

think that Canada has now done all that it should have done. Some think Canada has done all it could or can do—and on that score there is a good deal to be said. I am not called upon, and it is not necessary for me, in the view I take of this Bill, to discuss whether Canada has done all it can do, or whether it should and can go on and do anything further. I take the view that the way in which the Government proposes that any future possible contribution of Canada should be made is not the proper or best way.

I admit that if we could do more we should do it, but I do not admit that conscription affords the means of accomplishing that end. I believe that not only is it not going to accomplish the end, but it is going to retard, hamper, and hinder it. Not only is this measure going to prove abortive, but it is going to prove very mischievous and very dangerous. I ask you, in all sincerity, in all earnestness, what chance is there of a law of this kind, being applied efficaciously unless it has the sanction of the people, unless they approve of it.

It is not necessary to imagine all sorts of things which have no ground except in certain wild imaginations. It is not necessary to imagine that there is going to be open rebellion, in order to show that this law is not going to be effective. There are many ways of resisting a law other than by open resistance. I do not for one moment think that it has entered the mind of anybody, however strongly he may feel against this law, to be a party to openly breaking it. But look at the time, the energy, the money that will be frittered away in endeavouring to enforce a law which everybody, from the Prime Minister down, admits is very unpopular; and would not receive the approval of the people if it were submitted to-morrow—a law which is brought in and sought to be enforced, when the opinion is universal that the law does not meet the approval of the people. Look at the time we are going to spend, to say nothing of the class, racial and other difficulties you are going to raise. Remember how long it took and the difficulties experienced in England before conscription could be resorted to and enforced. And in the United States it took three years to prepare public opinion before active participation in the war could be thought of. The failure of conscription in Australia has caused that country to revert to the voluntary system. The question is not whether conscription is logically sound, constitutionally or morally right or just, but

whether it is opportune and practical and practicable.

It is a mistake to assume—and it is not true—that only the people of Quebec are opposed to conscription. I dare say that in this province of Ontario the farming community is probably as much opposed to conscription as the farming community of Quebec; I do not know; I can only conjecture. I offer my judgment only for what it is worth; but the honourable gentleman agrees with me, and the Prime Minister agrees with me, that if the law were submitted to-morrow it would not receive the approval of the people. Then why insist on a law of that kind? Why reject and put to one side a system which has produced the magnificent result of 425,000 soldiers in this country? Why discard a voluntary system by which Canada has done her duty well and promptly?

I do not agree with the statement that voluntary enlistment has broken down and is no good. Of course, it is not as fruitful just now as it might be, and we know why it is so: because the Government has stopped it; the Government has practically ordered enlistment to stop. Is it any wonder that it is not working satisfactorily now? But if you go to the people, even in the province of Quebec, and treat them properly, give them every opportunity of enlistment, give them the opportunity of being commanded by men of their own race, give them every opportunity of promotion and of recognition—which they have not now, and have never received during this war—and certain things which the province of Quebec expects from the majority in this country, and you will soon see that the voluntary system will not be the failure it is said to be. My honourable friend from Mille Isles (Hon. Mr. David) reminds me that the minister of the Crown who was appointed for the purpose of going to Quebec to organize voluntary enlistment, Colonel the Honourable Mr. Blondin, after spending a few weeks there, and after this Bill was introduced by the Premier, gave his verdict that, if the province of Quebec were properly treated and if her men were properly recognized there would be enlistment en masse. Is not that sufficient evidence for any one, coming, as it does, from a colleague of the Prime Minister? Should not that be conclusive for every one? But Colonel Blondin was stopped. There has been no recruiting going on, and yet figures have been submitted to this House and in another place for the purpose of showing that in the last few months enlistment has broken down. I do not believe that it really

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