

St. John (Mr. Pugsley). The amendment moved by the hon. leader of the Opposition reads as follows:

"That this Bill be not now read a second time but that it be resolved, that the abridgment by this Parliament of the electoral franchise now enjoyed in any province of the Dominion by any class of His Majesty's subjects would be contrary to the peace, order and good government of Canada."

I say that I have voted in the country's interest, generally, and in that of my constituents in particular, when I registered my vote—in spite of the entreaties of the hon. Prime Minister and of those who so slavishly follow him—in favour of the amendment moved by the hon. member for St. John and which contained two points, to wit:

That the said Bill be not now read a second time but that it be resolved, that in the opinion of this House it is not desirable, as provided by the said Bill, to disfranchise large numbers of people of Canada who have taken the oath of allegiance, have been guaranteed the rights of citizenship in the name of His Majesty the King, and who have not failed to discharge all the obligations of citizenship;

And further that it be resolved that any measure granting the franchise only to a limited number of women, as proposed by the Bill, is contrary to the public interest, and fails to recognize the splendid patriotic work which has been performed by the women of Canada generally during the present war

I again contend that, although siding with the minority of this House, we are however voting with the majority of the people and that, in moving this amendment, the hon. member for St. John was only voicing the sentiments of the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill which is called the "The War-time Elections Act", should more properly be known as The Election-time Vote Making Act. Such a title would be justifiable, since from the wording of this Act the Government has the right to make votes by extending the electoral franchise to a certain class of the female population, believing that by adding to the electoral lists the names of 400,000 extra voters, it may still have in the next Parliament a majority just as truly and servilely at its command as the one it has to-day.

They think they can justify this Bill by saying that it is for the Empire's welfare that the mothers, daughters and sisters of the soldiers be granted the franchise. They also state, to justify that iniquity, that it is a case of justice to grant them such a right. It seems to me Mr. Speaker, that there is a far more practical way of doing justice to them.

In 1915, when the Government brought down a Bill giving the soldiers the right to

vote, we did not object to the passing of that Bill, but I wonder why the Government have seen fit to further extend that right, after the recent experience of British Columbia and the rather distressing consequences that have resulted from it.

If the Government want at any cost to do justice to the mothers, wives and daughters of our soldiers, there is, I repeat it, a far more practical way of doing so; it would be by assisting them in a pecuniary manner. As a matter of principle, I am opposed to extending the franchise to women; however, this is a debatable question and, on that point, my own opinion is that women in general and mothers have a nobler part to play than to meddle with our political life and serve the interests of certain politicians too often untrustworthy. It seems to me that a splendid way to aid the mothers, wives or daughters of our soldiers, would be to increase the pensions granted them in 1914. The conditions are no longer the same that existed at that time; indeed, the cost of living has increased from 50 to 60 per cent, I might even say 100 per cent, and yet the mother, whose only support has enlisted, draws to-day from the Government the same pension, which is \$20 for a private, \$25 for sergeant, \$30 for a lieutenant, \$40 for a captain, \$50 for a major and \$60 for a lieutenant-colonel. Well, Mr. Speaker, why not give the woman an increase in her pension proportionate to that in the cost of living? Is it just that a man who is exposing his life in the interest of the Empire and of civilization, should only leave his wife or his mother, whose sole support he is, the paltry sum of \$20 a month? If the Government means to do something for those mothers, let it start in by increasing that pension which to-day is a derisive one. Should it do this, I am sure those women would not ask anything else.

The Government imagines that the women, whose names shall be put on the electoral list, will vote for it; for my part, I am sure of the contrary and the coming elections will show you that the vast majority are against this Government.

To justify this Bill, the Government has seen fit to recall the sacrifices those women have accomplished, and that it was only fair that this privilege be granted them. If, Mr. Speaker, this Act is fair towards this class of women, is it not unfair for another class still more numerous? Women and young girls have sacrificed themselves since 1914, have ruined their health in the mills and in the munition shops; others have worked night and day to help our