

But Canada itself is attacked; not necessarily on our shores. Everybody admits that it is only a question of time before the avalanche will reach us.

I do not like the word "conscription" at all. I agree with all that has been said about the necessity for food, munitions, and all kinds of services, but we should have a compulsory selective service law under which the State is at liberty to call any and every man for the service he is best qualified to perform. That is our duty as citizens. I do not care where we live, what our forefathers were, what religion we profess, or what language we speak—we are all Canadians, and it seems to me that when our country declares war against an enemy we ought to give that fact proper consideration and come to only one conclusion: that it is the duty of every citizen to hold himself ready for any service that the State may call upon him to undertake.

I shall vote for the Bill. When it is passed the Government will have a free hand. I do not agree at all with the view that the necessity for conscription does not exist. There was never greater necessity in the world to get men ready for the struggle that is bound to come before this war is finished. You cannot prepare men for active service in a week or month; it cannot be done. We should not wait any longer. The war is right at our door-step now. If we give to the Government the powers called for by this measure, it will at least be in a position to act when it thinks the time is ripe. I repeat, I intend to vote for the Bill.

Hon. JOHN T. HAIG: Honourable senators, I want to make my position perfectly clear. I would not vote for this Bill at all if I thought an affirmative vote would be construed in Quebec or in any other province of Canada as an attempt by the majority to make the minority do something that in their conscience they think ought not to be done. I have been particularly impressed by three speeches from the other side of the House, one by the honourable member from Rougemont (Hon. Mr. Beaugregand), the other by the honourable member from DeSalaberry (Hon. Mr. Gouin), and the third by the member from St. Albert (Hon. Mr. Blais). They brought home to me the seriousness of the situation. I do not know how other sections of Canada feel, but I know the attitude of honourable members from the four Western Provinces. The people living by the sea, in the mountains or on the prairies have no desire to make our fellow-Canadians do something that they in their conscience think ought not to be done.

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Conscription has assumed a rather ugly meaning. I do not agree with the statement of the honourable member from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Lambert) that we were not fully aware of the meaning of our action in entering this war. When, in September, 1939, I for one stood up in this House and voted for a declaration of war against Germany, I knew what I was doing. Make no mistake about it. I was ordering my boy to the front. I did not vote because Anthony Eden or Lord Halifax said something. I voted because I knew in my own conscience that if Hitler won in Europe we should be the next victim on the Order Paper. Those of us who have boys in the forces, especially if they are in suicide squads, where they have one chance in a hundred of coming back, do not need anybody to tell us what conscription means. We know what it means. It means, not conscription of law, but conscription of duty. We do not want our boys to go into that fight and be killed any more than we want anybody else's boys to die for their country.

I did not like the last part, but I did the opening part of the speech of the honourable senator from Vancouver South (Hon. Mr. Farris), where he said that we stand in the shadow of one of the greatest moments in the world's history. We know that if Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito win this war it means the end of our civilization for 1,000, maybe 2,000 years.

I want my fellow-citizens from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, or any other province who happen to speak the French language—I wish I did—

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: —I want them to understand that by our vote we do not intend to say to them: "We are trying to make you do something you do not want to do". We are voting for this Bill because we believe under Divine Providence it is our duty to face the greatest crisis in the history of the world.

The motion was agreed to on the following division:

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The Honourable Senators

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