

can make in parting with those dear to them; I think that it is the true ground upon which the argument should be based. If I were a soldier I would rather trust the ordinary women of the country than my own relatives to see that I was treated fairly in everything. The ordinary women of the country would not be interested especially through ties of blood; they would be interested as citizens, as women of Canada; and I am satisfied that they could be relied upon to see that absolute justice was done to soldiers in the matter of their support at the front and of proper provision for them on their return. In the matter of allowances to their relatives, in the matter of separation allowance, in the matter of pensions, do you not think that the ordinary woman would be even more generous in her demands than the relative of the soldier would be? It seems to me that the Secretary of State does not present any argument against the extension of the franchise to those persons whom the member for Montreal, St. Lawrence, Mr. Bickerdike) called the loyal and patriotic women of Canada.

The Prime Minister makes objection to extending the franchise to women generally on the ground that conditions affecting the naturalization laws have to be considered. Surely that difficulty, if it is a difficulty, must have presented itself to the Prime Minister two or three months ago when he assured the women's delegations who waited upon him that the franchise would be extended generally to the women of the country. On the 16th of May last, the following resolution was moved by the member for South Oxford (Mr. Sutherland):

That, in the opinion of this House, the question of extending the franchise to women should engage the attention of the Government at the present session.

That resolution was received sympathetically by the Prime Minister; he gave the women of the country to understand that the Government would act upon it. During the course of the discussion I moved the following amendment:

That all the words after the word "That" be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

"the Dominion Election Act should be so amended at the present session as to make uniform the right of women to vote for members of the House of Commons in those provinces which have granted to them the provincial franchise."

That amendment was ruled out of order by the Speaker. He said:

The member has on the Order Paper a resolution No. 6, following this one, which it seems [Mr. Pugsley.]

to me, although it is not in the same terms, is substantially the same as the one which he now submits by way of amendment. Bourinot says, page 301, "Nor is it regular to move as an amendment to a question a motion of which notice has been given and which appears in its place on the notice paper."

The question being again proposed on the amendment, the Prime Minister moved the following amendment to the motion of the member for South Oxford:

That all the words after the word "That" be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

"in the opinion of this House the question of extending the franchise to women should engage the attention of Parliament before an appeal to the people is made."

And the question being proposed on the amendment, I moved an amendment to the amendment in the following words:

That the following words be added thereto: "and it is therefore desirable that a measure having this object in view should be submitted to Parliament by the Government during the present session."

A debate arose upon that, and on the motion of the member for Russell (Mr. Murphy) the debate was adjourned. On a number of occasions since then I have been assured by gentlemen leading the House that an opportunity would be given for the discussion of this motion, of the amendment moved by the Prime Minister and of the amendment to the amendment moved by myself. But the important thing is that my right hon. friend moved as an amendment that the matter of extending the franchise to women should engage the attention of Parliament before an appeal to the people was made. That was an assurance to the House and to the women of the country that the Government was favourable to extending the franchise generally to the women of Canada. There is no doubt about that; the women of Canada so understood it; they expressed themselves as thankful to the Government for having at last decided to ask Parliament to grant them equal rights of suffrage. My right hon. friend put forth objections of a fanciful character as an explanation why the right of suffrage is granted to a few—I admit that it should be granted to them; they have strong claims to it—and is refused to hundreds of thousands of other women who are equally entitled to it. No harm can come from extending the franchise generally to the women of Canada; I am satisfied that every possible good would come from it. The Government ought not to let this session pass, it ought not allow this Bill to be disposed of, with-