

them. All I have to say is that I shall continue in the future as in the past, to try to perform my duty as a British subject and a Canadian to the best of my judgment and ability. It cannot be expected that in a free country like Canada we should all see alike upon these matters. No man's heart is deeper in the war than my own. But because I do not agree with other men upon the policy of conscription, gentlemen say my heart is not in the right place. That is a matter of judgment. Whether I am right or wrong to-day, my conduct and position is before the Canadian people, and I am quite willing to leave it there.

But, Sir, I did not rise at all for the purpose of defending myself. Those who have been in the House for the last six years, and those who have been here before that, know that on no occasion did I ever take notice of any personal attack made upon me. I rose to discuss the question now before the House, and in the few minutes I have at my command it is impossible to survey the whole situation, and I shall confine myself to the question now before the House. The indictment which we make against the policy of the Government, and against this Bill, is that it is a breach of faith. Our position, which I lay before the gentlemen on the other side of the House as well as upon this side is this: The exclusion which it is sought to make of men who for the last fifteen years we have recognized as fellow-countrymen is an absolute and unwarranted breach of faith. This accusation has been resented by members of the Government and by their followers, and by none more vigorously than the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. Bennett). It was not my privilege to hear the speech of the hon. member for Calgary the other day, but I read it with great care and attention. I thought it was a very high-class address, but it seemed to me to be based upon an absolutely fallacious foundation. He said very truly that citizenship and franchise are not convertible terms, that a man may be a citizen and yet not be an elector. To this no exception can be taken. All this had already been enunciated by the Secretary of State (Mr. Meighen) who in the course of the debate stated that no pledge had been given to any class of citizen for the franchise except, possibly, to the Mennonites and Doukhobors. Indeed that is perfectly true. The Doukhobors and Mennonites were especially given an exemption from military service, and all that it implies, and all

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this was done by Order in Council cited in this Bill, on the 13th August, 1873, by the Government of Sir John Macdonald, as far as the Mennonites are concerned, and on the 6th December, 1898, by the late government, as far as the Doukhobors were concerned. These two classes of His Majesty's subjects, the Mennonites and Doukhobors, are exempted from military service. They have enjoyed the privilege of exemption ever since they came into this country. Now they have to purchase their release from military service by forsaking their franchise. If they keep their franchise they lose everything that they have been given by these two Orders in Council. It is true that the same privileges are not given to the other aliens, who are enfranchised, but what does it matter to-day? Even if such a solemn declaration of exemption as has been given to the Mennonites and Doukhobors, were given to these aliens, they would not be any more advanced, because the solemn promise made to the Doukhobors and Mennonites is to-day treated as a scrap of paper—in fact, it is not worth the paper on which it was written; it is of the same value as the signature of the King of Prussia on the treaty which guaranteed the independence of Belgium. It was observed so long as it suited the purposes of the King of Prussia, now the Emperor of Germany, but when he found that treaty in his way, he simply set it aside, as we are doing with the solemn promises which we gave to the Doukhobors and Mennonites.

But, Sir, it is not on this ground that I rest the assertion that I have made that we are breaking faith with those we brought into this country when we pass this Bill. What I submit to the hon. member for Calgary is this: when we invited these men, and sent out agents to Germany and Austria to bring them to Canada, when we gave them naturalization, there was an implied pledge that never, under any circumstances would their origin be a reproach to them, that they would never be debarred from all privileges of British citizenship, and there would be no abridgement of any privileges given to them.

Does my hon. friend dispute that position? Does he think it is right that, having by naturalization given these people the privilege of citizenship, we should, by telling them that they can be citizens, but not electors, set aside one of those privileges? Why can they not be electors? It is admitted by the Prime Minister and by everybody who has spoken in this debate that those who have been naturalized since