

Well, that legislation did not pass and there has been no appeal to the people. That was four years ago—yes, four years have already passed and never since has the Prime Minister even dreamed of thinking that the first care of a man of honour, is to redeem his pledged word—it would surely not be an act of temerity on my part, should I to-day assert that this appeal to the people is what the leader of the Cabinet apprehends the most. And, judging the present by the past, I have no hesitation in saying that the Prime Minister seems more anxious to remain in power than to redeem his pledged troth. The measure now before the House, a measure of exceptional importance, is submitted to us as being of imperious necessity. The only guarantee we have of that necessity, is the word of the Prime Minister. For my part, that is not sufficient, past experience justifies me in demanding something more substantial. I regret that I should be obliged to so express myself, but, in fine, it is no fault of mine if the leader of the Government has put himself in such a position that a reputable backer is now demanded in support of his word.

Admitting I am quite unable to discuss the Bill now before the House from the legal point of view, I will simply limit myself to state in a few words what I think of it from the national and economic standpoint, I have most heartily agreed to our full participation in the present conflict. And I am one of those who declare, without any hesitation, that our duty is to continue the effort so generously put forth up to date. It is most unfortunate, however, that the Government should have tolerated speculations which, in these critical times, have a criminal character.

The attitude taken by the American government since the United States have entered into the war, shows plainly to what extent our rulers have been careless, not to use a harsher expression. The blood imposition was already painful enough, without adding to it the scandals which have kept on increasing since the beginning of the war. Whatever be the case, our duty would have remained the same, and those who have tolerated the abominations we did witness, must bear their full share of responsibility before history.

I admit I am unable to see the opportunity of the measure now before this House. A few months ago, the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. Bennett) enthroned as head of the National Service, spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to draw American

labour towards our western prairies. That step was a straight admission of the lack of hands to perform the required labour in this country. To-day it is perfectly admitted that this effort of the hon. member for Calgary was a lamentable failure. Since then, the American people have joined hands with the Allies, and no one ignores that we can expect nothing from the support our neighbours might have given us. The lack of farm labour is being daily more visible and it is to my personal knowledge that, in the province of Quebec, our farmers are seriously anxious to know how they may be able to gather in their wheat and their hay. The same anxiety exists in other provinces. Recruiting, although less active, is just the same taking away every month thousands of helpers from the farm fields. Every day we are being informed that the Allies are crying for munitions and still more munitions. How will we be able to feed our soldiers and supply them the means of defence if, through an improvident policy, we put ourselves in the impossibility of producing and of gathering in. It has been stated that Russia's attitude was one of the main reasons demanding a more strenuous effort on our part. That reason no longer exists, and the Russian victories are now becoming a subject of admiration for the civilized world.

The United States have now thrown themselves, body and soul, into the furnace. The millions of soldiers they will add to the Allied forces will soon give an overwhelming numerical superiority to the cause of the Allies. On the one hand, the Allies have a superabundance of soldiers; on the other, they need what we are in a position to furnish them: ammunition and bread.

Why should the Government be so obstinately bent upon placing us in the actual impossibility of doing that which would be the most useful to the common cause? Is it only to redeem that imprudent boast of contributing five hundred thousand men? It would be simply dispensing with the fulfilment of a national duty, just to justify an arrogant personal boast. It would be a crime of high treason against our own country. Is it, as some have stated, in order to better reach the province of Quebec? That would be most hateful and infamous; Quebec knows her duty, and she needs no one to dictate it to her.

I do repeat what I said in opening my remarks; we are threatened by Civil war—I do not see what the Allies could gain by it. I realize what their cause might lose through it. For my part, I beg the Govern-