

eral or Conservative, can govern Canada to-day in its best interests.

We have largely over-built railways, very much to the detriment of Canada; and if there is one thing above others which might be done it is this: the Administration should appoint to-day a commission, and a very strong commission, to inquire into that matter and determine as to our railway requirements, and make an inquiry as to how much railway that is already built can be dispensed with in the best interest of Canada. My hon. friend (Hon. Mr. Choquette) says "Oh," but he is not competent to express a view upon that question.

Hon. Mr. CHOQUETTE—I beg your pardon; I just said that this question has nothing to do with the Bill before the House. I do not think it is the proper time to discuss railway questions now; and as to being competent, I admit the hon. gentleman is perhaps more competent than I am, but I know something on that subject too.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—The remarks which I am making are pertinent to the question.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—Military railways.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—Not military railways, but it is pertinent to the question as to the position in which Canada finds itself to-day. Now I do not want to detain the House longer. I just wish to give expression to this opinion; let us to-day join as patriots, not as politicians or as party men, but join in doing that which will result in the best interest of Canada in the future. Canada has a problem to work out such as no country involved in this war has, not even Belgium. Canada has a far more difficult question before her to-day than has any other country involved in the war.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—What about the soldiers' vote?

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—I am not discussing that.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—That is what you ought to discuss.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—I am discussing the question which has been involved in this debate and on which I desire to express an opinion.

The SPEAKER—Is it your pleasure to adopt this motion for the third reading?

Hon. Mr. CHOQUETTE—It is just as well to settle that question now. Those who are in favour of the Bill will vote for it, and those against it will vote against it.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS.

Especially after the speech of my hon. friend, I have decided to move the six months' hoist. It is not a question of being patriotic at the present moment. I am as willing to be patriotic here and elsewhere as my hon. friend, but I do not consider it patriotic to vote for an absurd measure. I do not intend to stand in this House and pass this measure as a patriot because the Bill before us is impracticable. I wish to put the question plainly. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Prince Albert (Hon. Mr. Davis) that this Bill be not now read the third time, but that it be read the third time this day six months.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—No, after the war.

On the motion being put:

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT—I had hoped that my hon. friend from Grandville would not make the motion he has made; it is ill-advised and I personally am very much opposed to it, not that I have any love at all for the Bill which we are asked to pass. To call it by a mild name, it is the most extraordinary piece of legislation ever enacted by this Parliament or by any British Parliament anywhere in the world.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—Why not reject it?

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT—I think we are all agreed as to the principle of the Bill, that every citizen whether a soldier or not, should have a vote and exercise the franchise if it can be done properly; but that the Bill is unworkable, and is going to open the door to a lot of fraud, there is no doubt. This Bill, being concerned more particularly with the House of Commons than ourselves, I think we ought to pass it.

Several hon. GENTLEMEN—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT—I hope it will not bring upon us too severe a censure from the Imperial Parliament. At the time when Canada is seeking to be taken into the counsels of the Mother Country in matters of war, matters of peace, and matters of Imperial policy; at a time when we are trying to have a word to say and expect to say something when the time of peace-making comes, I doubt very much if our action in passing this Bill is going to help that along and is going in any way to give the Imperial Parliament and the people on the other side the idea that we have got to the stage of maturity, to the stage of reasoning when we ought to be allowed to have a word in