

a full knowledge and realization of the extraordinary and somewhat critical war situation which then prevailed, not only throughout Canada but throughout the world. However, at this time no good end is to be achieved by a discussion of these Acts, I only mention them to show their bearing and application under the present situation.

It will be remembered that the War-time Elections Act in express terms suspended altogether the operation of Part 1 of the Dominion Elections Act, being that part of the Dominion Elections Act which provided for the franchise, for the voters' list and also for polling divisions. The War-time Elections Act also amended Part 2 of the Dominion Elections Act by providing, among other things, that the wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of persons serving in the military and naval forces of Canada overseas should be entitled to vote. These were rather radical changes in our law. In addition to these, however, the Military Voters' Act made other important changes in regard to the votes of soldiers, and the terms upon which the franchise should be granted to and exercised by them, and the Military Voters' Act itself was incorporated as Part 4 of the Dominion Elections Act. By section 1 of the War-time Elections Act it was provided:

During the present war, and until demobilization after the conclusion of peace, the operation of Part 1 of the Dominion Elections Act shall be suspended.

Then in regard to Part 2 of the Dominion Elections Act the provision was as follows:

That Part 2 of the Dominion Elections Act shall, during the present war and until demobilization after the conclusion of peace, "operate and apply as if amended," and shall be deemed to be amended, as follows.

Then follow the amendments, while the qualification in the Military Voters' Act which became Part 4 of the Dominion Elections Act was in the following language:

This part of this Act shall apply only to a general election held during the present war or after the conclusion of peace but before demobilization.

From the summary of our election law as it stands, which I have just given, the House will see that there may be some substantial ground for uncertainty as to the correct and legal position to-day. In the first place the question will arise: Have we reached that particular period of time mentioned in the War-time Elections Act, and that particular period of time mentioned in the Military Voters' Act? Do the words "dur-

ing the present war" apply at the present time? Have we reached that particular moment of time which could legally be described as "after the conclusion of peace"? It is true that peace has been proclaimed in so far as it concerns Germany and Austria, but is it not equally true—technically true at least—that we are still at war with Turkey and Bulgaria? That is the first question. The next question is: Has demobilization yet taken place? Demobilization has taken place for all practical purposes, yet technically demobilization has not fully taken place. There are still some members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force who are not yet demobilized—some men who are still employed, and men in hospitals and the like. However the question of demobilization, so far as it relates to the War-time Elections Act, has probably been settled by an Order in Council passed on the 16th day of July last, which provided that on the first day of August, 1919, demobilization shall be deemed to be completed in so far as the operation of the War-time Elections Act is concerned. It will be noted, however, that there is no mention whatever in the Order in Council of the Military Voters' Act.

Now, from the circumstances I have just related I think the House will readily understand that it is very essential for us to have some definite legislation upon the subject of general elections; to set at rest for all time to come whatever doubts and uncertainties might possibly arise by expressly repealing every Dominion Election Act heretofore passed as detailed in the schedule to the Bill, and by providing a simple and comprehensive system which, it is hoped, will afford both a just and satisfactory franchise and an expeditious and convenient means of conducting elections for this House of Commons.

The object of the present Bill is threefold: In the first place, to provide a uniform franchise; in the second place, to provide a uniform method for the preparation of voters' lists; and, in the third place, to provide uniform election machinery. The importance of all three objects, though combined in a single Bill, will, I think, be readily appreciated by the House.

In endeavouring to establish a basis of franchise of uniform application throughout the nine provinces, upon foundations of absolute equality and fairness to every section of the community, one is met at the outset with problems of great difficulty and diversity; in endeavouring to formulate and perfect a system for the prepara-