

not; or whether we was of age or not, whether he should go to the front or not. I find in this country men of my acquaintance of my age who have never served in any military capacity whose consciences are disturbing them constantly because they are not at the front. Their place if they led sedentary lives at home. There is a great difference between national service and conscription. Under conscription the names of the men in the community are taken and put in a hat. If twenty men are needed twenty names are drawn out. It used to be the custom with conscription, and I do not think any law has been passed to change it, that if a rich man's name were drawn he could hire a poor boy a substitute to take his place. That form of conscription bore very hardly on the poor. But in France, where they have national service, the mother who rocks the boy in the cradle knows he has to fight for France and she glories in that. Many of them told me last year they were glad their boys would be old enough and able to take part in the war. Talk about their conduct in this war! Our ideas of the French people are in many cases entirely erroneous. The ideas put in books by novelists are often contemptible. There are no finer people, no more casual people, no more cool and collected people under danger—and I have seen them in the fight, in the middle of it—than the French. One of our officers, a Highlander, and a very brave man, who was wounded the other day, said to me: These Frenchmen in front of us carry on this battle just as casually as if they were working on a railroad job. Anybody who has seen them fighting knows that there is no chance in the world of the Germans winning, so far as fighting is concerned. The social qualities of the French and their discipline are very good. They were holding nearly 400 miles of these trenches I have described to you while the great British Empire was holding something like 35 miles. So you can understand the work and labours they had and the difficulties with which they had to contend. When we got into trouble their brigades marched to our assistance, took their places and helped us out and helped to finish the big battle of Ypres, which ended in a victory for the Allies, because it stopped the great German rush on the west front for a year. They have national service in France. If we had had national service we would have had no difficulty now; everybody would have known that he had his place, and then there would not have been

any qualms of conscience in the breasts of those who are now wondering if they should not get into khaki because I or somebody else has done so. They would have their place, and their proper place perhaps would be on the lines of communication; perhaps behind the men in the trenches, or perhaps legislating here. The legislators in France have to attend to their duties, even if men are fighting at the front. We must get the 500,000 men, and I feel satisfied that, in view of the martial ardour of the people of this country—and I am speaking now more particularly of the Canadians, who number over 80 per cent of the population—we will get them; there is no doubt about that. Even if we have to take action, even if we have to adopt some form of national service, I think 90 per cent of the people of this country would say immediately, "Amen, let the older men take our places and let the younger men go." Why should a middle aged man with a large family go to fight in this war, and leave the young fellows who have no ties to stay at home? I received a letter the other day from a man at the front who is 53 years of age, and who has a wife and twelve children at home, and for over 12 months he has been under fire in the trenches. It is very unfair that a man of his years and position should have to go when there are hundreds of young men in the country quite capable of bearing arms; and it would be the best thing in the world for them.

We must get these men as quickly as possible. The nation that has the greatest number of men, the largest number of guns, and the greatest amount of equipment at the front, is the nation that is going to win this war. We must not say: We cannot do this, and we must not expend this or that money, because the war is likely to stop soon. Do not believe, gentlemen of the House of Commons, that this war is going to end in six months or in a year. The Germans have won so far; bear that in mind, and whilst they may want peace, and whilst it would be to their interest to secure peace at this moment—and nobody knows that better than the Germans themselves—we should see to it that they do not get peace. What has kept us back was our lack of preparation. Germany has got 65 per cent of industrial France; she has the coal mines and the iron mines; and she has Austria, for Austria will be the lamb that will lie down inside the German lion when this war is over. There will be no Austrian emperor then; take that for