

a certain force at the front. I have not heard it suggested that the force that has gone to the front is greater than represents Canada's fair share in this common enterprise into which we have gone with Great Britain and the Allied Nations. This measure proposes what? To send an additional force, to add people to our force. This measure purposes providing reinforcements so that the force that is at the front may be maintained. It seems to me either we must provide those reinforcements, or we must withdraw from the war, because our force at the front is, day by day, being depleted. There are people who say that we never should have gone into the war, and people who say: Now we have exhausted our effort we should go no further; let our battalions disappear, and let Canada cease to be known as an active participant in this great struggle for the defence of Christian civilization upon this globe. Those men, in my opinion, are absolutely logical when they say: No conscription. I do not say they are right, because I do not agree with their premises. But the men who say that we ought to go on with this war, but that we ought not to take to-day, under the conditions of to-day, the step that this measure purposes taking, are, in my judgment—I speak with all respect—absolutely illogical. I say that for two reasons. In the first place, I do not know and I do not care whose is the fault or what are the causes that brought it about, but I do know that persistence in the voluntary system is not bringing us the men as fast as they are required. I have not heard that statement seriously controverted. The second reason comes to me from the arguments I have heard against conscription. As I have said I have listened and I have read attentively and carefully, looking for the reason that would justify my withdrawing from the position that I have taken, and I have not found it. But among the reasons that I have listened to, the one that struck me as having very considerable force, was the argument based upon the assertion that, under present conditions in Canada, we need and we can use every man for purposes of a nature to give more valuable and more effective support for the armies of the Allies than we can give by sending him to war. I have been impressed by that argument. If the facts upon which it is made to rest were established to me, I am not at this moment prepared to say that I might not think that was the reason that would relieve me of this duty that to-day weighs

[Mr. Doherty.]

so heavily upon my shoulders. But I say that out of that argument has come to me the conclusive reason why we should proceed, (if we are not going to drop out of this war and send no more men) to obtain our men by selective conscription. If the statements of fact upon which some hon. members advanced that argument, be absolutely sound, what will this measure do? It will establish their soundness. I wondered often as I listened to the discussion in this House, and I wondered more as I read discussions out of this House, to what extent this measure had been read and its principle grasped by the people of this country. In the face of what I have just stated, this measure is strenuously resisted by people who say that we must not send another man because we cannot spare another man. If hon. members have confidence in their affirmation, why do they so strongly oppose our finding out whether it is true or not? For my part I am quite satisfied that they are mistaken. I think, as has been said repeatedly in this House, we all of us have before our eyes to-day the evidence that they are mistaken.

Mr. MEDERIC MARTIN: Does the Minister of Justice mean by his statement that Lord Shaughnessy was mistaken when, on his coming here from England, he said that the only thing to do was to produce for the Allies?

Mr. DOHERTY: I have not suggested that we should not produce for the Allies, and I think if the hon. member will wait until I get through he will see there is no contradiction between what I am saying and Lord Shaughnessy's proposition, even as he states it, though I am very far from believing that he states it correctly. Lord Shaughnessy and a great many others—and I have no criticism to make—have insisted upon the importance of our producing to help the Allies. I am not aware that Lord Shaughnessy has ever said that that was the only thing we had to do. We have many duties in this matter; we are trying to deal with one of them now, and at the proper time and the proper place I trust we shall be able to overtake all our duties. But the way to get all those duties done is not to tie this House up indefinitely in resistance to the measure that is proposed to do one duty, and the one which seems to us to present the most imperious call upon us.

To me the second and the conclusive argument why we should proceed to get the men we want by this measure of selective conscription rather than by voluntary en-