

press or ignore all the rules of logic and throw aside all the teachings of experience and the dictates of reason. Another of these hon. members who demand the imposition of a conscription law, would be ready, in order to attain that end, to rend every article of the constitution. Among these extraordinary theories also, we find the boastful and childish pretension that we have allies, and that we are playing in the present conflict a part equal in importance to that of the autonomous nations, such as France, England and Russia. Lastly, another claim which is devoid of common sense, would make of the present war our war, Canada's war.

And add to that, Mr. Speaker, all the other absurdities which we have heard, which we have read and which are all included in the exaggerated and irrational vocable: Win the war.

People talk of the crushing of Germany, of the Kaiser's downfall, with the unconstrained language of schoolboys enjoying their holidays. In all those theories we find the precepts of the most appalling anarchy combined with the teachings of the most complete and most absolute autocracy.

But, meanwhile, what becomes of the true Canadian sentiment? It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it is forgotten. This perturbation in the Canadian mind would leave us quite unconcerned, if from the chaos of these incoherences had not sprung up the Military Service Bill. Offspring of excitement, prematurely ripened by the scorching breath of prejudices, this measure is apparently justified by the Government by two arguments, both absolutely worthless: First, our promise to those who have left, and secondly, the absolute necessity of filling the gaps and keeping up our effective forces.

Our promise? I have listened with great attention to the speeches which have been made since the opening of this debate, but I yet fail to find in any one of these speeches a satisfactory proof of such a promise. When the country decided to take part in the present war, it was understood that such participation would be absolutely voluntary, and that those who would enlist under Canada's colours, would do it freely and of their own volition, absolutely so.

The public men of the country, the right hon. Prime Minister himself, and after him the right hon. leader of the Opposition, have stated everywhere, not only in this House, but at all the public meetings that were held, that the enlistment was abso-

lutely voluntary, and that never should we resort to compulsion.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, the volunteers who have gone to fight overseas, have left, knowing that it was the Government's determination, supported by the Opposition, to always maintain volunteering and never to impose conscription. They were not put under any false impression; they went away fully aware of the Government's intentions, and no one can surely find in their voluntary enlisting, nor in the solicitations made to them, a promise to impose conscription.

But, is it said, we must keep up our effective forces. Where is the evidence that the Allies, and that England, in particular, need fifty or a hundred thousand men, who would have to be levied under such difficult circumstances as may arise from the enforcement of this compulsory military service? It has been established, beyond all doubt, by the Prime Minister himself, and by others who have followed his lead, that England had never asked Canada to impose compulsory military service and, Mr. Speaker, we understand the wisdom of England in not requesting from our Premier the imposition of such a law, because it is evident to-day that England herself has not thrown into the struggle all her manhood nor has she seen fit to employ all the resources she can dispose of. In support of my statement, Mr. Speaker, allow me to quote from the speech of the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) who has seconded the amendment moved by the right hon. leader of the Opposition. This quotation, Mr. Speaker, bears out my assertion that Great Britain has not put into this war all the forces she can dispose of; probably, because she has not yet found it necessary. The extract is from an English paper, and forms part of a communication from a resident in England:

"Tribunals all through the country continue to hand out exemptions to huntsmen, variety artists, store managers, clerks, luxury manufacturers, frankly declaring that their mission is 'to protect local industry.' One district alone granted 30,000 exemptions during the past fourteen weeks.

"Even the Government joined the Freedom League. Only a few departments are not still to a large extent manned by eligibles with influence. In this 34th month of the war it is still the custom to hand a list of names to a branch of a department with orders to find places for them. A regiment is permitted to retain at home its football players and runners and boxers.

"The great markets of London—Smithfield, Covent Garden, Billingsgate and the rest—have scarcely been touched, because their combing