

tious co-operation of Canadians of all parties, all classes, all provinces—I believe that Canadian patriotism would yet make the actual operation of the compulsory service measure unnecessary. Such an appeal, backed by an earnest educational campaign, and conducted in the true spirit, would, I verily believe, result in the coming forward of the 100,000 men required, and more. If this can thus be done—and I believe it yet can—is it not worth while to save a situation fraught with serious possibilities of schism and strife, a situation which may all too easily produce a moral effect neither creditable to Canada nor helpful to the cause we aim to serve. I sincerely trust that the Prime Minister will give earnest consideration to this suggestion.

I have to disagree with many of my party, and with my honored and revered chief, but let me assure the House that I have thought long and earnestly over these matters—so long and so earnestly—that my conclusions are no longer opinions; they have become sincere convictions.

Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN (Solicitor General): No one could be present during this debate, or, if not present, could look out with intelligent mind on the manifestations of sentiment everywhere appearing without being convinced that this discussion is of greater consequence than any that has ever before taken place in this Parliament. I say that, not because the issue is in doubt. Substantial unanimity, though not entire unanimity, on this side of the House would perhaps carry the Bill. But the courage of certain hon. gentlemen on the other side of the Chamber—courage in an hour of trial—has placed the issue beyond all doubt at all. However, it is not the mere passage of the measure that is of final consequence. It is the enforcement of the Bill that we must keep in mind. It is not so much the enactment of law as obedience to law that counts. That is why this Bill should be thoroughly considered, and why the debate should be conducted in such a spirit, and with such a purpose, as will afford an example to the people of Canada. The right and honourable thing must be done. The right and honourable thing will be done. The right and honourable thing is embodied in this Bill. But the important duty of members of Parliament is to see to it that we make plain to every reasonable man to the four corners of this Dominion, that we pass this Bill, and enforce it, only because it is the right thing to do—that we do so, far from any spirit of vindictiveness, or for any

unworthy or insufficient reason, but because, in this crisis of the nation, it is the only right thing to do. It will become us, also, to demonstrate in this House—to be in this House a reflection of the overwhelming sentiment of this country, that the war in which we are engaged must be pressed on to victory by the only means in which it can be pressed.

I regard the forwarding of troops to the front as a necessity, as an all-essential, as something we cannot shirk. Does anybody dispute that? Whatever means are necessary to procure these men, they must be sent, and whatever action is necessary on our part to support our army at present in France, we must adopt. No one has seriously argued in this House—and I give every hon. gentleman the credit of saying no one seriously believes—that we can dispatch 350,000 men overseas, commissioned by us to stand between our country and destruction, and leave them to be decimated and destroyed. The obligation of honour is upon us, it is the plainest obligation that ever was placed on a nation. The obligation of honour is fortified by the primary obligation of all people to protect the security of the state. There is no other way in which either the honour or the security of the state can be preserved.

In the next place, we are able to send these men; we have the men to send. Does anybody dispute that? It is argued feebly by some that we require all our men for our industrial, commercial and agricultural pursuits. True, we can use them all here; there are opportunities in Canada to occupy them all. But surely a reasonable mind must agree that we need them far more sorely in France. It is true that we cannot send them without some inconvenience. The soldiers who represent France on that 350-mile battle line in Europe are not there without inconvenience to the people at home; neither are the soldiers who represent Great Britain. When the men are sent away, necessarily, more women will be employed in our factories, more old men will be employed on our street cars, more boys will be employed on farms during the summer instead of passing their time at lake resorts. There might even be a very small diminution of production in Canada. But all this we can afford infinitely better than we can afford to allow our lines in France to be decimated, weakened or destroyed. We can afford the men; we must send them; what other way is there of sending them?

Some have suggested that if we withdrew this Bill we could sustain our forces