

of us and see what the answer is, putting our hand on our heart and appealing to our conscience—has each one of us redeemed his pledge? The member for Rouville (Mr. Lemieux) made a promise of that sort, made it on his own behalf, made it on behalf of his constituents; has he redeemed the pledge? Have his constituents redeemed the pledge? Let us ask ourselves that question, and let us answer it. The question now is, and it is a very simple question, whether or not we are to declare to the world that, having put our shoulder to the wheel, we have determined to turn back; having promised the Allies, having promised especially our young men who went to the front to sacrifice their prospects in life and perhaps to make the supreme sacrifice of life itself, having promised them that, are we prepared to declare to the world that we are quitters? That is what it means. There is no way of getting these men to send to the front except through compulsory service. That I think is admitted by every one.

Mr. MARCIL: That is where we disagree.

Mr. CROTHERS: Oh, disagree! I wish my hon. friend from Bonaventure would back up his arguments by producing some men and not merely leaving it to argument.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Will my hon. friend allow me to ask a question? I do it because I am relying on information in newspaper reports. I have seen it stated that during the last month something over 7,000 men enlisted. Is that correct?

Mr. CROTHERS: I do not know I am sure, whether it is correct or not. Suppose it is—

Mr. PUGSLEY: Should not the minister know that? I was told the other day in St. John that the enlistments are as great upon the average as they have been since the war began. A good many are for the artillery. I would ask my hon. friend why recruiting for the artillery has been discontinued by order.

Mr. CROTHERS: Mr. Speaker, I shall not attempt to answer these military questions.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. CROTHERS: Is there anything to laugh about because one minister does not know everything that is going on in the other departments?

Mr. PUGSLEY: He ought to know before he makes these statements.

[Mr. Crothers.]

Mr. CROTHERS: I can explain.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Will my hon. friend pardon me—

Mr. CROTHERS: I do not think that I will.

Mr. PUGSLEY: The minister has made a statement that recruiting has absolutely stopped. The minister ought—

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister of Labour has the floor; unless with his consent he should not be interrupted.

Mr. CROTHERS: Let me give you an explanation as it has been given to me from several sources, of considerable recruiting during the last few weeks. I know two young men who came forward when Sir Robert Borden made the announcement of conscription and said: Well, we will have to go under the Military Service Act, and we would rather go now; we will go as volunteers; and the two went that day and volunteered. A great many have come in that way. Why, if they desire to come from Bonaventure, or Rouville, or Megantic, or anywhere else, we will receive them with open arms, and if they were to come as numerously from that province as they have from some of the other provinces, neither the Militia Act nor the Military Service Act would be necessary at all. It ill becomes these men, it seems to me, to ask these questions. They say it is not necessary to have the Military Service Act or to enforce the Militia Act. Give us your proof of your statements by bringing forward recruits, bringing them forward as you promised you would on the 18th of August, 1914, when you promised that your constituents would do a fair share in the work of carrying on this war. That you promised, and that promise you have not carried out; and if it had been carried out by all of us and by all of our constituents it would not be necessary to have either a Militia Act or a Compulsory Service Act at this present time. As I said a moment ago, the question is whether or not we are going to announce to the world that we are quitters, whether or not we are going to announce to the world that we are going to abandon the men who went to the front under a covenant that we made with them that we would stand behind them until the war was won. Is that what the member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcil) desires to announce to the world? That is what it means if you reject compulsory service. It is said now that we ought to have a referendum. A referendum! When the right hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Wil-