

*Mobilization Act—Mr. Church*

that campaign. The Toronto members were invited by the Canadian corps and Canadian Legion to attend a meeting to boom the plebiscite. I would not have attended it otherwise, as I did not believe in the said citizens' committee or that a thing would be done on this vote. One of the members of the government was there. Our members were not allowed to take part in the meeting. I asked the chairman had he any word or undertaking from the government that if we voted "yes" we would get conscription, or a total war effort. He said "no", and now this celebrated committee find out they were fooled, and what they voted for was not carried out.

The Prime Minister has pointed out that one of the main principles of the bill is that parliament has to decide what part it will take in the war. There have been some differences of opinion, but they have been cropping up since the war started. It has been said that Canada did not enter the war for ten days—until September 10. After ten days of neutrality we did enter the war. Then there were some other election speeches which had been made against conscription, and the government got over that difficulty with the plebiscite.

We now have a bill which has for its purpose the striking out of section 3 of the act. As I say, this is merely permissive and enabling legislation. In connection with this matter of recruiting, we have been doing everything by fits and starts. It is a fact that this country should stop, look and listen, because the adoption of the amendment may not make any change in the law as it was, with the exception of section 3.

This measure will not help the overseas part of the war. It will not send any troops over there. It will not conscript troops at the present time, unless it is found necessary. It has strings, riders, and a number of jokers—what would be known by the laymen as "jokers". It has "ifs" and "whens" and "when necessaries", and all that kind of thing. If it is adopted, it is not intended to apply conscription until necessary.

That particular part of the bill is not very clear. It is no more clear than was the plebiscite, and I suggest that it needs some revision. As the Prime Minister said yesterday, it is perfectly clear that the enemy overseas will have to be destroyed, if this continent is not to be the field of final conflict, or the first scene of an invasion. Our provisions for home defence do not amount to the snap of a finger in the beating of Hitler. If we are beaten overseas the battle will be here in a very few hours.

[Mr. Church.]

The motion for second reading of the bill was not necessary, nor was there any necessity for the plebiscite. As I say, there has been too much interference with the war, instead of leaving it to our military leaders to conduct along lines of military strategy. It has been conducted from the political end, and that was the trouble in the far east. There has been interference from statesmen, some of whom have been called politicians. They interfered in the far east with the direction of the military campaign on land, on sea and in the air.

This war is different from the last one. In 1916 the Asquith government went out of office in England because it tried to conduct that war as a Liberal war. Since this war started, the government in Canada have been conducting it as a Liberal war. All along the line it is conducted from the political point of view. I should like to find out if this change in Bill No. 80 was considered by the defence council. Did the defence council advise the government about the situation in Europe? If they did, they did not know what they were talking about. They were not well advised if they said that an overseas army, in addition to what is in England, was not necessary.

I say that because there will have to be another peninsular war. Great British cannot win this war in the air, and we have lost command of the Pacific. I would repeat my question as to whether the defence council were consulted, and if they recommended this amendment. Will they take the responsibility for this bill if Canada is invaded, and any reverse is suffered by our forces. Australia had the same trouble. They wanted the formation of a war cabinet, because they found that political decisions were being given against them, and against the advice of their military leaders in the far east.

I do not see any necessity for this bill. The government was given authority, by a large majority, the largest majority since confederation, to carry on this war. The government has failed all along the line. It is a Liberal war, based on a half-way effort. As Napoleon said, when we gamble with the lives of men we lose the confidence of the troops. That is true to-day. I venture to say that the minute our troops hear what we heard in this chamber yesterday they will be very much surprised, and they will be asking themselves the question as to why they enlisted at all. I say that in this Bill No. 80, from the military point of view and from the point of view of strategy in the war we are taking a gamble of a hundred to one.

The people have not been given the facts. They have not been told the details of the