

gard, and for my own part, although I approve of the principles of this Bill, I cannot too strongly impress on the Government the advisability of not putting it in force at the present time. I would suggest that all the members of this House get together, as true Canadians desirous of winning this war, and commence one of the grandest and most enthusiastic propagandas in favour of recruiting that could be undertaken, and I hope and believe that by that means we will be able to fill up the ranks.

I do that for two reasons. We have the honour of having volunteers, freemen, in France. I would like to see Canada retain that proud honour. I would like to have it said that while France, England, Germany, Italy, Serbia have conscripted men for military service, Canada has had the proud distinction of sending an army of voluntary freemen to fight in this great struggle. That is the first reason. The second is this: I think that that is the best way of maintaining in this great crisis harmony and peace among our people. Nothing is more desirable than that at the present time.

I have stated some of the reasons that impel me to vote for the second reading of this measure. There are others. The Prime Minister has returned from England, from the heart of this great war, having had conferences with the statesmen of the whole Empire. He has informed the House and the people of Canada that there is a pressing need for reinforcement of the Canadian forces at the front, that the need is, indeed, very pressing and that without reinforcements our Canadian soldiers will not receive from their fellow countrymen the support that they have the right to expect and obtain. Mr. Speaker, I am not bold enough to say that the Prime Minister is wrong; that is one reason why I support this measure.

Again, a message from a son of my own county, Sir Arthur Currie, an intimate friend of my own, has recently been conveyed to the Canadian people. Sir Arthur Currie is a man who sprang from the plain people of this land, from whom have come so many of our great men. He was born almost within sight of the birthplace of his great fellow countryman, Edward Blake. He is not one of those Canadians who have had knighthood thrust upon them on account of fictitious political services; he is one of those who have achieved greatness and who have deserved it. I know the Irish-Scotch stock from which he springs. I know his people. I know his integrity. I have faith in his judgment and his pat-

[Mr. Ross.]

riotism. I believe that no man in Canada is better able to tell us what the needs of the Canadian force at the front are to-day. He has made an appeal to the men of Canada and to the men of Middlesex, and I, as his neighbour and friend, and as one born in the same county, do say that the people of that county would condemn me, and properly so, if I did not listen to that appeal. He knows that Canada and Canada's sons are fighting, and have fought most nobly, the battles of liberty and of civilization. He knows the strength of the enemy; he knows their determination; he knows the needs of the hour, I base my decision largely upon the faith that I have in him and upon the faith that I believe every man in this country places in him. I would not, Mr. Speaker, be following the advice which his aged mother gave him when he left his home in Middlesex if I did not do as I am doing. Her advice to all her children, as I saw it reported in one of the daily papers, was "Be honest to yourself." In simple language, this proud mother quoted Shakespeare, who said:

To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

For this and other reasons, Mr. Speaker, I feel that I would not be true to myself, to my country, or to the cause for which the world is struggling, did I not by voting for this measure endeavour to send to the Canadians at the front such support as will enable them to gain victory for Canadian arms and liberty for the world.

For Canada these are fateful and critical times. On the momentous decisions of the hour hangs the fate, not of the Canadian battlefield only, but of our country in the days to come. It is a time for calm, reflective judgment, not for noisy agitation. Canada's leaders and Canada's people hold the future in their keeping. They have inherited proud traditions and priceless liberties. Sad, indeed, will be Canada's fate if, in this day of testing, her people fail. But Canada will not fail. Democracy has unsheathed the sword and will not turn back until its enemies are completely destroyed.

Mr. R. E. TRUAX (South Bruce): Mr. Speaker, this is one of the most important matters that has been considered by this House since Confederation. It affects the whole of the Canadian people, and for that reason will have to be very carefully considered.

When I was home about ten days ago, I was asked what had become of about 75,000