

now at work are taken out of employment and used for military service.

That statement should give the Government pause in the course upon which they have embarked, and into which they are trying to rush Parliament and the country. Munitions must be produced and forwarded, or you imperil the lives of the men at the front. Food must be produced and forwarded or you sap the strength of the men at the front. Is it not better to have one man in the trenches well armed and well fed than two men poorly armed and half fed? That is the practical situation which presents itself to the mind of Sir Joseph Flavelle and of every other practical man in the country. I have no doubt that that was the situation that presented itself to the mind of the new food controller appointed in Great Britain, Lord Rhondda, who within the last forty-eight hours flashed across the ocean a message almost pathetic in its appeal to the United States and Canada to come to the assistance of Great Britain and the soldiers in the matter of the production of food.

Then there were one or two other observations of my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce to which I desire to refer. With fine old Tory contempt for the people, the minister scouted the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition. Let the verdict, he said, be passed by the people later on, or by history. In other words, when the Tory party is in power with a safe majority in both Houses why should we ever have an election? As I listened to my hon. friend, the glitter of the new Mace on the Table caught my eye, and recalling that we are near the end of the sixth year of this Parliament, I wondered whether my hon. friend had convinced himself and the other members of the Government that a Cromwell can not appear twice in history. If he has not reached that conclusion he might give the matter further attention in the light of this discussion.

My hon. friend who sits beside me (Mr. Oliver) has seconded the amendment proposed by my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition. When speaking in support of the amendment he declared himself to be in favour of conscription. He was questioned by the Solicitor General as to whether he would entrust the administration of a conscription law to the leader of the Opposition, who is opposed to conscription. The hon. member for Edmonton said that he would, and he had ample warrant for that reply. In fact, had the Solicitor General

[Mr. Murphy.]

reflected for a moment he never would have asked the question. How could the hon. member for Edmonton have replied otherwise than he did, when the Solicitor General knows that the Prime Minister asked the leader of the Opposition to join him in a coalition government to pass conscription and to assist him in the administration of it? Surely the Solicitor General will not condemn what his own leader thought was so eminently proper.

It is an axiom of general acceptance that a law which is not sustained by the moral sanction of the people cannot be enforced by constitutional means. This afternoon the Solicitor General said that above all it is the enforcement of the Bill that we must keep in mind. I quite agree with him. We have ample evidence that the Bill we are considering is not sustained by the moral sanction of the Canadian people. Let me cite some of the evidence. Speaking in Toronto in December last, the Director of National Service, the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. Bennett), had the courage to say to some interrupters in the audience he was addressing that, as the result of representations made to him in the western provinces, which he had just visited with the Prime Minister, he was convinced there would be civil war if an attempt were made to force conscription on the people of Canada. Mark you, Mr. Speaker, that opinion was formed by reason of conditions in Western Canada, not in Quebec. Since then organized labour has declared against conscription; so has the largest employer of organized labour in the Dominion, the Canadian Pacific Railway, through its president, Lord Shaughnessy. From the rural districts of the country, already depleted of man power, have come strong protests against conscription.

All these represent such a powerful body of public opinion against the measure that more should not be required to prove its unwisdom and untimeliness. But, there is more. The Bill itself specifically recognizes that the Mennonites and other sects are opposed to it and the people of these denominations are exempted from its operations. Without taking into account any other classes of the population than those I have mentioned, those alone make it plain that such a measure cannot be generally administered. The Solicitor General this afternoon said that it is the enforcement of the Bill above all that we must keep in mind and again I say, I quite agree with him. While this is the fact you would at times be led to think by the writings of certain journalists and the speeches of