

ficie. In my judgment the Government of the United States acted wisely, because conscription avoids everything of the nature of what has taken place here in Canada.

I come now to Great Britain. When did Great Britain adopt conscription? Can anybody tell me?

Hon. Mr. KING: 1916.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: 1916.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: In 1916, during the throes of the last war. In other words, Great Britain all through the centuries in all her wars never had conscription, simply because in later years most of those wars were conducted on a purely voluntary basis, and prior to that on a voluntary and mercenary basis—that is, the troops were gathered from every part of the world, and as long as they were willing to fight, Great Britain was willing to pay them for their services. But eventually Britain was compelled to adopt a policy of conscription in order to obtain the forces required to carry on the last Great War, and she adopted it in 1916; not until then. You must bear in mind what I have already said: no people in the world would be opposed to conscription as strongly as the people of Great Britain were. If there is one liberty-loving nation in the world it is Great Britain. She has been and is the bulwark of liberty throughout the world. Yet Great Britain was eventually forced by necessity, in the interest of the state, to adopt a conscription policy.

Then in 1917 conscription came in Canada. I need not dwell upon that. We know what the situation was, and what was done. Again it was a case of necessity. We had tried the voluntary system and it had failed, just as this Government has found it to fail in this war. Its failure was inevitable, for the reasons I have stated in explaining the voluntary system to you. As I say, it is unnecessary for me to dwell upon what happened then and afterwards.

Now we are in exactly the same situation right at this minute—with this difference, that the necessity arises not now, nor did it arise a few months ago when Colonel Ralston went to Europe, it arose two years before that. Do you agree with me? You must. The necessity arose two years ago, and while we had little differences, you might almost say major differences at that time, there was no crisis. Why? Because the character of the conscription adopted at that time was not the character of the conscription proposed now.

Hon. Mr. KING: It was of a character and kind to meet the situation then existing.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Exactly, I will go further, I will say to meet a situation that

necessarily existed. Now let me point out the difference, and it will take me only a minute. What was the situation of the war at the end of 1941? I have already told you what had happened in Europe, and I have told you about the U-boat menace. What was the condition in Canada as a result of all those events? The people of Canada from coast to coast had a fear in their hearts. Otherwise, do you think we would ever have had observers stationed on our coasts, or all the talk about getting sirens to blow warnings, or the trips that our wives and families were making to get material for a blackout? There was in this country actual fear of an invasion, fear that U-boats or aircraft carriers would appear off our Atlantic coast and launch planes that would drop bombs on Ottawa, Montreal, or other parts of the Dominion. When the Japanese came into the war there was the same fear on the Pacific coast. Is not that true? You know perfectly well it is true. There was actual widespread fear of an attack by the enemy.

As a consequence of that we found ourselves here in Canada without any defending force at all. All our men who had volunteered were gone overseas, and we had no troops with which to protect ourselves. Thereupon the Government realized the necessity of bringing into being a home defence force. That force was created, not on a voluntary basis but under a conscription law enacted by the Parliament of Canada. Under this law some thousands upon thousands of men from all parts of Canada were compelled to join this force. Since then we have had extensions of that enactment, and the other day it was made applicable to the war theatre in Europe. I do not blame the Government for that policy, not in the slightest degree. On the contrary I agree that the Government did the only thing they could do in those circumstances. We had reached the stage where a home defence force had to be created, and there was at that time only one way in which it could be created—by conscription. That is why Mr. Cardin, the minister, resigned. He was opposed to conscription.

Now let me deal very briefly with the situation which exists right at this moment. So far as providing reinforcements for our infantry commitments overseas is concerned, there is no doubt as to what will be done. We still have to await the voting in the House of Commons, but in view of all that has happened here during the past week or ten days, I think there can be no doubt as to the result. Those reinforcements will go forward. The Government's decision and undertaking in that respect will be carried out.