

duce no munitions for the Allies, we could send another half million men to strengthen the man-power of the Allies. These are conditions which we must bear in mind when we seek to throw a wet blanket on the patriotism of the people of Canada, and more particularly on that of one nationality.

Like my revered leader, I am for the prosecution of the war. If in his vision of the future he had been listened to by the majority of the electors, Canada would perhaps be in a better position now than she is to assist the Allies, even with man-power. To-day, with all my desire to see every young man go who possibly can go to the assistance of our Canadian soldiers, to reinforce them, and to reinforce the armies of the Allies, we are in a position now where we cannot possibly do that which our patriotism inspired us to do at the outbreak of the war. In the beginning of the war it was only manhood that was required. There was food in every country at war. France was provided with food for the year to come, and England had provided for her necessities. They were in such a position that there was no immediate danger of food scarcity or lack of production. We have sent our men, or we might say that they have gone in spite of us, impelled by their patriotism. There was no want in the first period of the war. We thought, as the people of England thought, that the war would last six months or a year, and we did not make the necessary provision at once for food production. But the war has lasted for four years, and it threatens to last another year or two. God only knows if by that time we shall have succeeded in driving the Hun out of Belgium and France. Unfortunately, everything points to the conclusion that we have a long and arduous task before us.

The latest regulations to be issued summoning every young man from 20 to 22 years of age will, especially at this time of the year, prove a serious impediment to the production of food for the Allies. I am not worrying so much about Canada, although we shall suffer as a result of the want of help for the farmers. It will not be the Canadian people who will suffer the most, it will be the allied armies and the civilian population of the allied countries that will suffer if there is a shortage of food.

That position will affect, more or less, certain portions of the country. In Canada there is not only production of food from the farm, but there is also production of food from the sea. In the Maritime Prov-

[Mr. Turgeon.]

inces, as the Acting Minister of Finance knows, we produce food not only from the soil, but from the sea, and that sea food is just as much needed to-day, for the sustenance of our Canadian soldiers and of the British and French armies, as is the wheat and the barley which is grown in the West.

Let me describe the situation which will be created in my constituency by the fact that all the young men of from 20 to 22 years will be taken away by conscription in the course of a few days. We have in that county what is known as the Gloucester Fishing Fleet, composed of some two hundred and fifty-six vessels of an average of twenty or thirty tons each. This fleet is manned by from eleven to twelve hundred men from the county of Gloucester, and the tribunals sitting in the county have heretofore exempted every young man so engaged during the fishing season, in order to maintain that fleet complete, and so that the production of fish might go on unimpaired, and those exemptions have been sustained. The idea was to continue the obtaining by this fleet of from four hundred to five hundred thousand quintals of cod and other fish for the use of the Canadian and British soldiers, that being the quantity secured last year and the year previous. Very often the crews of those vessels in the fishing fleet consist of four or five men, two or three young men of a family with the father, and perhaps some of their neighbours. There are hundreds of these young men, who, after having been exempted in the past because their aid was necessary in the production of food, will be called upon in a day or two to join up. The greater part of the crews of the fishing fleet will then have to remain ashore, and the Allies will be deprived of an immense quantity of food from this part of the Maritime Provinces which would serve to sustain our Canadian soldiers for a month.

I waited upon the Minister of Militia (Major-General Mewburn) in connection with the matter, and I must say that I was received with great sympathy. However, I obtained no promise from him, and there is not in the statement made by him to the House to-day any indication that the conscripting of these young men will be delayed in order to facilitate food production during the coming season. The Minister of Militia has in his possession a petition from the fishermen and the people engaged in the fishing industry in Gloucester county, which I only received yesterday, urging the Government to exempt, for