

understand we have been trying to do all along, is to represent to the world that both parties in this country are a unit with regard to the prosecution of this war in which the Empire is involved, and that we are also strongly behind the British Government in our endeavours to help them in the struggle in Europe. The very fact of putting through legislation of this kind would have the effect of showing to the world that there was a conflict of opinion between the people of this country and the British Government. The paper this morning announced that the British Government are considering the question of taking more closely into their counsels the different dominions later on when the time comes to discuss the terms of peace. The British Government have shown by such action that they are prepared to work in closer connection with the different dominions of the Empire, and that they desire to bring about a closer connection, more harmony between the separate dominions of the British Empire—in absolute contradistinction to this legislation, which, as I tried to point out, may bring about a conflict between the military authorities in England and the civil authorities in this country. This Bill has been brought up to us just previous to the announcement of prorogation. It deals with a large question that would bear a great deal of discussion. In order to give it proper and necessary consideration, it should be discussed for a considerable length of time. If we are to have prorogation as has been announced, it will be impossible to discuss this Bill as it should be discussed in this order to make it, if possible, a workable measure. I do not propose therefore to do more than possibly, at the next stage of the Bill, propose some amendments to deal with the matter along the lines on which I have discussed it.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I do not propose any more than the hon. leader of the Opposition, to speak at any length, but I do not feel that I would be justified in allowing this Bill to pass its second reading without uttering a protest. The hon. gentleman from Grandville (Hon. Mr. Choquette) last evening put the case against this measure in a very forcible and effective way, and I cordially endorse what he then said. To one or two points, I think it desirable to call attention. One is that, in addition to the various classes of railway employees and others, and men serving in English regiments who are not to get any benefit

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK.

from this Bill, we have a number of Canadians who have been on active service in the Navy ever since the war began; and it does seem to me that a sense of justice would have provided that those men should have a right to vote, as well as the men who happen to be in the land forces. The other point is this: I have no objection to any man who has volunteered to risk his life in the service of the Empire and of Canada having a vote, that is, provided he will be in a position to exercise his right of voting independently and intelligently.

Hon. Mr. THOMPSON—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I am satisfied that, under present conditions, the men who are in the trenches in northern France and in Belgium—and possibly when the election comes off will be in Germany—are not in a position to vote independently and intelligently. That is my strongest objection to this measure.

Several hon. GENTLEMEN—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. POWER—Hon. gentlemen know that in the case of an officer like the late lamented Col. Farquhar, the slightest intimation on his part that he wished his men to vote for one party or the other would carry nearly the whole vote of his regiment. That is a most unsatisfactory condition of things.

Hon. Mr. POPE—They are nearly all Tories anyway and it would not do any harm.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—More Grits than Tories.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I do not know what Col. Farquhar's political views were but I say that his soldiers are serving in the field under officers who are much respected and beloved, as most of the officers at the front now are. The expression on the part of an officer of sympathy with one party or the other would carry the great bulk of the votes of his men. That is a most unsatisfactory condition of things. Here we have men living in this country watching the Parliamentary proceedings and things that are happening day by day, these men having property here, and they vote in virtue of being citizens of Canada and property owners; and you can take a constituency where there is perhaps a majority of five hundred one way or the other, the vote of that majority may be nullified by the vote of a single battalion serving in the trenches, and the vote of