

*Mobilization Act—Mr. Cardin*

been pushed, step by step, to the last ditch, by making concession after concession, until it has now reached the point where it has to pass the law that it is striving now to place upon the statute books.

Mr. SPEAKER: May I point out that it is now almost ten minutes after six. Is it the pleasure of the house that the hon. member continue?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. CARDIN: I am sorry to be placed in this position, Mr. Speaker. I had intended concluding my speech before six o'clock, and I have only a few words more to say. When one speaks extemporaneously, it is not like making a set speech which can be timed before delivery. I thank hon. members for their kindness in my regard. They understand, I am sure, the difficult position in which I am placed, and the embarrassing situation which is mine at the present time.

There are many other features I should like to touch upon, but time does not permit. I wish only to repeat that no hon. member should be deceived as to what is going to happen after clause 3 is deleted. I can only refer hon. members to section 5 of the National Resources Mobilization Act, which provides the only source of information parliament is going to have in regard to conscription, if the government decides one day to apply it. We are going to be favoured with a copy of an order in council applying conscription. But it is only half a favour, because the proviso to section 5 reads:

Provided that any of the steps specified in this section may be omitted or deferred if the governor in council considers such omission or deferment necessary in the national interest having regard to the special circumstances.

After section 3 has been deleted, conscription may be applied without parliament being informed, without the order in council being placed upon the table of the house even though parliament is sitting. Our boys will be sent overseas without anyone knowing that they have been sent; the order in council sending them can be kept secret, kept from parliament and from the public. That is the implication of what is here. One may say that that was the law. It was the law when I approved of it, but that law applied to the defence of my country only and to the territorial waters and possibly to adjacent territories. But when it comes to sending our boys anywhere in the world on the advice of the military authorities, I say it is not fair that this should be done without parliament being consulted or even advised.

[Mr. Cardin.]

That is the position in which we shall find ourselves when section 3 has been deleted.

When section 3 has been deleted the mobilization act will place trainees on the same footing as volunteers. There will be no difference; they will be in the same class, liable to be sent anywhere at the will of the military authorities, approved by an order in council which may be kept in a drawer for as long as the government may decide to keep it there. That will be the position in which we shall find ourselves after this legislation is enacted.

It is all very well to say that there should be no anxiety, because the principle is not going to be applied. We are amending legislation which is already in operation. We are amending legislation which called men to serve in Canada. When this section is deleted, the effect will be retroactive and will apply to the trainees who have been called already. They will be placed on the same footing as the volunteers, and a simple order in council can send them overseas, just as it takes an order in council to send any regiment of volunteers overseas. No regular regiment can be sent abroad without an order in council being passed, because we must provide for transportation and for many other things. When section 3 has been deleted we can just dispense with the voluntary system and proceed with conscription only.

It is all very well to say that it will not be applied. What is the use of arguing in that way? The trainees are scattered all over Canada among regiments composed of volunteers. We have English-speaking soldiers, in Montreal and French-Canadian soldiers are sent outside the province of Quebec to be trained. When there is a somewhat large number of French-Canadian soldiers they are divided among the regular units. When those regiments are called upon to go overseas to replace casualties or as reinforcements, the authorities are not going to choose David, James and Harry who came in under the National Resources Mobilization Act, and say, "You will not go overseas." That would be absurd; it would create chaos in the administration of our national defence. Once section 3 is deleted and those trainees are in a regiment, they will go with the regiment. The order in council sending the regiment overseas will cover them as well. It would be a disruption of our whole organization of national defence to do otherwise.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the house, for your kindness and generosity. I conclude by saying that I want to respect the word I have given to my