

habitation or village. Even the fruit trees have been cut down and the wells destroyed. The Hun has spared nothing. Thousands of its inhabitants, especially girls and young women, have been led away by the Germans into a captivity worse than death. Its churches have been destroyed and even its graveyards desecrated. Imagine such scenes in this country of Canada, along a battle line extending from Quebec to Toronto. Where is Canada's first line of defence against such horrors and barbarities? It is in the North Sea, where the Empire's Navy holds back Germany's power, and in the trenches where the Canadians with the other Allied armies are slowly but surely freeing the soil of France and of Belgium from the insulting tread of the invader. If that is not our first line of defence, where is it? Who then will say that the Canadian Expeditionary Force is not fighting for the defence of Canada? Who will affirm that it is performing a less distinctively national service than the force employed in garrison and outpost duty within our territory? And yet, no one for a moment can deny that the force we have called out for garrison and outpost duty in Canada is acting in the defence of Canada. Is the service that is being performed by the force overseas of a different character? I say not, in my judgment, and in this matter, I, and no one else, am responsible for the judgment to which I must come. Some one speaks of the distance. What security is there in mere distance, considering modern means of communication or attack, not only on the sea, but through the air and under the sea? If this war continues for two more years, who shall say that we may not see German aircraft in Canada? Let us not forget that German submarines crossed the Atlantic nearly a year ago.

In the debate of 1904, upon the Militia Act, as it is now constituted, some exception was taken to the change made at that time in the Act as originally passed by Sir George Etienne Cartier. It was agreed on both sides of the House that, whether the change was desirable or not so far as form was concerned, it made no change in substance. After very careful consideration I agreed to that. The Minister of Militia of the day, Sir Frederick Borden, the Minister of Justice of the day, Sir Charles Fitzpatrick, now Chief Justice of Canada, the Minister of Finance of the day, Hon. W. S. Fielding, all agreed that if there was a change in form, there was no change in meaning or in substance. At column 6374 of

[Sir Robert Borden.]

Hansard, of 1904, Sir Charles Fitzpatrick said in response to a suggestion that the Governor in Council ought not to have the power to send the militia to any part of the Empire for the defence of Canada

We have had that power for a long time.

Later on in the debate he said:

Here is the position that is taken now, that we give to the Governor in Council authority to employ the troops of Canada either within or without Canada for the defence of Canada. Then we make provision that Parliament should be summoned fifteen days after a declaration of war, and that the troops may be called out, so that Parliament shall decide then what use is to be made of the troops whether within or without Canada, and what we are to do with them.

Further on he said:

The Governor in Council may send the militia of Canada out of Canada at any time when deemed necessary for the defence of Canada. If, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, it should be necessary, because of a war going on in India, to send our militia out there for the defence of Canada, they may, in the exercise of their discretion, do it, because they are the sole judges of what is necessary to be done in defence of Canada. But we do not think it advisable that that power should be absolutely and unrestrictedly in the hands of the Governor in Council. We think it advisable that the period during which they may exercise that power should be restricted and that Parliament should be called together and be consulted at the earliest opportunity. Parliament must be summoned in fifteen days and then the whole matter will be in the hands of the people's representatives.

I could quote many other passages along the same line, but I will only allude to one of them. The then member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) said in the same debate:

I admit that an emergency might arise when the Government should have the power to call out the militia immediately.

I do not dispute that; but suppose an occasion should arise on which Canada would be called upon to organize its militia and send a large portion of it outside of Canada, when in the judgment of a large number of the people and Parliament of Canada it would be to the disadvantage of the country to have so large a number of troops sent out, Parliament should be the final judge of that question, and the Government should call Parliament to deal with the matter.

So it will be apparent to hon. members of the House that there was no question raised at all as to the power to send the militia outside of Canada for the defence of this country. It was conceded that the Government of the country must in the first instance be the absolute and uncontrolled judge of whether that necessity had arisen, and the only point raised was whether or not, in case that power were