

that has been needed or called for or could be used in any theatre of war or in any service? If there is dishonour in that, then the world is turned upside down. It is a matter of pride to us, not of dishonour, that we have succeeded in doing what we have done, and that the Canadian people and Canadian boys and women have done what they have done without our having had to resort to conscription for overseas service. The leader of the opposition spoke about our standing in the United States being affected by this. Such knowledge as I have of United States opinion shows that our standing is not so much affected by our not having conscription for overseas service as it is by the campaign of detraction carried on in Canada, and by the failure of our government to make the full story of the Canadian war effort plain in the United States. Canada's honour does not rest on this. Canada's honour is in safe hands. It is in the hands of the half a million men in our armed forces; it is in the hands of the boys who are flying nightly over Germany, of whom—I am glad to say—we hear increasingly good stories of grand heroism.

One further word on this question of the honour of Canada. I draw it to the attention of hon. members that if this bill were not to pass it would still leave Canada with respect to conscription for overseas service in the same position as Australia, and no one has any doubt about the honour of that country, our gallant sister commonwealth.

If conscription is asked for as a symbol of total effort; if it is being demanded because of the leader of the opposition's idea of national honour, I say those reasons are not enough. If, on the other hand, Canada fails by even a hairbreadth to discharge her full duty to the united nations, to humanity and to herself, she would be dishonoured unless she took every last means of throwing into the scales every resource she had, no matter what the cost.

The opposition to this comes largely from two sources, two extremes in Canadian opinion. There are those who want conscription, no matter what it costs, immediately; there are those who want conscription never, and there are even some who say that our participation in the war should be limited. These extreme views are the very best possible justification of the policy chosen by the government and now placed by it before this house.

Of equal importance with the questions raised directly in the bill are the questions which are raised in consequence of it—the question of national unity. In that connection I should like to read to the house a passage from a fine speech of the Minister of Finance

on February 4, as reported at page 313 of *Hansard*:

Unity is still possible in Canada if we take ourselves in hand. The other day when the Prime Minister was speaking, appealing for unity, I understand that an hon. member interjected, "What unity?" Well, let no one scoff at unity or despair of unity. We can maintain unity by the course we are taking. But we would shatter it into a thousand bits if we followed the course advocated by any single faction of extremists in the camps—not the camp—against us. The objective of all of us is a total war effort in the interest of the earliest possible termination of the war.

What he said then is even more true to-day; it has an even greater appeal to the members of this house and to the people of Canada, because the plebiscite showed—and there is no gainsaying the fact—a wide division in Canadian opinion. It is a challenge to Canadians, a challenge from which Canadians and this house are not going to flinch. We are not going to pass it by and we are not going to despair. This is the seventy-fifth anniversary of confederation, and we can meet its challenge if we remember the way in which the fathers of confederation met the even greater difficulties of unity which threatened them at that time. They refused to be daunted. We can take up the challenge. We can take it up in their spirit. But we will need coolness and frankness and a great deal more understanding in order to meet it.

I thought I should, as a Canadian who lives in the province of Quebec, try to make some contribution, however slight, to Canadian understanding on this point. I have lived in the province of Quebec since I was born. My children were born there, in the constituency I represent. My family has been there for four generations, and I have come to know and like its people and to love the province. Because of that, and because of the feeling I have for this country, I feel that I should try in sincerity and frankness to help to bridge this gap in our understanding. The plain fact is that English-speaking Canada has never appreciated what the question of conscription has meant in the minds of French-speaking Canadians, and I do not know that they ever will, without being members of the race. It is partly a question of race, and for that and for what that means I refer hon. members to a passage in "*Maria Chapdelaine*" which has been read before in this chamber. It is a question of history, of fighting for survival, of the economic difficulties to which the hon. member for Richelieu-Verchères referred yesterday. It is a particular attitude towards their own country, their only country; and it is due to the fact that conscription has been continuously linked in their minds with