

by doing that utmost, they shall have placed themselves in a position to equal the great effort that France has made, but which, alas, she can make no longer, or at all events with the same effect. Is it consonant with the honour of Canada to say, as we have heard it said here: Oh, it is not our 100,000 men who are going to make the difference. But our 100,000 men are, in proportion to our population and means, what ten times that number would be to the people of the United States. If the people of the United States say Oh, it is not our 1,000,000 men who are going to make the difference, and if Great Britain lets up and says: Oh, it is not the more men that we may gather who are going to make the difference—if we and the United States and Great Britain say that, all the difference in the world will result. Surely we have pride enough to say: Having put our hand to the plough, we will not look back at this critical moment. Surely we have regard enough for our young men who have gone forth so willingly and so readily to say to them: So far as it depends upon us at home, your task will not be made harder than it need be.

Do hon. gentlemen realize what reinforcements mean? Do they realize that when reinforcements are lacking, double or treble stress is put on the man at the front? You are exposing him to double or treble danger; you are sending him again and again into the trenches to meet death. In addition to that, when he has done his double or treble duty, he gets but half or one-third the time for rest he would get if his comrades at home were doing their duty. When it is for this purpose that reinforcements are needed, are we going to sit back and say: Oh, well, let the Americans do it; let the Englishmen do it; let the Frenchmen in the present exhausted condition of France do it; we have no interest in our boys more than we have in any other men who are fighting in this war. I did not intend to go into any development of the reasons why this thing ought to be done, because that has already been treated of very much more eloquently than I could hope to do it, but there are some things a man cannot touch without being carried away.

Now to proceed to the suggested referendum, which is the method proposed for meeting the emergency, for remedying the condition of which I have spoken. Mr. Speaker, no man is a greater stickler for the people's rights than, I venture to say, I am. There is to me, as a representative

[Mr. Doherty.]

of the people, only one thing more sacred than the people's rights, and that is the people's duty. To the individual man, his duty is or ought to be something much more sacred than his right. The public man ought to be more anxious about whether he is doing his duty as a public man than whether he is hewing just absolutely to the line what he has a right to do. I am anxious that the people's rights should be respected, but I am also anxious for the honour of my country that the people's duties should be done. It is all very well to talk of devotion to the people, and I suppose that there are occasions when that talk is useful for getting votes, but there comes a time—or all government is vain imagining—when it is the duty of the people's representatives and of those who have been entrusted with the government of the people, to see to it that the people do their duty. And, that is the position that confronts this Parliament to-night.

Let me eliminate for a moment the question which I shall deal with later on of whether there is any distinction between this Parliament and any other Parliament. Is it my right hon. friend's (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) conception of popular or democratic government that those whom the people elect and to whom they entrust the power of governing them, and with the power the duty of exercising it, shall never govern the people when the people do not want to do their duty. I am not saying that the people of Canada do not now want to do their duty, but the principle that underlies this referendum motion is that if the time ever comes when the people of Canada do not want to do their duty, those entrusted with the government shall throw up their hands and say: We will not govern, we will go out and say to the people—on the hypothesis that they do not want to do their duty—please will you be good enough to tell us whether we, your delegated authority to govern you, ought to make a law to compel you to do your duty.

When I studied mathematics long ago there was one form of argument described as the *reductio ad absurdum*. When you wanted to show that a proposition was absolutely indefensible you pointed out the absurdity of the consequences to which it would lead. It seems to me that the referendum proposal is intended to support an argument directed against democratic government to show its utter futility and utter uselessness by means of the *reductio*