

the soldiers at the front to-day. At the time the Soldiers' Vote Bill was passed, it was recognized that it was desirable to poll the soldiers' vote. Very strong opinions were expressed at that time that it would be impracticable. Other opinions from hon. gentlemen, for whose judgment I have great respect, were expressed to the contrary. One of those opinions I cannot pass by; I refer to the opinion of the Prime Minister, who was behind the Soldiers' Vote Bill, who believed it was practical at that time to take their vote, but he has been across the water in the meantime, and looked into the matter, and he has made a statement in this House with respect to it. I wish to quote a couple of sentences from his remarks:

The men at the front will be not only practically, but actually, disfranchised if an election does take place in this country while they are in the trenches. That is my conviction.

Further, in connection with the Soldiers' Voting Act of 1915, he said:

I am not disposed to think that the arrangements made in that Act or in any other Act that could be devised are such as to enable those men to vote, or at least any considerable number of them.

We must have in this country a great many men who are available for service at the front. Some of them are what we call "slackers"; others are opposed to Canada's participation in the war. These men would have the right to vote, but a great many of the men who have bravely gone overseas to defend British institutions and who are calling for reinforcements would be debarred from voting. If only 10,000 of them were debarred from voting, I would still not support a referendum, having regard to present conditions. The men who are fighting for us overseas are specially interested in this matter, and they are the men who should be first considered.

It has been contended that the voluntary system could even now be made successful. Well, the present Administration have had that matter in hand and it is likely that they will continue to have it in hand for some time. They declare that they cannot do much more along the line of voluntary recruiting. What are we going to do about it? It is all very well to make recriminations and to say that they should have done better or that under different conditions they would have done better. But, Sir, discussion of that kind can very well be left for a while; what we have to face now is the present situation. Werequiremen at the front, are there any men in Canada available for that service? I believe that there are. The

slogan at the beginning of the war was: the last man and the last dollar; it is nearly time that we tried to put that into effect. It was not anticipated that the war would be such as it turned out to be, but the country has to continue to perform its part, even if it takes the last man and the last dollar. At the same time, there are many men who are not available for service at the front. An authority has stated that out of the 100 per cent only 25 per cent of the energy required to win the war is represented by men who can be classed as combatants, the remainder being made up of those who take part in agriculture, transportation, the manufacture of munitions and so on. On the other hand, many men are employed to-day in non-essential industries—piano and automobile factories, and so on—who could be sent to the front and their places filled by others, including returned soldiers. Any one who visits a lacrosse or baseball match is struck by the number of athletic, able-bodied young men who play these games professionally for the amusement of the crowds, in order to make money. This is the kind of man that ought to be at the front. They do not seem to want to go, and it strikes me that they should be made go to defend the institutions of their country. Other men attend these games and gatherings—they are sometimes called rooters—many of whom could be sent forward. As a matter of fact, many men are available who could be well spared, and if they do not know their duty, it should be pointed out to them. I do not think, however, that a single man should be taken from the farms. I do not say that because I am a farmer, but I know that though we may manage to get the crop in, the outlook for saving it is not very bright. If many more men are taken from the farms, production will be made much less, and production is as essential as the sending of men to the front. Great judgment will have to be exercised in selecting the proper men to send forward.

I think that there should be another form of conscription, that which has been referred to as the conscription of wealth. There are many men in the country who have large incomes—professional men, promoters, commission men, men who have inherited large sums of money. The lives of these men are in no danger; they cannot go to the front; they should, therefore, be called upon to pay out some of their surplus money to assist in feeding and equipping the men at the front. How