

Bill, or to elaborate argument with regard to the principle of the measure.

Hon. WILLIAM PUGSLEY (St. John): Mr. Speaker, I feel quite sure that all the members of the House approve the desire of the minister to give to our soldiers an opportunity of casting their vote. While every reasonable opportunity for their doing so should be afforded, it is necessary to surround with every safeguard the casting of the vote and the return of the ballots to Canada in order to make sure that the ballots finally counted shall be the ballots which were cast by the electors. Certain provisions which might well be inserted are absent from the Bill; but, as my hon. friend says, that is a matter which can be considered in committee. I should like, however, to take this opportunity of asking the minister if we are to assume, from the fact that women engaged in the expeditionary forces are to be allowed to vote, that during the present session a Bill will be introduced giving the women of Canada generally the right to vote. It would be somewhat anomalous to give this right only to those who serve in the expeditionary force; there should be one law dealing with women generally throughout Canada. Those women who have remained at home and have performed duties in connection with Red Cross and patriotic work generally in such manner as to call forth the admiration of the world are just as much entitled to recognition as those who have gone to the front in the capacity of nurses.

Mr. DOHERTY: I am not prepared at this moment to give a categorical answer to my hon. friend's question. In the preparation of this Bill we were looking at the whole subject with a view to seeing that the right to vote was conferred upon every person who had taken part in the active military service of the country. That being so, we did not, by reason of sex, exclude from the provisions of the Bill those women who were doing service with the Canadian Expeditionary Forces. My hon. friend speaks of that as being an anomalous condition. But if that is anomalous it would be equally anomalous to include expressly the Indian, who is excluded from the general voting because he is an Indian. Likewise, this measure makes no distinction of age; it does not require that the soldier who votes as a soldier should be of the full age. That, I suppose, might, according to my hon. friend, be subject to the same sugges-

tion of being anomalous. The quality of having given active military service—service in any way connected with the military operations of this war—overrode other considerations. But that did not, we thought, imply that with regard to other persons those considerations should be overridden. We have been looking at the matter exclusively from the point of view of the military vote.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I am sorry that my hon. friend is not able to give an assurance that the inclusion of women in the provisions of this Bill is an indication that the Government intends to ask Parliament to extend the franchise to women generally. I am not prepared to say that I would favour the granting of the right of suffrage to women simply because they served with the Expeditionary Forces, unless that principle is to be applied also to a broader measure that would extend to all women of the country the right to vote.

It is provided by the Bill that any person, who has enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Forces, whether a resident of Canada or not, shall be entitled to vote at the next general election. I think that is going entirely too far; the right should be limited to those who have been residents of Canada. For instance, a British subject who is a resident of the United States, and who, because of his desire to engage in the war in the interests of the Empire, enlists, for the sake of convenience, with the Canadian Expeditionary Forces, would be entitled to vote as a Canadian elector. I do not see why that should be the case. I assume that such a man joins the Canadian Expeditionary Force because of a desire not to aid Canada but to aid the Empire. I am unable to understand why, simply because of that fact, he should be allowed to vote at a Canadian election. If he is a British subject resident in any other part of the Empire, he would have the right to vote in that portion of the Empire in which he is resident. The right to vote should be limited to those who have been residents of Canada. Section 3 of the Bill makes provision that if this class of voter is not able, by reason of non-residence, to select any particular district in which he is entitled to vote, he is allowed to select any district he pleases. That strikes me as being very objectionable. A British subject resident in the United States, never having resided in Canada, may select any district that he pleases, in any portion of the Dominion, in which his vote shall be cast. To my mind, very great in-