

and that this Bill is intended to fill the gaps in those five divisions. It has been stated—and I have seen no contradiction—that there is on file in the Militia Department in Ottawa a report made by Imperial officers sent over here for the purpose stating that, having regard to Canada's population and to all the data that must be taken into account in estimating the numerical basis of an army for this country, Canada should confine her fighting forces to three divisions, so as to be able to meet all possible demands from wastage in the ranks, when on active service. That report, I understand, was made before the war. The events of the war have proved its correctness. What explanation has the Government to give for ignoring that report; and when they chose to do so, how can they expect us to approve this Bill as a cloak for their inattention to the most elementary detail of military organization?

This brings me to the consideration of another practical matter which I have not heard mentioned in this debate thus far. It is said that the men required are to fill the gaps in the ranks at the front. But how many are required? Who knows? Surely we ought to have answers to these questions before we are asked to proceed. Who can answer them? Frankly, I do not know. It would, however, seem to me that the man most likely to be able to answer would be the Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian forces. If that be correct, then what does he say as to the number of thousands of men required to fill the gaps in the Canadian ranks? Does he say that the number already enlisted are not sufficient to furnish these thousands? If he does not, should not that fact be made clear? Otherwise, how are we to know just what we should do? It is true that statistics have been brought down, but they do not reach the crux of the situation. At best, these statistics are only careful estimates; they are not and cannot be complete or conclusive from the standpoint of military requirements. Therefore, I suggest to the Government that every effort be made to get the information I refer to before this Bill is advanced another stage. If, moreover, it be established on reliable military advice, that we have too many divisions, does it not seem to be common sense, based on what I understand to be sound military practice, to readjust the organization and to consolidate the men that are available in the way best adapted to make their number most effective?

[Mr. Murphy.]

The discussion thus far upon the Bill and the amendment introduced by the leader of the Opposition has elicited facts and views that are helpful as disclosing the real position of the Government, and as an aid in determining the real value of the Bill. By reference to the Orders in Council and the official despatches of the Government, the leader of the Opposition, in refutation of the Prime Minister's argument that the Bill contains no new principle, was able to show that a new principle is involved, and that at the outbreak of the war the Government was not of opinion that the principle embodied in the Militia Act was the same as the principle set forth in this Bill. My right hon. leader's argument and reasoning were so cogent, and it is so important that the public be seized of his viewpoint, that I ask the indulgence of the House while I restate his views on this subject in his own words: This is what he said:

Now, the Prime Minister says that he is introducing no new principle, that he could have sent abroad the 400,000 men who have been sent, under the authority of the existing Act. Sir, I take issue with my right hon. friend on that. I say he had not any such power.

Then later on he said:

In support of this contention of mine that this Government could not, under the Militia Act, send the forces that they did, I will contrast with the Government of to-day the Government of 1914.

The Government then did not pretend that they were using the Militia Act in sending Canadian forces across the sea; they did not send them under that Act at all. Here is a despatch of His Royal Highness the Governor General, sent by the Prime Minister which is an absolute refutation of the doctrine which has just been asserted by him. This was sent by the Governor General to the Secretary of State for the colonies, and dated August 1, 1914:

Ottawa, August 1, 1914.

"In view of the impending danger of war involving the Empire my Advisers are anxiously considering the most effective means of rendering every possible aid and they welcome any suggestions and advice which Imperial naval and military authorities may deem it expedient to offer. They are confident that a considerable force would be available for service abroad. A question has been mooted respecting the status of any Canadian force serving abroad as under section 69 of Canadian Militia Act the active militia can only be placed on actual service beyond Canada for the defence thereof."

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier: If it was "for the defence thereof" what was the necessity of stating that there was doubt as to the status of these troops?

"It has been suggested that regiments might enlist as Imperial troops for stated periods, Canadian Government undertaking to make all necessary financial provision for their equipment, pay and maintenance."