

land. We do not know at what hour it may become the most perilous of occupations. My information from the department is that the service has certainly not been free from peril.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: The mine sweepers in Halifax harbour work only two hours a day, and their occupation cannot be described as dangerous.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not know much about it myself, but I made inquiries in the department, and I have given the information I got.

There were several other inquiries I promised to answer to-day. First of all, I will take the meaning of the word "demobilization." I have had the following memorandum prepared:

The meaning of the word "demobilization" is not given or referred to in any of the legal authorities which I have been able to consult, with the exception of a definition given in 13 Cyc, where it is said that it means "in military law, the dismissal of an army or body of troops from active service." He refers to Rapalje and L. L. Dict. as his authority for this definition.

In the Century Dictionary the meaning given to it somewhat accords with this definition. The meaning there given is "the act of disbanding troops; the reduction of military armaments to a peace footing; the condition of being demobilized, and not liable to be moved on service."

It seems to me that this all taken together is just what every one has understood by demobilization—the release from military obligations—and the moment our overseas soldiers are released from the obligation they assumed as such in our expeditionary forces, at that moment demobilization has taken place.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: The Bill says "complete demobilization," that is, the cessation of operations, or the withdrawal of the troops from practical operations. Of course you might withdraw one corps after another.

Mr. MEIGHEN: My own opinion is it would be just the same. I do not know how we could word it to meet that difficulty. I presume it would be possible to keep ten men mobilized.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: But, it is a feature of all legislation that even an ordinary expression is defined. I had hoped my hon. friend would have given the definition of the words "complete demobilization."

Mr. MEIGHEN: Without an interpretation at all, the meaning would be just the meaning we would give by an interpreta-

tion, namely, the release of the members of the overseas forces from their obligations as such. That is just the effect of it as it is.

Mr. MARCIL: Is it not a fact that these men are all engaged for the period of the war, or until six months after the war?

Mr. MEIGHEN: My information is, that that is the condition of the voluntary enlistment.

Mr. MARCIL: Will you keep those men six months after the war?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Personally, I do not see how they can get home within six months. Steps may have to be taken to keep them on the force until we can bring them home.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: We may understand then that complete demobilization means the release of all the troops from active service, whether they are in Europe or whether they have returned.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes. Release from their obligations as members of the expeditionary force. Of course we would not release them overseas.

The next question was as to whether this Act would be applicable to by-elections. I have looked into the matter very carefully, and in my opinion if a by-election should become necessary while this Act is in operation, that is, before demobilization, this Act is applicable, and should be applicable. It is true the Military Voters' Act is not applicable. They would not have a vote in any by-election, but it is much better that this Act should be in effect rather than that the old Act should be in effect. As a matter of fact, the old Franchise Act would scarcely apply at all in some provinces. Reference to sections 52, 214 and 218 of the Act as it will be when this Act is passed, will show this Act is clearly applicable. Section 52 of the Act as it stands reads:

52. Except as provided in this part, it shall not be necessary to prepare new voters' lists for the purpose of any election to be held under this Act, when there has been in the said electoral district a previous election, the voters' lists prepared for which are of record in the office of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, and there is an interval of less than twelve months between the dates of the writs for the two elections.

So that, for any election held within one year the voters' lists prepared under this Act and in the possession of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery would be the lists. Section 214 says: