

gram which he read in the course of his address, that such was the opinion of the Government and of the Prime Minister himself. But I have another authority. Would it surprise members of the House when I say that the former Minister of Militia, who gave us yesterday a lecture on constitutional law, was of the same opinion? In Hansard of August, 1914, I read the following words, page 95:

Mr. A. K. Maclean: In the event of further Canadian troops going to the front, will the system of volunteering be continued, or will the militia be asked to go in a body?

Sir Sam Hughes: I might point out that upwards of 100,000 men have already volunteered, but we are only able to take 22,000, although I am told 27,000 have got on the trains. They simply climbed on and we couldn't keep them off.

Recruiting was going well at that time. He continued:

So far as my own personal views are concerned, I am absolutely opposed to anything that is not voluntary in any sense—

These are the words that I want the House to note.

—and I do not read in the law that I have any authority to ask Parliament to allow troops other than volunteers to leave the country.

Sir, holding as I do the strong opinion that this Bill is a departure from the rules and principles which have hitherto prevailed, I submit that such a departure cannot be made without the consent and the sanction of the people. The moral unity of Canada cannot be maintained or secured without government of the people and by the people, and the ruling of the majority. I believe in democratic principles in time of war as in time of peace. To this Parliament, which has outlived its constitutional existence, in which a large section of the people of Canada is not represented and which is asked to pass an arbitrary measure of compulsion, I commend these words of Burke:

Let the Commons in Parliament assembled be one and the same thing with the commons at large. The distinctions that are made to separate us are unnatural and wicked contrivances. Let us identify, let us incorporate ourselves with the people.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce said that the proposal of a referendum was a dilatory expedient calculated only to delay the application of the law. My best answer to this argument is that the delay involved will not be greater than that which would have resulted had the proposal of the Prime Minister been accepted. The offer was to form a coalition

Cabinet, pass this Bill and appeal to the country to put it into force. Where is the difference? Is it a crime that we should ask that the people be consulted in this matter by the only means which is at our disposal?

Sir, I ask the Government to be loyal to the Canadian people. I ask the Prime Minister to reconsider his decision; to reconcile the country, which is now threatened with internal trouble and disruption. The only way to do that is to accept the amendment of the leader of the Opposition and trust the Canadian people.

Mr. J. A. BARRETTE (Berthier) (translation): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister introduced in the House the Military Service Bill, he stated in plain words that the measure was not inspired from Downing Street but that he it was who on his own impulse as head of the Canadian people, had taken upon himself to frame such an Act. He thinks the seriousness of the present emergency justifies his introducing compulsory service, whatever disastrous consequences may follow in the wake of such a measure, which may well be said to be the bane of Canada's welfare. My sense of duty urges me to express openly in this House my views in the matter and the opinion of my constituents. I shall discuss the issue dispassionately in the light of reason and facts.

I admit that since the declaration of war, all measures tending to Canada's participation in the struggle have received the undivided support of both sides of the House; no dissentient voice was heard. To this day we have done our share of our own free will, and so long as our participation has been voluntary the Canadian people have nobly done their duty. Last January, the Prime Minister was invited to London to attend the Imperial War Conference, and he came back more of an Imperialist than ever. Allow me to suggest, Mr. Speaker, the necessity of inserting at once in the Statutes a very important piece of legislation prohibiting the Prime Minister of Canada from going out of the country during his term of office. Since 1896, every time a Canadian minister has gone overseas to represent Canada at imperial conferences, he returned an imperialist to the core, blind to the true interests of the Canadian people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I must acquaint the House with the position I took previously on this important matter. In October, 1916, at a largely attended meeting held at Berthierville, in the presence of the ex-Secretary of State (Mr. Patenaude), I stated to the electors of my county and my pro-