

to Canada to enlist provided he had been here a certain time.

Mr. DOHERTY: My hon. friend wants to put a penalty on the man who enlisted too soon. He should have waited thirty days and then he would have got the vote.

Mr. MACDONALD: The hon. gentleman laboured in justification of that principle in putting through the law in 1915.

Mr. DOHERTY: The hon. member for Pictou talked about the Act we had passed by agreement, and now he has forgotten how he struggled and laboured to prevent that Act being passed.

Mr. MACDONALD: My hon. friend is sidestepping.

Mr. DOHERTY: I am afraid that if I am trying to do any sidestepping I am entering into a hopeless competition with the hon. member for Pictou. I think we had better get back to the question. I quite realize that we made this thirty-day provision, and I also realize that all the difference made was that we were refusing the vote to the man who had resided six months in Canada in training because this period of time was not immediately before he enrolled, and we were giving a premium to the man who had loafed around for thirty days before he had enlisted over the man who came in and took up his military work at once. I do not want to be understood as condemning that law. I am free to admit that at that time, as the question presented itself to my mind, we were making a good law, and I am not now saying that it was a bad one, but there is such a thing as a good law and a better one. I think we can reach a better one.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Does the minister see any difficulty in giving a vote to a man who was never in Canada, who does not know the name of a single county or electoral division, has no idea of our public affairs, and does not know one political party from another? There might be a man of that stamp who would be entitled to take part in our affairs. Has the minister considered that?

Mr. DOHERTY: There might be a man of that stamp among the people who have stayed at home and not gone to fight. There is quite a number of people in this country who do not know very much about public questions and there are not a few people who require to be told the name of the electoral district in which they vote. We do not exclude them from the vote.

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Mr. SINCLAIR: I want to know if it is the purpose of the minister to cover a case of that kind.

Mr. DOHERTY: I do not assume that a man who is going to enlist in the Canadian forces is below the average of intelligence.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Not at all, but he is a perfect stranger to the country.

Mr. DOHERTY: If he is not below the average intelligence, and if he has lived, as he has, for a year or two in close daily contact with our Canadian soldiers, I do not think we should class him as not knowing anything about the questions which will come before the electors at the next election. Do hon. gentlemen think, for instance, that, through our forces on the other side, the knowledge is not general on one of the great questions that will have to be dealt with in this election and that is the question of the Military Service Act? I think there is a pretty general knowledge of that question.

Mr. PUGSLEY: There are many other questions besides that.

Mr. SINCLAIR: There is no need of the minister labouring the point. I want to know if he proposes to cover a case of that kind?

Mr. DOHERTY: I give credit to the British subject who has come to join our forces for being the possessor of as much intelligence as the average Canadian citizen. Giving him that credit, I have no doubt that a man living among our fellow Canadians for that period of time will gather knowledge especially in regard to questions that arise and conditions that exist here.

Many, I should say the great majority, of these people, it is fair to assume, are intelligent men, who will know something of our conditions and appreciate the questions at issue in the election. They have given the greatest possible service to Canada. Canada has every reason to induce them to remain Canadians when they have ceased being soldiers, and I think one way to do that is to open our arms to them and to take them in as Canadian citizens. I think we are running no risk by granting them votes. I do not think there is any greater risk involved in giving the vote to a British subject who has done that service than in giving it to a British subject who may come to Canada and live here for six months or a year. If we get down to arguments based on the suggestion that such a