

liament but another step in the temporizing attitude that has been displayed? Is it real, or is it placed before parliament for its psychological effect? If it is real it will give hope to the millions of Canadians who voted in favour of relieving the government, and hope to our men overseas, who when they enter the battle must realize the necessity of having reinforcements at home, or has it another purpose, namely, to delude Canadians into believing that something will be done, to temporize once more, to beguile the united nations into believing that Canada has an all-out war effort? For you will remember that the Prime Minister throughout his speech maintained that one of the most serious situations in which Canada found herself to-day was the fact that throughout the world her attitude was misinterpreted. His words were these:

If there is any wisdom in removing false impressions surely the sooner they are removed the better.

The false impression is removed when the section is deleted, but so far as action is concerned there is no hope whatsoever. I ask the Prime Minister: in the removal of this section is it the real thing that we now see? Is it selective service for overseas, as was pointed out so brilliantly and eloquently by the hon. member for Richelieu-Verchères (Mr. Cardin)? Is it the real thing, or is it just an imitation based upon political expediency which the Minister of Agriculture implied should at all times be considered?

To sum up, I say that the record of this government as regards man-power has been a record of promises, postponements, plebiscite, and now procrastination.

Mr. McNIVEN: And 600,000 men on active service.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: A brilliant record of enlistments; no doubt about that. But that is not the record of the government; that is the record of the people of Canada, who are willing and anxious to serve. Only those who serve can boast of that service.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): And there are not 600,000 on active service.

Mr. McNIVEN: There surely are.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: The hon. member for Regina City (Mr. McNiven) will be able to make his speech in due course.

Mr. HOMOUTH: Figures don't mean much to him, anyway.

Mr. McCANN: They're as good as yours.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: The Prime Minister implied that the repeal of this section means

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

that the government is empowered to act. It may act, and again it may not. The hon. member for Richelieu-Verchères, who was a member of that government when this measure was introduced, says that it means a surreptitious form of overseas conscription. I say to the government that the Canadian people are aroused, they are angered, they are discouraged, as a result of government inaction. We complain about parliament; we say that parliament to-day is not appreciated throughout the country. How can you expect parliament to occupy the high plane which the British house occupied in the days of Burke, when members were prepared, regardless of the views of their leaders, to stand up for the opinions they believed in; when there was government by parliament, not government by caucus? If there is one redeeming feature of this debate, it is this, that men who heretofore have seen fit to follow their party regardless of personal opinions are going to stand up during this debate and express the views of their constituents and support the things in which they personally believe. I say to the government that it cannot forever procrastinate; it cannot forever fight this delaying action, if the morale of the people of Canada is to be maintained.

What is the policy of the administration? Where are we going? What stand does the government take? "We don't know where we're going, but we're on our way" may be political expediency, but it cannot be or become a battle slogan for a country at war. The Prime Minister in the plebiscite asked for a release because he said the government was hobbled, and he declared that when the release came action would be taken. Well, if action is to be taken on the basis of what was said to-day by the Minister of Agriculture, then the 600,000 who were spoken of a moment ago, three million who voted "yes," have been hoodwinked. What is more serious, the Prime Minister says to parliament in effect that it will not get a second chance to discuss this matter, having this power in the hands of the government, in the hands of the governor in council, and that so far as parliament is concerned it shall be handcuffed in that it will henceforth be unable to deal with this matter.

It may be said that I am going too far. But what rights have we as private members when we pass this legislation and place this power in the hands of the government of the day? Private members' days are gone. True, we have an opportunity to move the adjournment of the house, but only under the gravest circumstances. So far as parliament is concerned this is our last opportunity to bring