in amendment thereto:

That the following words be added after the word "time":

"With the understanding that this Bill will not come into force until after the general election."

Hon. N. A. BELCOURT: Honourable gentlemen, a year ago almost to the day, fifty or sixty delegates of the Empire Parliamentary Association, coming from the House of Lords, the British House of Commons and the Parliaments of all the self-governing British dominions, including, among others, three of our colleagues in this House, the honourable senator from Stadacona (Hon. Mr. Landry), the honourable the junior member for Halifax (Hon. Mr. Dennis), the honourable gentleman from Moose Jaw (Hon. Mr. Ross), and myself, were officially received by the President of the Republic of France, at the Elysée Palace. I had on that occasion the honour of being selected to reply to M. Poincaré and to acknowledge on behalf of the delegates the eloquent and kindly

words which he had addressed to us. Among other things I said this: "The countries from which we come are pacifist countries, and most of us, in fact all of us, are pacifists; but on the day when the German hordes brutally set foot, almost simultaneously, on the soil of Belgium and France, there was a cry of supreme indignation throughout the British Empire; there was one firm and irrevocable resolve—that Great Britain and the Dominions under her sovereignty owed it to themselves, to Belgium, and to France, to the cause of justice, honour, freedom and democracy, to take the largest possible part in repelling the colossal attack so elaborately and so long prepared by Germany." If I now recall the statement which I made on that solemn occasion, it is in order that there may be no misapprehension on the part of the honourable gentlemen who are now listening to me, or of those who may read my words, as to where I have stood and now stand regarding Canada's participation in this war. I said at the Elysée Palace simply what I had said on many previous occasions, and what I have since frequently repeated, in many parts of Ontario and Quebec. The first time that I had the oppor-

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