

viewed it along these lines, but I will tell the House along what lines I have viewed it. I have viewed it along the line, which I consider the proper line, of putting as much punch and power behind the war government of this country, whatever Government it may be, as it is possible to put. I think there is necessity for that.

If I may be allowed an expression of my own opinion, I am sorry that we have ever been forced to hold an election in Canada in the midst of the turmoil and the burdens of this war. Aside from all questions of constitutional right, and constitutional practice, to my mind there is a condition in the world and a condition in Canada which might have been better met in this country by all of us coming to the conclusion that we could do without for another year exercising the right of ballot and devote ourselves entirely and wholly to the prosecution of the war. I am sorry that we have had to go to the country and hold an election during this war period, but it is not my fault. It is not the fault of the leader of the Government, it is not the fault of the Liberal-Conservative party. That we have to go to an election is the fault of my right hon. friend who sits opposite (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), if it is the fault of anybody. He had it all within his own power, and if he had done as he did a year ago, his party would have followed him, and we would be without the turmoil of an election. But now that the election is imminent, and must come, it is a war election, and nothing else. We are not in this election into which we are now entering to determine the question of permanent suffrage for any class of people in this country. We are not voting upon and determining what shall be the tariff policy of this country. We are not determining by our votes what shall be the policy of the Administration in any civil line. Now when we make the first step, and as we make every other step until the day upon which the votes are to be cast and counted, we are more and more determining the war policy of this country, and only the war policy of this country. That is the way I look upon it.

Now, if it is to be a war election, this measure which is before us is a war franchise measure. We would not have had it if there were no war. We all admit and believe that. We have this War Franchise Bill because we have a war, and because this is an election which is to be particularly and preeminently fought out with reference to the policy which shall prevail in carrying on the war. Let us take a step

[Sir George Foster.]

further. If we are in the throes of a war election, and if that election is to decide the measures which shall be taken and the efficiency with which the war policy shall be carried out—and I think that view is held by the members of this House and by the country at large—we can only have an efficient war policy carried out with due regard to what we have already done, with due regard to the men who are at the front, and with due regard to their support, through one method, and that is the method of selective conscription.

Do we think that or do we not? The votes of this House, with 27 of them from the other side, affirm that most solemnly in this House and the votes of this House, with 27 from the party led by my right honourable friend voting along that line, reechoed the sentiment of this country—a sentiment that a man with red blood in his veins ought to have due respect for. They did not echo the sentiment of the slacker, of the soap-box orator on the streets of Montreal or in any other city. They did not represent the policy of Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Lavergne. They did not represent the policy of dozens of members on the other side of the House who supported my right honourable friend and who subscribed to the idea that Canada had done enough. There is no one here more glad, or more proud that Canada has done what she has done for the success of this war, than those who cast those votes, and by and large they represent the sterling national, loyal sentiment of this country from one end of it to the other. That, then, is the position to which we have come.

This franchise is meant to strengthen that sentiment. That is the purpose of this franchise and that is the purpose which I think it will achieve. Have we not a right to strengthen that sentiment? You say that 300,000 of our men have gone out from this country—the pick of its citizenship? That is true. Of these men, only a certain proportion can by any possibility give their votes. Not a single one of them can use his legitimate and usual influence in this country towards the determination of what the policy of the Government shall be. The dust of thirty thousand of these men lies silent on the other side of the ocean. Others are imprisoned, others are interned, and others are incapacitated in various ways.

When this country comes in a few months to register its voice as to whether those men shall be supported and this war