

These are the men who saved the honour of the province of Quebec, and if other methods had been adopted for the purpose of bringing about a larger recruiting percentage in that province, better results could easily have been achieved. Not long ago I read a letter addressed to the Prime Minister by Colonel Mignault of Montreal, who had been entrusted with the enlistment in the province of Quebec. When he returned from Europe he found that recruiting had fallen off, and he said that during his absence fully 100,000 men had become employed in the munition factories in the province, especially in and around Montreal, fulfilling contracts for war purposes. He gave this as his reason for the falling off of recruiting. They had been told that the man who worked in the munition factory, the man who worked on a government contract of any kind for war purposes, was doing as effective work as the man in the trenches, and the people of the province of Quebec had acquired that idea. Outside of Montreal the people of the province of Quebec are, for the most part a farming people. In my own constituency, for instance, they are practically all fishermen or farmers. How many of these men could leave Canada without bringing about a loss to the country? They are all producers of food, and they are all necessary in the country, and I know the exemption tribunals which will sit in that part of the province will exempt the great majority of them on that ground, because their presence will be more valuable here than it will be on the other side.

I do not want here to indulge in any further criticism of the Bill. I condemn the whole principle of it, because I think it affects what Canadians should uphold as the most sacred part of our Constitution—the sanctity of the ballot box. If we once admit that the fountain of power in this country were setting a precedent which might be unfortunate for the country in future years, if the present Government for alleged reasons of war takes upon itself to disfranchise a large class of citizens of Canada, and to enfranchise another class, what is there to prevent another party, or even the same party, which may be in power in future years, from doing the same thing at every general election, for other reasons? It is a most unfortunate state of affairs, and I believe for that reason it will be condemned throughout the country because it looks too much like a party measure which has not the support of the whole House that it should have had if it were a purely war

[Mr. Marcell.]

measure. You have nodded to me, Mr. Speaker, that my time is up. I thank you for the patient hearing you have given me, and I conclude by saying that I know when the election day comes those women who are enfranchised in the province of Quebec and in the constituency which I represent will join us in bringing about the true condition of affairs which should prevail in this country, equal rights for all and privilege to none.

Hon. FRANK OLIVER (Edmonton): We are discussing the third reading of the War-Time Elections Act. We are dealing in that Act with one of the many problems of Canada, and it is because we are dealing with one of its most important problems in what appears to me to be a most unfortunate way that I have the strongest objection to this measure. Canada is a country of vast extent. It has great variety of population because of that vast extent, because of the variety of conditions and because of racial characteristics. The great problem of Canada is to establish a great country and to build out of these varying component parts a united citizenship that shall take the forefront in the progress of civilization. The great problem of Canada is to secure unity amongst our people. Perhaps it is unfortunate that we have not started out as a united country, but it certainly will be unfortunate if having started out in our national life as a country having a variety of national elements, we shall so carry on our public business as to accentuate those diversities of outlook and opinion that necessarily accompany diversities of race, of traditions, of surroundings, and of locality. Canada has suffered more during her past history on account of this division of race than from any other cause, and it is to be regretted that her statesmen in bygone times had as their ambition the maintenance of themselves in power rather than the building up of a united country. It was because of that fact that Canada stood still while her neighbour to the south went ahead. It was not until under the inspiration of the leadership of my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, when he was honoured with the direction of the affairs of Canada, that this country had an Administration which looked to success and progress through unity amongst our people. That inspiration and leadership brought the two great races inhabiting this Dominion together, working shoulder to shoulder in the common interest, and Canada made pro-