

As everybody knows, many of them did cross the forty-fifth boundary line and still a larger number were preparing to follow suit. In 1913, 1914, and up to the declaration of war, things were far from being bright. A large portion of our people were complaining and justly so. The war changed this condition of affairs. Labour has greatly increased and wages have been more remunerative. The working men's conditions have improved; they have been able to support their families properly, to meet their obligations and, moreover, to lay a little in store for the future. The workmen therefore have until now improved their position. It has just been learnt, as shown by the motion of the hon. member for Pictou, and with much apprehension, that this munition labour is on the point of ceasing. For some time I have had a personal knowledge of the fact, for in the country-place where I live, which is close to the town of Saint-Laurent, the Canada Store Co., which have, since 1914, been producing munitions and employing quite a number of hands, have begun discharging them. It is the same with the Dominion Bridge Co., in Lachine, and it is generally rumoured that this war industry may fully cease ere long. If that be so, it is a most regrettable affair. It is said that necessity knows no law, and the axiom is well known; but it seems to me that this work should not be discontinued, seeing that the war is still on and that it must unfortunately last too long, and seeing also that the munitions are absolutely indispensable for the war. I am asking myself Mr. Speaker, whether it is fair that Canada pay millions and millions to assist the Empire, the mother-country; whether it is fair to take our own country's money and send it over to London for the making of munitions to be used by those who are fighting for our country. Humbly I say: no. If it is necessary that we still contribute to help England financially, it seems to me that, at least, the millions we are to subscribe should be spent here, if possible. Is it right to take our money and send it oversea to manufacture the necessary fighting weapons which will be put into the hands of our boys from Canada? No, Mr. Speaker, justice demands that the money we advance, the money we subscribe for the manufacture of munitions, be spent in Canada; if we do not do that, we are recreant to duty of justice. What will those workmen employed in munition

[Mr. D. A. Lafortune.]

shops say when they see themselves thrown on the streets, just before the bad weather, Autumn is close upon us and winter will soon follow. Where will these workmen find any work? In summer time, one can find something to do almost anywhere, as in navigation, in construction, for instance, and in a lot of other occupations, but such is not the case in winter, and hundreds and thousands of men, women and children will be given up to the greatest want, if we discharge them from the munition factories. I repeat it, if it is necessary to continue subscribing and advancing millions to the mother-country, let us see to it that, at least, the money we so advance remains in Canada, that the materials needed for the making of those munitions, such as iron, steel, copper, wood, etc., be materials taken from Canada. It seems to me only fair and just.

I was glad, Mr. Speaker, to hear the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce state that Canada had done her duty. Very well! I agree with him, but he has been saying this only recently. The hon. minister and his friends have always declared, always maintained that Canada had not done her duty, and that it was therefore, necessary to impose—compulsory military service—to force those who had not contributed adequately, to discharge the duty they had neglected.

When I hear the Minister of Trade and Commerce reproaching the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) with being inconsistent, because he asked that the shell manufacture be continued in the country; when I hear the learned minister say: Don't you see how illogical and inconsistent, you are now, in asking that munitions continue to be manufactured in Canada, you who did not want to have anything to do with the war, who did not want to consent to the imposition of compulsory military service. And he tried to prove the inconsistency of the hon. member for Pictou.

I may say to the hon. minister that he is not more logical, and in my humble opinion, he is less consistent because the hon. member for Pictou did not contradict himself, did not show any lack of logic in asking that, inasmuch as it was necessary, if any munitions were to be made for the war, such munitions, at least, should be made in Canada. There is no contradiction in that.

I, myself, have voted and I shall again vote most heartily against compulsory