

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is very true, but I do not know what it has to do with the definition of the intent of this Act as stated by the hon. member for Kingston, and accepted by the hon. member for Edmonton, from which he argued that the effect would be to send the cripples to France and keep the strong men in Canada.

Mr. OLIVER: Just cut out the cripples, please. Even if it did send a few cripples to France it would be doing no more than has already been done in hundreds of cases, according to the Bruce report.

Mr. MEIGHEN: There may have been inaccurate medical examinations, even in the city of Edmonton. The hon. member argues that the New Zealand Act is entirely different. He says that their Act is quite fair.

Mr. OLIVER: I did not say that it was a fair Act. I said that the conditions in New Zealand were not on a parity with conditions in Canada, because we have no evidence that New Zealand was in league with the manufacturing interests to discourage voluntary recruiting.

Mr. MEIGHEN: He stated that the New Zealand Act laid down principles for exemption that were quite fair. What are the principles set out in the New Zealand Act for exemption?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Before giving the exemptions would the Solicitor General explain the principle of their Act? I am not acquainted with it, and I do not think many hon. members are, and it might be well to have the explanation on Hansard.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The New Zealand Act was passed on the 1st of August, 1916. It was not taken as an initial step in enlistment in that country, but after a long period of voluntary recruiting, just as in Canada. There is no division in their Act by sections; it proceeds on the very same principles as this Bill. It does not say to one province in New Zealand, as the hon. member for Edmonton would do: You have not sent as many men as another province; consequently, you must raise men until your proper quota is reached. The principle of the New Zealand Act is the principle of this Act. It says to the slacker in one province as to the slacker in another province: Your place is in the fighting line, and to the fighting line you must go. The principle of this Act recognizes that there are those who ought to be in France in every province

[Mr. Oliver.]

in Canada, no matter how many have already gone from that province; that is absolutely true. I appeal to the hon. member for Edmonton and other hon. members from his province whether they have not said that in their own constituencies there are men who obviously ought to be in France. Would the hon. member for Edmonton put it into the mouth of those men to say: We are slackers, it is true, and our proper place is across the Atlantic fighting for this country, but because our neighbours who should have stayed at home and worked in Canada have gone to the front, therefore, we are exempt. That is the principle the hon. member wants embodied in this Bill. We say to the man who is a slacker—perhaps that is too strong a term to use of all, because many a man may have to go who may not necessarily be a slacker—but to the man who approaches the slacker in any degree we say: No matter whether you are in the province of Manitoba, or Nova Scotia or British Columbia or Quebec, you shall be assigned to the place where your services will be most valuable to this country; you shall go to France. We do not allow a man to escape his just duty to his country merely by the assertion: I am a citizen of Edmonton, or a constituent in the province of Alberta. That is the difference between our Act and the Act that would be framed by the hon. member for Edmonton.

The New Zealand is a much longer Act than ours, but I see no difference between the two in principle. It is over six weeks since I read their Act for such information as it could give me in the preparation of our own, and I can recall nothing in it that differs at all from the principle of our Act.

Mr. PUGSLEY: When Sir Joseph Ward was here he told me that the New Zealand Act provided for a certain quota from each of the 22 districts into which New Zealand had been divided. He said there was rivalry between the different districts to make up their quota, and that the voluntary system was proceeding very satisfactorily even though they had a conscriptive law. That is quite different from the way the Solicitor General puts it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Act is before me and I have made inquiries as to its contents, and my opinion is confirmed that it does not call for a fixed quota from any district; that was their plan under the voluntary system only. I do not know whether my hon. friend from St. John is in favour