

EXTENSION OF THE LIFE OF PARLIAMENT.

ON Tuesday, July 17th, the Right Hon. Sir Robert Borden moved in the House of Commons the following motion, praying for an extension of the life of Parliament:

"That an humble address be presented to His Most Excellent Majesty the King, in the following words:—

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty:

Most Gracious Sovereign:

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of Canada, in Parliament assembled, humbly approach Your Majesty praying that you may graciously be pleased to give your consent to submit a measure to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, to amend the British North America Act, 1867, in the manner following, or to the following effect:

"An Act to amend the British North America Act, 1867."

Be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords, Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. Notwithstanding anything in the British North America Act, 1867, or in any Act amending the same, or in any Order in Council, or terms or conditions of Union, made or approved under the said Act, or under any Act of the Canadian Parliament, the term of the Twelfth Parliament of Canada is hereby extended until the Seventh day of October, 1918.

2. This Act may be cited as the British North America Act, 1917, and the British North America Act, 1867 to 1916, and this Act may be cited together as the British North America Act, 1867 to 1917.

All of which we humbly pray Your Majesty to take into your favourable and gracious consideration."

In introducing this motion the Premier stated:

In my judgment, the reasons for proposing this motion ARE QUITE AS STRONG TO-DAY AS THEY WERE IN 1916, and perhaps stronger. They are fully set forth in the remarks which I addressed to the House at that time. I need only summarize them now. In the first place, there would be, consequent upon a general election, disunion and discord throughout this country. There has, up to the present time, been at least a seeming unity. Outside and inside of Parliament men have worked together without regard to party or race or creed. I believe that party political questions have not been very much in the minds of the people during the last three years, and I would hope that we might, on this occasion, arrive at some conclusion WHICH WOULD PREVENT THE CONTROVERSY AND DISTRACTION CONSEQUENT upon a general election. More than that, the minds, the thoughts, the energies of the people would be diverted and turned aside from the supreme purpose of aiding in this war, and would be concentrated on political issues of relative insignificance. In short, a general election would leave, at least might leave, a divided nation. Besides that, I desire to emphasize the fact that the time and the energies of the ministers of the Crown during a general election would necessarily be diverted from the conduct of our country's participation in the war to the activities of a political campaign. It goes without question that members of the Government could not remain silent under attack. They would be obliged to speak and to use their best efforts to justify themselves and the Administration for which they were responsible. In short, they would be obliged to take one course or the other; either to devote their energies largely to the purpose of a political campaign, or to let that campaign take care of itself, and continue, as they have been doing in the past, to devote their entire energies to the duties which are imposed upon them by the necessities of the war.

The Premier also referred to the great necessity of supplying reinforcements for our Canadian soldiers at the front. He went on to show how that in Great Britain and in New Zealand extensions of the Parliamentary term had been secured. Sir Robert stated further that he did not propose to press this motion, if this motion could not be carried in this Parliament by a unanimous or practically unanimous vote. He concluded his remarks by the following appeal:

It will be for my right hon. friend to see for himself

the path of his duty, and to decide the responsibility which appertains to him as he may think that duty demands. So, my final word of appeal to this House is that this motion may be passed with that practical unanimity which will enable us to present it to the Imperial Parliament for the necessary action and ratification by them, and I believe in doing so we will be taking a course which none of us, at any time in the future, can regret, a course absolutely in the interests of this Dominion, of this Empire, and of the great cause for which our troops at the front are fighting to-day.

Immediately following the speech of the Right Hon. Sir Robert Borden, the Hon. George P. Graham moved the following amendment to the resolution asking for an extension of the Life of Parliament.

The amendment which Mr. Graham moved was as follows:

"That all the words after the word "that" in the said resolution be struck out and the following be substituted therefor.

"In the opinion of this House the consideration of the terms of said resolution should be deferred until the Government brings before Parliament measures providing that those best able to pay will be asked to contribute their full share to the cost of the war and by which all agricultural, industrial, transportation and natural resources of Canada will be organized so as to insure the greatest possible assistance to the Empire in the war, and to reduce the cost of living to the Canadian people."

In introducing this amendment Mr. Graham stated:

National War Organization.

The amendment has not been sprung upon this House. I gave notice of it several weeks ago, intending to move it on going into Committee of Supply, but not succeeding, as an opportunity was not afforded me to move that resolution, I take the opportunity of moving it to-day. I may say frankly that I did not care to move this on the third reading of the Military Service Bill to which I have referred. Had I done so, a great many hon. gentlemen would have said that the hon. member for South Renfrew (Mr. Graham) was retarding the Military Service Bill. Consequently, I am moving it to-day in the proper place and, I believe, at the proper hour, and I would ask serious consideration of the few observations I am going to make.

What is Necessary.

It is useless to send men to the front, either voluntarily or forcibly, unless we are prepared to back them up. We must feed, finance, equip and clothe them. We not only have to finance, feed, clothe and equip these men at the front, but we have to finance ourselves, and we have to feed the people of Canada. In addition to that, we have to produce all the food possible to assist our Allies. In all the discussions that have taken place in the United States, in Great Britain and in France, the questions of food supply and finance have been considered only secondary to the question of the supply of men. We in Canada appear to think that we have done our duty if we have passed a measure providing for the raising of a certain number of men. We are not helping the Allies one iota if we provide men and do not provide to fully feed and equip them. Instead of helping the Allies, we are placing a burden on them.

Finances.

Let me take up the question of finance for a moment. Hon. gentlemen will see, when I move the amendment,