

LAURIER OPPOSES SELECTIVE CONSCRIPTION AS THE CANADIANS

THE LIBERAL LEADER VOICES HIS STRONG OPPOSITION TO SELECTIVE CONSCRIPTION

Would Not Have Consented to Extension of Life of Parliament Had He Known Government Would Resort to Compulsion Claims He Wants People Consulted—Premier Tells of Available Men.

(Canadian Press.)
Ottawa, June 18.—On rising to move the second reading of the military service act Sir Robert Borden was received with loud government cheers.
"As I gave on moving the first reading of this bill," said the Prime Minister, "a full explanation of the measure it will not be necessary for me to detain the House at any great length. It is upon the motion which I am now presenting to the House that the bill is to be discussed according to the usage of parliament.
"In that respect I emphasize what I said when I presented the bill, that no new principle is invoked by the measure now presented. It is based upon precisely the same principle as that embodied in the bill introduced in 1888 by Sir George Etienne Cartier and confirmed when the militia act was re-enacted in 1904.

The chief change between this measure and the militia act is this, that under the militia act the selection of men for service in case of emergency is effected by the instrumentality of the ballot, or blind chance. We did not think under the circumstances confronting the country at the present time such a move could be tolerated for a moment.
"For that reason we brought before the House a measure embodying the principle of compulsory service which was first established in 1888 and which has remained in force ever since. But we have changed the method from blind chance to intelligent selection based upon a consideration of the needs of the country at the present time.
"We have endeavored to frame the bill in such a manner that the tribunals that will make that selection shall be beyond suspicion, and if in that regard or any other respect any suggestions can be made from either side of this House which would seem to surround this bill with better safeguards and at the same time not detract from its efficiency we shall be only too glad to consider them.

Number Available.
Proceeding Sir Robert quoted the figures recently prepared by Mr. Robert Coates as to the number of men available for military service. According to these figures there were in Canada 760,453 unmarried men between 20 and 45 and 823,096 married men between the same ages, making a total of 1,583,549. Between the ages of 20 and 24 there were 314,910 single men and 66,247 married men; between 25 and 29 there were 308,165 single men and 180,369 married men; between 30 and 34 there were 112,011 single men and 198,328 married men, giving a total of men, married and single, between 20 and 34 of 1,066,690. There were in Canada 636,746 single men between 20 and 34 and married men of the same age 429,844.
Of course, said Sir Robert, many of those men would not be fit for military service. Of those who had hitherto volunteered for active service 25 per cent. had been rejected on first examination and about 10 per cent. had been subsequently rejected.

Other Considerations.
"Then there are other considerations to be taken into account," continued the Prime Minister, "in connection with the exceptions in the act and the principle on which exemptions are provided for, which I have already explained.
"I will therefore, only say once more that I present this bill, which has been prepared with great care, with an earnest desire to do justice to all parties. I commend it to the

Sir Wilfrid maintained that the government in 1914 had not regarded the militia act as authority for raising troops for service outside of Canada. They had never pretended that they gave any such power. The Liberal leader backed up this statement by reading a message sent to the Imperial authorities on August 1st offering assistance, and referring to the doubt of the government's right to act under section 61 which declared that troops could only be placed on active service beyond Canada "for the defence hereof." The reading of the latter phrase brought a chorus of "hear, hear" from the Conservative members, which led Sir Wilfrid to ask why there was a doubt about it. The Liberal leader read other data, to show that the government at that time had not regarded

the militia act as the Prime Minister now regarded it.
A New Condition.
Leaving that phase of his argument upon the fact that the government in announcing conscription was taking a step that they had repeatedly decried would never be resorted to. Today an entirely new condition presented itself. It might be argued that the people had the right to change the laws but it should be the real voice of the people.
"To that I certainly have no objection," he said, "with that I completely agree. All I ask is that the people change the laws themselves and not this parliament. Let the people speak, and I have no objection, no complaint. Let the people speak and express their will, I ask no more."

Canada's Pledge.
Sir Wilfrid paid particular attention to the Prime Minister's statement in regard to his "pledge" of 600,000 men, and to his comment that though not so intended, he was now content to regard the announcement as a pledge. He reminded the debate on the address in 1916 he had asked the Prime Minister whether the men needed to make up the deficit of a million men would be raised by voluntary methods or by compulsion. Sir Robert on that occasion had referred to former assurances that the government did not propose conscription in Canada, adding, "I repeat that an announcement today with emphasis."
Following this, continued Sir Wilfrid, the Prime Minister as recently as last January had, in dealing with the response to the call for men, given the house to understand that men were coming forward in great numbers, even from Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, where recruiting was believed that the government would resort to compulsory service an extension of the life of parliament would never have been agreed to. The opposition had consented to an extension of the life of parliament on the assurance of the Prime Minister that the government did not propose conscription.

Home Defence Forces.
Touching briefly upon the short-lived scheme to raise a "home defence" force the Liberal leader frankly declared that had the opposition believed that the government would resort to compulsory service an extension of the life of parliament would never have been agreed to. The opposition had consented to an extension of the life of parliament on the assurance of the Prime Minister that the government did not propose conscription.

Opposition's Action.
Proceeding Sir Wilfrid said the opposition had since the war broke out assented to every measure proposed by the government for the prosecution of the war and had tried to work in harmony with the classes and races of the Dominion. "If today this harmony is broken," said Sir Wilfrid, "it is the fault of the other side of the House."
He declared that from the beginning of the war to May 18th the government had promised that they would not resort to compulsory service. "Now," he said, "I ask that we pause and see whether this new measure of conscription will be useful to the cause we all have in view."

Takes Issue.
Proceeding the Liberal leader took issue with the statement of the Prime Minister, made upon the introduction of the bill, that he was not deviating in any way with the law of the land. The law of the land, he declared, was emphatic, that no man in Canada should be subject to compulsory military service except by a vote of the House, and for the defence of Canada.
"To compel invasion the government could call upon all men between eighteen and sixty," the Prime Minister had stated that the government could have called upon the manhood of Canada without any new bill, but he took issue with that statement.
"I say," he said, "amid applause from a number of his supporters, 'that the government had no such power. The Prime Minister could not, under the act as it stands send anybody across the ocean to serve in the war.'"
"My honorable friend says the first line of defence for Canada is in France and Flanders. I claim there never was any danger of invasion on the part of Germany. Nobody can say that Canada for one instant during the last three years was in danger of invasion. If I took the stand I did, if I was in favor of Canadian participation in the war it was not because I feared invasion but because a victory for Germany would mean for Canada as for the rest of the world a black crown of German insolence and barbarism."

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Quebec Sentiment.
Sir Wilfrid then proceeded to deal with sentiment in the province of Quebec. He admitted frankly that the French-Canadian people had fallen far behind the English-speaking citizens of the Dominion in their response to the call for men. He dismissed the thought that the French-Canadians were lacking in courage with a reference to the "Canadian conduct of the war of that race who had gone to the front. There were two reasons which might be given for the disparity in enlistment. There was the fact that the French-Canadians had no longer any kinship with France. Sir Wilfrid doubted if there was a single French-Canadian who had relatives in France except a few recent arrivals. Whereas it was a question whether there was one family in English-speaking Canada which did not have relatives in the old land.

Ancient History.
The Liberal leader also delved into history to show that the martial spirit had never been encouraged in Quebec since 1760. Not until 1910, when the conscription bill was introduced into the house, did military service become an issue in Quebec. It was at that time that the doctrine of no participation in the war was proclaimed in Drummond-Arthabaska and it was that doctrine, said Sir Wilfrid, which won for the Conservative party the general election in 1911 when it was fought in Quebec by the alliance between the Nationalists and the Conservatives. The success of that propaganda was represented by a Conservative-Nationalist vote of 159,299 compared with a Liberal vote of 164,381.

Hughes Denies It.
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It had been said that the referendum could not be taken because the soldiers could not vote. This was nonsense. The soldiers were citizens and they must vote. There were difficulties, but it would be perfectly easy to take the soldiers' vote, and it must be taken.
"I repeat," concluded Sir Wilfrid, "that when the true verdict of the people of Canada is taken everybody must submit to the law, and everybody must be treated alike. If any other province in Canada, whether opposed to the law or not, will obey it."

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Paris, June 18.—"Intermittent cannonading occurred at various points on the front last night," says today's official statement. "Our reconnoitering parties penetrated the enemy lines near Leintrey and southwest of Senones, bringing back prisoners."

Two New Scout Troops.
Two Troops of Boy Scouts were formed last night at St. Luke's church by Deputy Commissioner Waring. Rev. Mr. Green will be Scout master of the troops which number forty boys in all. The troops will be in the Scouts parade Friday night.

Why Change Was Made.
As to contention that the government had not acted in good faith in introducing conscription after promising not to do so, Sir George said that if the war had not lasted longer than he believed, at the outset it would be the voluntary system would have carried us through to victory but three years had passed, and the war was still raging, the need for men was still great and Canada's duty had not been fulfilled although voluntary enlistment had failed to produce all the men required. Consequently there had to be a change. The question was not whether the government should have introduced conscription at the outset of the war. "The question is," said Sir George, "with thrilling intensity that carried the house into bursts of cheering and applause, 'that when our

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confederacy at the imperial war conference at the imperial war conference. In a speech in London moreover, General Smuts had urged that all the nations of the empire should not be formed in one mass, and that there should be unity in diversity. If the British empire was to live, said Sir Wilfrid, as he hoped it would, it would have to be the principle of unity in diversity and diversity in unity. If it lived on this principle the bickering between race and race would be forgotten.

Speaks for Quebec.
Sir Wilfrid said he proposed a referendum because the idea of the referendum had made progress in the country and moreover, if unity was to be preserved parliament could not do better than support the wishes of the laboring classes. "If we have a referendum," continued Sir Wilfrid, "I pledge my word that to that verdict every man will submit in the province from which I come and in the other provinces."
"In presenting this motion," he proceeded, "I do not intend to bind any man of those who sit by me and around me and with whom I share the honor of representing Liberalism in this House. This is a time when every man must decide for himself and act for himself. The questions involved in the measure are of too far-reaching importance to be decided by any vote save the voice of each man's individual conscience. I believe that when that voice has spoken it will be the right voice. It will bring back harmony and will be the test and the vindication of that system of democracy which we believe must be the social gospel of all the nations of the world."

Laurier's Amendment.
Sir Wilfrid, with Hon. Frank Oliver as second, then presented his amendment as follows:
"That further consideration of this bill be deferred until the principle thereof has been by means of a referendum submitted and approved by the electors of the province of Quebec."
It had been said that the referendum could not be taken because the soldiers could not vote. This was nonsense. The soldiers were citizens and they must vote. There were difficulties, but it would be perfectly easy to take the soldiers' vote, and it must be taken.
"I repeat," concluded Sir Wilfrid, "that when the true verdict of the people of Canada is taken everybody must submit to the law, and everybody must be treated alike. If any other province in Canada, whether opposed to the law or not, will obey it."

Recruits Lacking.
Sir Sam Hughes was inclined to think that the officers mentioned had been given an opportunity to recruit but had been unable to produce results. Wilfrid, however, was convinced that Capt. Papeau had not returned from the front. He went on to quote Lieut.-