

of the Twelfth Parliament of Canada is hereby extended until the Seventh day of October, 1918.

This resolution asking for an extension of Parliament until October, 1918, is, I presume, to be brought before the House of Commons. That means, of course, that if it goes through, we shall be here for another year after October 1917. The Prime Minister has said in this House—and he has said it in the negotiations for a coalition Government—that he is willing that this Bill should not go into force until after a general election. The Government is certainly going to ask for an extension of Parliament, the end of which will be about a year and a half from now. After that, at some time, there will be an election, and according to the declaration of the Prime Minister, after that will come a proclamation bringing this measure into force. Therefore, we have in prospect an extension of Parliament of a year and a half at least, a general election, and a vague and indefinite idea that at some time in the dim future a proclamation will be issued by the Governor in Council bringing this measure into force. There can therefore be no hurry about this matter; there is plenty of time, and if there is such an abundance of time as nearly two years before the Government has any intention of bringing this measure into force, the question of haste is not the reason why this matter cannot be submitted to the judgment of the people.

So far as the opinion of hon. gentlemen opposite is concerned, have we any precedent for this thing? It is not very long since the attitude we took upon the Naval Bill was at issue in this country, and when we began to deal with that matter, we were a new Parliament with all the seats filled. The resolution out of which the Naval Act originated was introduced by the hon. member, who is now the Minister of Trade and Commerce, on the 29th of March, 1909, when we were just fresh from the people, a general election having taken place in the fall of 1908. That resolution was introduced and the Bill passed through Parliament, and steps were being taken to implement the will of Parliament in regard to it.

Compare the importance of that question with the measure before the House to-day. In 1909 it was simply a question of building ships, simply a question of spending money for a useful purpose. We were not touching the property of any person; we were not depriving the wife of her husband, the mother of her son, or the child

of its father. We were not dealing with any sacred, civil or religious rights. All that was involved was the expenditure of money for the building of ships. But the measure before us to-day involves the sending of the sons and husbands and fathers in this country to the trenches where they may be shot down. It surely requires no time to bring home forcibly to every man in this country that the question now before the House is much more important and far-reaching than the naval question of 1911. Nevertheless, hon. gentlemen opposite clamoured on that occasion for a referendum, and refused to have anything to do with the Naval Act until the people were consulted. What was the situation then? On the 29th March, 1909, the present Minister of Trade and Commerce, then the member for North Toronto, moved in the House of Commons a resolution practically as follows (a few minor changes being subsequently made in the wording):

The House is of opinion that under the present constitutional relations between the mother country and the self-governing dominions the payment of regular and periodical contributions to the Imperial treasury for naval and military purposes would not, as far as Canada is concerned, be the most satisfactory solution of the question of defence. The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian Naval Service in co-operation with and in close relation to the Imperial Navy, along the lines suggested by the Admiralty at the last Imperial Conference, and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the Empire, and the peace of the world. The House expresses its firm conviction that whenever the need arises, the Canadian people will be found ready and willing to make any sacrifices that are required to give to the Imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in every movement for the maintenance of the integrity and honour of the Empire.

When the Naval Bill was introduced by the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier for the implementing of the above resolution, Sir Robert Borden, then leader of the Opposition, on the 3rd February, 1910, moved the following resolution (Hansard 1909-10, p. 2991):

That no permanent policy should be entered upon involving large future expenditures of this character until it has been submitted to the people and has received their approval.

In support of that resolution, Sir Robert Borden spoke in part as follows (Hansard 1909-10, p. 2989):

I venture to recall to my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) the reason which he gave in a speech delivered at Sherbrooke, in the Province of Quebec, in the month of January,