

There have gone from the city of Montréal some six or seven thousand French and Belgian reservists, who are fighting as only French and Belgians can fight. At the Marne, Verdun and other places we have had ample evidence that the French soldier has not deteriorated. Under this Bill the women relatives of these men are disqualified, and I say that a greater injustice could not be done. These French and Belgian reservists came to this country as to a new promised land, where they thought they would enjoy all the advantages of a new country. Many of them married Canadian women, British subjects by birth and descent, and these women are being disfranchised by this Bill. We are told that that is because it is impossible to get at the Russian reservists who left this country to serve in the Russian army. But the fact that an injustice may be done to the women relatives of Russian reservists in this country does not justify an injustice to the women relatives of the French and Belgian reservists in this country. I am sure that if any consideration had been given to this point before the measure was introduced the franchise would have been extended to the women relatives of the Belgian and French reservists as well as to the relatives of the Canadian soldiers.

We have heard representations from the West on the question of debarring the Germans and Austrians from voting. I was sorry, in the early days of the session, to see some of our friends breaking away from us on the Military Service Bill, which was indeed an anti-Liberal Bill. But I am glad to see that on the question of maintaining the sanctity of British citizenship, these men have come back to Liberal ideals and to the Liberal fold. The greatest thing a British subject can boast of is his British citizenship. The British Empire has maintained an army and has waged war in all parts of the world for the purpose of defending British subjects, simply because they were British subjects. These German and Austrians have come to this country trusting in the promises which were sown broadcast in the literature that was distributed throughout Europe. They trusted in the promises made by our immigration agents, trusted in the speeches of Canadian statesmen who have often declared that Canada was to be a free land, the equal of the United States. Now that these people are in this country they find themselves treated as the French were treated in Alsace-Lorraine, and as the

people of Poland are being treated by Germany. What a spectacle that is for a young country like Canada to give to the world. Canada has always boasted that she was, par excellence, the land where all classes could come. Under Liberal rule, thousands and thousands of people from all parts of the world invaded our Canadian West. Every day they came in by the thousands, and the total immigration for one year amounted to 350,000 or 400,000. Three years after the advent of the Liberal party to power, the new provinces were formed in the West, and a great many of us had the pleasure of voting for granting autonomy to those provinces. We told the people who came from all parts of the world and settled there that they were becoming citizens of a British country, and would receive the protection of the British flag, and that their rights and privileges would be respected for all time to come. But to-day we are departing from that promise. We are doing what Wilhelm of Germany did when he tore up the treaty by which he had bound himself to maintain Belgian independence. We are treating our promises to these people as a scrap of paper. I am sorry that the brilliant Secretary of State, a man who no doubt has a great future before him, should have supported a measure so unfair and unjust as the one before the House, which deprives these men of their votes, and deprives the French and Belgian women of the sacred rights which they have in common with their sisters of other nationalities. In after years, like many another distinguished man who has played a part in the history of this country, he may find that he has made a mistake. A right is a right, and a wrong is a wrong. Canada has done great things in the past. We have had several examples of British fair play in this country. We have performed wonders in the material, industrial and political spheres, and have astonished the world. I am sure the world has been impressed with what Canada has done since 1914. We have sent across to the other side an army of nearly 300,000 men, all of them ready to give their lives for the cause they thought sacred. It is true that the province of Quebec was not represented as largely as it should have been, but if the numbers were not there, the quality was. The French Canadian troops who fought at Courcellette, Vimy Ridge, Festubert, and Givenchy have proved themselves the equal of any soldier who fought on those battlefields.