

Every man who remains at home should be called upon to contribute something to aid his country in its hour of trial. I consider the farmers of this country are doing just as patriotic work in winning the war as the munition workers and in my judgment the Bill should specifically state that no man engaged in the production of food-stuffs shall be liable for military service. In my province too many of our producers have felt it their duty to go overseas, and to-day we are facing the very serious situation that our production this year is likely to be less than last year. This is a most alarming condition and every effort must be put forth on the part of every one to have this remedied, and I am firmly of the opinion that the great industry of agriculture should be exempt from the operations of this Bill.

Mr. J. E. MARCILE (Bagot) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, at this late hour of the night, I will not undertake to discuss the legal aspect of Bill No. 75, now before us; I am no lawyer, and as that phase of the Bill has been sufficiently debated, I shall not touch upon it; no more than on this Parliament's power to enact such legislation, as in my opinion, it has been sufficiently demonstrated that we have not the right, under the present conditions, to enact compulsory military service.

Mr. Speaker, although I have given my opinion, on the 10th of May last, upon recruiting and upon Canada's participation in the war, I believe it my duty not to let this conscription Bill, now before us, go by without making a few remarks, so that there may be no equivocation as to where I stand in the matter of compulsory service.

On August 4, 1914, England declared war against Germany, because the latter trampled under foot a solemn pledge, signed by herself, to respect the neutrality of Belgium. No honourable man there was but approved of the stand taken by the British Government.

Canada's Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) thought he should offer this country's support to the motherland, in the conflict then beginning. Parliament was convened and, on August 19, it was proposed that we should send over a contingent of 22,000 men. Every one thought this was generous and even more than generous. We approved, without a word of dissent, because we did believe that, under such circumstances, our duty was to help, within our means, to destroy Prussian militarism and to show England, and especially our friends

here—those of Ontario, in particular—that we were always ready to fight for the pledged troth and, above all, for national honour. Unhesitatingly, we voted the money asked for, although it was quite a large amount. Instead of twenty-two thousand, thirty-three thousand men enlisted and went to the front. Since that date, Sir, nearly three hundred thousand more have left. Any one who, at the outbreak of hostilities, would have dared to mention such figures would not have been taken seriously. Moreover, we have in this country over one hundred thousand volunteers awaiting orders to leave and join those who are gone. Notwithstanding that incredible contribution in men, the Government is not satisfied; they are endeavouring to impose compulsory military service, although publicly and officially they have asserted that compulsion would never be resorted to in Canada.

Can there be any surprise, Sir, if the people protest loudly, and want the Government to live up to that pledge, since it is exactly what our sons are fighting for overseas, as has been so eloquently said by the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. McCrea).

My two sons—the only two I have—were so incensed at the Kaiser's treachery that they took up arms. Must one suppose that this disposition on the part of the Kaiser is a contagious disease? If so, complete isolation should have been resorted to; no Canadians should have been allowed to cross the Atlantic, and thus be exposed to contamination.

As one of the reasons for this Bill, we are told that the Prime Minister received a message from the boys at the front and in the hospitals asking for assistance. When the right hon. gentleman made that statement in the House, I could hardly refrain from rising and giving vent to my outraged feelings. They calling for assistance at the front when there are in England three millions and a half young men who have not yet deemed it proper to enlist! They are calling for assistance at the front, and over one million and a half men in restaurants, bar rooms and such places have not the mettle to answer the call of those who are fighting for them! They are calling for assistance at the front, and we have in England 126,000 of our boys awaiting the word to start for the firing line! Have they not been told that their brothers were crying for help? These men, at least, would have