

objection can there be? Does the hon. gentleman suppose that there is a militiaman in Canada who would not take the risk of being called out in some great emergency for active service knowing that within fifteen days the parliament of Canada had to meet to rectify an error if error there should be on the part of the government? Where is the militiaman from one end of this Dominion to the other who would not take the risk of being ordered out of Canada in such an emergency? The hon. gentleman has said that gentlemen on this side of the House are desirous of advertising their loyalty.

An hon. MEMBER. Hear, hear.

Mr. BARKER. The hon. gentleman from Montmagny—I think it is—says ‘hear, hear.’ I have noticed several times that he has taken the opportunity of intervening with a sarcastic hear, hear, in this debate. I repeat that there is not from end to end of this Dominion, in any of the provinces, I do not care in what province, any militiaman who will object to the risk of being ordered out by the government of Canada for active service, knowing that parliament must be called within fifteen days to pass upon that order. Any militiaman who would object is not worthy of being a member of the militia of Canada. He is not worthy of the name of Canadian, because we all know that such an order would never be made by any government of Canada except in extreme emergency. Take the case mentioned by the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule). Suppose that some foreign nation attacked Newfoundland. Are we to remain sitting in our chairs doing nothing, not even making necessary preparations that the fifteen days would allow us, because the hon. gentlemen have put upon the statutes a provision that the militia must only act for the defence of Canada? The hon. Minister of Militia laughs. He puts such words in the statute that they cannot even make the order to call out the active militia except for the defence of Canada. What would the taking of Newfoundland by some foreign nation mean to Canada? In fifteen days, as is suggested by my friend beside me (Mr. Gourley), Newfoundland might become the possession of a foreign nation. What would that mean to Canada? Does the hon. gentleman suppose that if such an emergency should arise any militiaman from east to west of this land, would object to turning out in the defence of the empire though not in the defence of Canada? Defending Newfoundland would not be defending Canada.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. It might.

Mr. BARKER. It might, but in the opinion of the government of the day it might not. We know well enough that in 1899 when the fate of the whole British empire, including the fate of Canada, was at stake the First Minister thought Canada

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was not interested. The Minister of Militia will not deny that that is the case. I assert that to be a statement made by the First Minister of Canada; in the time of the South African war when the very fate of Great Britain and of every colony of Great Britain was at stake, the First Minister allowed himself to be interviewed and his interview was published in the Toronto ‘Globe’ of, I think, October 4th, 1899, and he stated in that interview that the government of Canada had no power under the Militia Act to intervene; they could not send a soldier, they could not pay a dollar. Why, Sir, what a disgrace it would have been to this Dominion had we not intervened! Canada would never have recovered from that disgrace. But, Sir, within ten days after that the government found the means of doing what the Militia Act, according to their contention, did not enable them to do. The old Act, the Act which is in force at this minute, was not clear. It was subject to some doubt, the Minister of Justice tells us. But what does the Minister of Militia want to do? Does he want, in removing all doubt, to make the change in the interests of the British empire? No, not a bit of it. The hon. gentleman wants to change in the opposite direction and to make it absolutely clear that we cannot and shall not interfere in such a case. That is what these gentlemen are doing and that, Sir, is what we object to. Now we say that the people of every part of this Dominion are willing in such a great emergency as war to leave to the ministry of the day, whether that ministry be Liberal or Conservative, the power of calling out the militia. They are willing to do that with the constitutional safeguard which the hon. gentlemen propose that within fifteen days after the order is pronounced, parliament shall be called together to say yes or no, to the decision that the active militia shall be sent beyond our borders. Who is going to object to that? Who can object to it? I think if he were to tell that to the militia of Canada they would say that they would like to have another Minister of Militia. They would tell him he is not the kind of minister they want in the interests of this Dominion. I say that having regard to the law as it stands, to the fact that the Minister of Militia tells us that the law he now proposes does not materially alter the law as it stands, the old law confers no greater power on the government than the law he proposes, and therefore he would do well in the interest of Canada to leave it as it is. Why does he want to make the change? He wants to accentuate the question that was raised in 1899, as to the power of Canada to interfere on behalf of the British empire, even if the empire’s very life was at stake. The hon. gentleman wants to put it beyond doubt that he cannot interfere. He is seek-