

I think a clerk could make a copy within an hour or two. When will the return be brought down?

Hon. C. J. DOHERTY: The matter has not yet been brought to my attention, but I will make inquiry at once and expedite the bringing down of the return.

MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1917.

DEBATE CONTINUED ON MOTION FOR SECOND READING.

Consideration of the motion of the right hon. Sir Robert Borden (Prime Minister) for the second reading of Bill No. 75, Military Service Act, 1917, resumed from Tuesday, June 19.

Hon. T. W. CROTHERS (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to delay the adoption of this measure longer than a few minutes, for I believe that in a few sentences I can fairly show ample justification for the acceptance of the principle of this Bill both by the House and by the country. There are a few outstanding facts which I desire to bring to the attention of the House. In the month of August, 1914, we determined not only to join in this world-war, but to stay in it until victory should crown the efforts of the Allies. The time has come when, in order to continue in the war properly, we must have more men to send to the front. It is admitted by every one that more men cannot be secured under the voluntary system.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Not at all.

Mr. CROTHERS: Well, if that is not admitted by my hon. friend, the facts show that is the case. The time has come when the only way of filling the gaps and answering the call of our men who are fighting in the trenches is by the adoption of compulsory service, and the question before the House at the present time is whether or not we shall adopt the principle of this Bill. A considerable time has been devoted to the discussion of the details of the Bill, but I submit that it is entirely out of order at this stage. It is the principle of this Bill which is or which should be under discussion on its second reading.

When war was declared against Germany by the British Government on the 4th of August, 1914, every part of the British Empire, including Canada, became thereby at war with Germany. It is within the memory of the members of this House that on the 1st of August, 1914,

when a declaration of war appeared imminent, this Government proffered the assistance of Canada to the British Government, and that offer was accepted as soon as war was declared. We at once proceeded to get ready to render all the assistance in our power. Parliament was summoned for the 18th of August, 1914. There were then three or four courses open to us. We might have sat down and calculated the cost of participating in this world-wide war. We might have considered that it would involve the organization, equipment, and transportation of a large army. We might have reckoned on losing thousands upon thousands of our best and bravest lives in this great contest. We might have calculated that it would make thousands of women widows, and thousands of children fatherless. We might have thought of all the burdens that would be placed on our shoulders by participation in this war—burdens which are not likely to be removed during our day. We might have considered all these things and said: We refuse to take any part in this war. That, of course, would have meant severing our connection with the British Empire. But there was not a man in this House, or in this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, who suggested that we should sever our connection with the Mother Country and strike out for independence. Or we might have said: We are nearly three years removed from consultation with the electorate, and the last time we consulted them the question of war was not considered at all. My right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, if he had been as anxious for a referendum then as he is to-day, might have said what we have heard repeated over and over again in this House, "We have no mandate from the people to participate in this war, and we ought therefore to have a referendum;" and then there would have been some reason in it. Or he might have said: The House should be dissolved and a general election held. But no one in this House suggested that we should have a referendum or a general election before participating in this war. We were here representing the people of this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and we thought we knew how the people of this country felt on the question of the war. We were all agreed as to the course to be taken.

Let us see what was said at that time by the right hon. Prime Minister and the right hon. leader of the Opposition. Sir Robert Borden said:—