

CANADA

House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT

Tuesday, July 10, 1917.

The House met at Three o'clock, the Speaker in the Chair.

"CONSCRIPTION OF WEALTH."

STATEMENT BY THE FINANCE MINISTER.

On the Orders of the Day:

Hon. Sir THOMAS WHITE (Minister of Finance): I desire to make a statement upon a matter of public importance. It has been officially drawn to the attention of the Government that the use of the expression "conscription of wealth" in the debates in Parliament and by public and other bodies outside of Parliament and by the press in its news reports has caused a certain uneasiness among those whose savings constitute a vital factor in the business and industrial life of the Dominion and are so essential to the credit and prosperity upon which our efforts in the continued prosecution of the war must largely depend. I desire to say on behalf of the Government that there need exist no apprehension on the part of the public that any action of a detrimental character will at any time be taken with respect to the savings of the Canadian public. On the contrary it will be the policy of the Government in the future as in the past to encourage in every way possible the exercise of the thrift and economy resulting in national savings which have enabled Canada to maintain her credit and improve her economic position during the war. Any taxation to which it may be necessary for the Government to resort from time to time will be in accordance with legitimate and established forms of taxation sanctioned by the tradition and experience of British self-governing communities. This statement, therefore, must not be understood as precluding legislation providing for income taxation upon those whose incomes are such as to make it just and equitable that they should contribute a share of the war expenditure of the Dominion.

Hon. GEORGE GRAHAM: In the remarks which I made during the discussion which took place in the House, I did not use the term "conscription of wealth." The resolution which I introduced was in these words:

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that steps should be taken forthwith by the Government to provide that accumulated wealth should contribute immediately and effectively to the cost of the war.

The observations that I made were, I think, perfectly in harmony with the wording of this resolution and with the remarks just made by the Minister of Finance.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Hear, hear.

MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1917.

CONSIDERATION OF THE BILL IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE.

House in Committee on Bill No. 75, respecting Military Service—Sir Robert Borden. (Resumed from Monday, July 9. Mr. Rainville in the Chair.)

On section II—exemptions:

(1) At any time before a date to be fixed in the proclamation mentioned in section four, an application may be made, by or in respect of any man in the class or subclass called out by such proclamation to a local tribunal established in the province in which such man ordinarily resides, for a certificate of exemption on any of the following grounds:—

(a) That it is expedient in the national interest that the man should, instead of being employed in military service, be engaged in other work in which he is habitually engaged;

(b) That it is expedient in the national interest that the man should, instead of being employed in military service, be engaged in other work in which he wishes to be engaged and for which he has special qualifications;

(c) That it is expedient in the national interest that, instead of being employed in military service, he should continue to be educated or trained for any work for which he is then being educated or trained;

(d) That serious hardship would ensue, if the man were placed on active service, owing to his exceptional financial or business obligations or domestic position;

(e) Ill health or infirmity;

(f) That he conscientiously objects to the undertaking of combatant service and is prohibited from so doing by the tenets and articles