

*The War—Mr. Homuth*

studiously ignored by the government; now we are going to play our part. We have as much at stake in this war as they have; our children, everything we own is at stake as well as that of the members of the government. From now on we are going to play our part, just as big a part as the government, and we are going to force the government to give us the information they have repeatedly denied us. It is the lack of frankness on the part of the government that has brought so much criticism down upon their heads, criticism that is in some measure well deserved.

The people of Canada are not expecting members of the government to be supermen; they are not looking for supermen in the House of Commons; they know we are all human. We represent certain ideals, certain policies; but there is not a man in this house who is not concerned to-day about one thing, namely the carrying on of this war to a successful conclusion. If the government, instead of concealing the mistakes they have made, would be honest with the people of Canada, admit they have made mistakes and have as far as possible rectified them, and are carrying on to the full extent of their ability, how much more confidence the people would have in the government. Mistakes have been made; no matter what government was in power, mistakes would be made; but at least let them take the people of the country into their confidence, admit these mistakes, and then the people would feel that at least we have on the government benches men who are trying to do their part.

I have said this on the floor of the house before. I ran as a national government candidate; I believe in it; I still believe in it. But the Liberals were elected; very well, that is the voice of the people. If the Liberals are going to carry on as a Liberal government, let them do so; I have no objection to it. But what we are asking them to do is to carry on this war and fight it, whether they be Liberals, national government, or whatever it may be.

On several occasions we have criticized members of the government because of things we knew were happening in the administration of their departments, particularly in relation to the war effort. Statements have been made by the ministers, statements which we find to-day were not according to facts. The ministers may have thought that what they stated might happen, but thinking is not good enough when even the shores of Canada are menaced. As a result of the attitude of the government, the only thing we can do is to bring publicly to their attention and to the attention of the people of

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this country the facts, so that perhaps they in turn can stir the government and bring out the true facts of the situation as far as our war effort is concerned.

Let us go back to the statement made by the right hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) that the war policies of the government were submitted to the people last March. I take issue with him on that. Who can forget the first broadcast that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) made then; he did not speak of national government except to associate it with the union government of the last war, and in a very subtle way, as only the Prime Minister of Canada knows how to do; he raised the bogey of conscription. He raised that bogey in his first speech. No one can deny that one of the biggest issues in that election was the issue of conscription.

Then the government was reelected to power with an overwhelming majority, and to-day we have conscription. To-day conscription is the law of Canada.

Some hon. MEMBERS: No, no.

Mr. HOMUTH: Modify it as you like, but let us face the facts. Let us have some courage in this matter. We never question the courage of the men in our air force or army or navy, but we expect courage also from the men back home, and particularly from the men who are sitting in this House of Commons; courage to face the facts, courage to do those things that they think are right, and we expect them to direct Canada's utmost efforts to the winning of this war. If the members of the government, and if the private members of the government party—because, after all, they are a force to contend with—show the courage they ought to show, there will be no difficulty as far as an all-out effort in this war is concerned.

Last fall we met here and time after time we questioned the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston) and the Minister of Munitions and Supply (Mr. Howe) as to the production of Bren guns. They either gave an evasive answer, or refused to answer, or said that which did not satisfy the opposition.

Mr. RALSTON: If my hon. friend will permit me, the answer I gave him was that I did not consider it in the public interest to make public the number of Bren guns being produced, but I did give to his leader, as I did to the leaders of the other groups in the house, an exact statement of the number produced.

Mr. HOMUTH: The Minister of National Defence made a statement that we were