

To  
the People  
of  
Canada

**T**HE Twelfth Parliament has been dissolved, and it becomes the duty of the people to choose a new House of Commons. Under the constitution, the mandate of those whom the constituencies returned in 1911 expired a year ago. But by agreement between the two parties in both Commons and the Senate, and with the clear sanction of public opinion, the duration of Parliament was for causes strange and momentous in our history, extended for one year.

The circumstances and conditions under which, and upon which the people must pronounce judgment are without precedent or parallel. Nearly three and a half years ago, in obedience to honorable alliances and out of regard for her very existence and the security of her dominions, Great Britain engaged in war with Germany. Canada, as became a partner nation in the British Commonwealth, entered the struggle by the decree of her Parliament.

#### NO HESITATION.

That decree was enacted without a single dissenting voice, and it gave true expression of the sentiment and determination of the people of this country. No government could have lived, and no government would have deserved to live, that did not give such instant effect to the popular will. Hesitation would have savored of cowardice. Delay would have humbled and defamed the nation. Failure to mobilize the manhood and resources of the Dominion for freedom and civilization would have exposed us to the scorn of our own time and the contempt of posterity. But neither the government nor the people hesitated. The resolution and patriotism of the Canadian people found prompt and adequate expression.

By voluntary enlistment an army of over four hundred thousand has been enrolled. Three hundred and fifty thousand Canadian soldiers have gone overseas for service and sacrifice in the conflicts in France and Flanders. Many thousands of them lie in graves hallowed by their blood, and glorified by their suffering. Pride in their valor and their achievements mitigates the sorrow which possesses so many of our homes. Through what they have done we have a new revelation of patriotism. The nation is clothed with new dignity. But how meanly we shall stand at the bar of history if through any

neglect or failure the cause for which they fell does not prevail! By the test which they met so steadily and bravely we shall be judged. If their living comrades in the trenches are not supported, shame and humiliation will be our portion. They will have paid a price far beyond our deserts. What they sowed in honor we shall reap in dishonor.

#### ON RICH AND POOR.

When it became apparent that the voluntary system was not providing adequate reinforcements for the army, it became necessary to consider the provisions of the Militia Act empowering the government to enforce compulsory military service upon all male citizens of Canada between the ages of 18 and 60 inclusive. The selection under that law is not to be made by ballot, that is by chance. Under present conditions the public interest can not be served by a chance selection, but it demands instead an intelligent selection based upon a wise and careful consideration of the country's needs, both in the fighting line and at home. Accordingly a new measure to authorize a selective draft of persons between the ages of 20 and 45 was prepared and submitted to Parliament. Much care was taken to insure that the measure would not be unfair or unjust in its provisions, that there would be no prejudicial interference with agriculture or industry, that there would be no preference for groups, classes, interests or sections. The Military Service Act is a democratic measure, calling the rich as well as the poor—indeed bearing more heavily upon the rich in that it is more difficult for a young man of means to claim exemption on the ground that his labor is needed at home for the support of his relatives.

It is eminently fair as between the provinces and as between those portions of our people who are of different racial origins, because it pays no attention whatsoever to provincial boundaries or racial groupings but calls upon all young Canadians of the same circumstances wherever they may live. It is the most effective method possible, for it impartially selects the men who should stay at home and work, with an eye single to their fitness for these two closely related services and so insures that each man is precisely where his blow or his labor tells best. In enforcing this act the government will proceed upon the principle that the ser-