

FOUR DIFFERENT VIEWS IN HOUSE ON CONSCRIPTION

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**Sir Edward Kemp Points to Need of Another System —
Hon. Mr. Sevigny Supports Bill—Mr. German Favors
Referendum—Dr. Pugsley Against Bill**

(Staff Correspondence of The Globe.)

Ottawa, June 25.—Parliament to-day heard four different views on the conscription issue. The Minister of Militia, Sir Edward Kemp, led off with a defence of the measure which added little new to the arguments or information already before the House. He noted that of the 6,400 recruits during May, only 1,208 had gone to the infantry branch, where, he maintained, the need was greatest. As to the Quebec situation, he said that the recruiting campaign of Col. Blondin and Gen. Lessard had netted only 221 soldiers, and only 92 of these enlisted from the Province of Quebec.

Plea for Appeal to People.

W. M. German, Welland, declared his approval of the conscription principle, and his disapproval of the "Prussianism" which would not trust the people. To refuse the people the right to pronounce upon conscription because it was feared they would not pronounce aright was, he declared, a new doctrine for a free country. "It may be Toryism, but it is not Liberalism and it is not democracy."

In a trenchant and clear-cut address Mr. German hit out hard at the administrative failures of the Government since the war began. The

taint of politics, he said, had run through everything. The present bill he characterized as a bill "not to gain recruits, but to gain an election." While declaring that if a referendum were refused he would have to vote for the bill and do what he could to make it a success, Mr. German made a strong appeal to the Government to adopt the course of submitting the question to the people, after an adequate educational campaign, thus avoiding "discontent, discord, distrust, disunion and disaster."

Hon. Mr. Sevigny Supports Bill.

Hon. Albert Sevigny, Minister of Inland Revenue, in announcing that he would support the bill, "no matter what others may say," declared that feeling was running so high in his Province that his life had been threatened. However, he intended to stand by the Government. His declaration in 1911 that "Canada owes nothing to England" he got round by saying that Canada was not fighting now for England, but with England, and for her own existence.

His attack on Sir Wilfrid Laurier as "an old man of seventy-six years of age who is ending his career by seeing the two races further apart," drew vigorous protests from the Liberal members, by whom Mr. Sevigny's somewhat labored recantation of the

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FOUR DIFFERENT VIEWS ADVANCED IN HOUSE

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Nationalist doctrine he preached in 1911, was cynically received.

Dr. Pugsley Says Case Not Made Out.

The last speaker of the day was Hon. Dr. Pugsley. The failure of the voluntary system he attributed not to the people, but to the Government. He recited some of the sins of omission and commission. He pertinently asked for some statistical demonstration of the truth of the Government's statement that conscription must be resorted to forthwith lest the gaps at the front be left unfilled. The figures given to the House, he said, reveal explanation, and the Prime Minister had made out no case for the sudden breaking of every pledge in regard to conscription given to Parliament and to the people. He believed that the best interests of the war would be served, among the Canadian people maintained, if the referendum were granted. If it were not granted, he declared he would have to vote against the bill, in the belief that the whole situation would be properly cleared up by a new Parliament and a new Administration.

No Reflection Upon Speaker.

When the House met, Mr. L. J. Gauthier, St. Hyacinthe, rose to state that on his return to Ottawa this morning, his attention had been directed to the speaker's reference to his statement that the Barrette amendment calling for a six months' hold for the conscription bill would never have been accepted by the House had it not been engineered by the Government.

"Nothing was in my mind reflecting upon the speaker," observed Mr. Gauthier. "My remarks were directed against the Government solely. If anything in my remarks has been interpreted as a reflection upon the chair, I desire to withdraw them."

Mr. Gauthier's brief statement was greeted by manifestations of approval.

Only Way to Equal Sacrifice.

Sir Edward Kemp, in resuming the debate on the conscription bill, declared that compulsory enlistment was the only method now practicable to remove "the inequalities and injustices of voluntary recruiting," and to secure the needed reinforcements for the front. The fathers and mothers and sisters of Canada, he said, who were now represented at the front demanded that an equal sacrifice should be compelled from others. It was not right that one family should suffer while another went scot-free. Sir Edward regretted that the coalition proposals had fallen through, and he added that not one of Sir Robert Borden's colleagues had objected at all to the Premier's attempt to secure Ministers from the Opposition side of the House.

New Constitutional Authority Cited.

On the constitutional issue as to whether or not the militia act actually gave the Government power to send troops outside Canada in case of emergency, the Minister of Militia quoted one new authority in support of the Government's contention. He referred to a judgment given since the outbreak of the war by Sir Francois Lemieux, Chief Justice of Quebec, in connection with an appeal for the release of a certain private on the ground that the Government had no authority to send an enlisted man out of Canada. The judgment declared that the Government had the constitutional right to enlist men for overseas service without seeking further legislation.

The referendum amendment Sir Edward dismissed with the statement that the soldiers' votes would not be given a fair chance against the slacker vote and the alien enemy vote.

Recruiting Figures Show Need.

As evidence of the need of conscription, the Minister of Militia quoted the recruiting figures for May. Out of a total of 6,497 recruits for the month, 1,842 went with the railway construction and forestry battalions, 385 to artillery, and 1,208 to infantry, while the balance went to various other units. The great need, he said, was for infantry. Hon. Dr. Pugsley wanted to know why the Government could not transfer men to any unit after they were enlisted. Thus deficiencies in infantry might be made up.

The Minister said that legally the

Government had the right to enlist recruits to any service, but the men enlisted in good faith in one branch, and the Government believed that, as long as the voluntary system was in force, faith should be kept with these men.

When Was Conscription Considered?

B. M. Macdonald noted that on April 28 the Minister had stated in the House that up to that date the question of conscription had not been considered by the Government. "When was it first considered?" queried Mr. Macdonald. "I must refer you to the Prime Minister's statement in the House," replied Sir Edward.

"But surely you must know. You are the Minister of Militia," retorted Mr. Macdonald.

Sir Edward declined to be drawn.

"Apparently the Premier announced conscription, and then the Cabinet considered it," commented Dr. Pugsley.

Did All Co-operate in Quebec?

Touching on the Quebec situation the Minister of Militia declared that all the methods which had been tried in other Provinces had also been tried in Quebec. But in the other Provinces the whole population—clergy, sportsmen, professional men, politicians—co-operated. Sir Edward left with the House the question as to whether that condition existed also in Quebec.

Enlistment of French-Canadians.

He referred to the return submitted some days ago, showing that the total number of French-Canadians from all parts of Canada who had gone overseas, including Acadians, was 14,100. This figure, he declared, was carefully estimated and was "approximately correct." Further details would be given when the bill was considered in committee. The recruiting campaign of Colonel Blondin and General Lessard for a French-Canadian battalion netted only 221 soldiers, and of these only ninety-two had enlisted from the Province of Quebec. The rest were transferred from other units. As to the charge made by Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux that a blunder had been made in appointing a Protestant clergyman to supervise recruiting in the Province, Sir Edward said that the clergyman in question, Major (Rev.) C. F. Williams, had been appointed to supervise recruiting among the English-speaking people of Montreal. Unsuccessful attempts had been made to enlist the co-operation of the Roman Catholic clergy.

Never Attempt to Retard.

The Minister declared that there had never been any attempt to retard enlistment, as charged by Sir Sam Hughes. As to the Home Defence Force campaign, he said that was a "last chance" effort, instituted in response to demands from various parts of the country, and because the Imperial authorities had suggested that all overseas troops available in Canada should be immediately sent across the Atlantic while the nights were comparatively long and submarine operations thereby retarded. However, now that the United States had entered the war, there was no necessity for a Home Defence Force.

Better Defeat Than Breaking Faith.

In conclusion, the Minister declared the Government might or might not go down to defeat because of having introduced a conscription bill, but better defeat a hundred times than to keep faith with the men at the front.

German Favors Referendum.

Mr. W. M. German, Welland, pointed out that the people of Canada had a great duty to perform to King and service, and the question of the moment was how best this duty could be performed. He believed himself that Canada should spend her last dollar and give her last man a secure success in this struggle for freedom. For a referendum Canada could obtain a referendum and national unity as well. Mr. German said he had received many resolutions both in favor of and opposing a referendum, but he must decide for himself and leave his action to the judgment of the people. In common with others he had a son in Flanders.

"Politics" Spoiled Everything.

Voluntary recruiting had fallen down. Everything the Government had touched in its war administration had fallen down, national service, home service, and so on. One reason was the perpetual playing of politics. Every woman and child in Ontario had put their shoulders to the wheel until the serpent of politics raised its slimy head. Had politics been kept out of voluntary recruiting that system-to-day would have been as successful as ever.

Should Have Had Coalition.

Mr. German maintained that Parliament had no right to pass the conscription bill without the approval of the people. He would like to see a measure which would bring about compulsory service, but he would like to see a bill passed that would be effective and which would have the approval of the people. Unless it had that approval it could not be effective. In Britain conscription followed coalition, and Canada should have had coalition since the beginning of the war. Had the Government honestly and patriotically desired to form a coalition behind which the people could stand it could have done so two years ago.

Go to People for Approval.

In Britain they had by-elections. In Canada there were twenty vacancies. Mr. German admitted the need for men was imperative, but he believed the course of Sir Wilfrid Laurier was the sure and the safe way to secure the men to win the war. He did not favor an election with its many side issues. The only way was to go straight to the people for approval, to go with candor and with courage. The statement had been made in the House that the question should not be submitted to the people because the people were overwhelmingly against it. "In the name of high heaven," exclaimed Mr. German, "what sort of doctrine is that to preach in this country? I will never subscribe to a doctrine like that! It is Prussianism. It may be Toryism, but it is not Liberalism, and it is not democracy."

Mr. German quoted the words of Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour: "There is but one form of Government, under whatever name it may be called, that is the Government in which the ultimate control lies with the people." This was the principle, said Mr. German, under which he was brought up and by which he intended to stay, irrespective of what anyone might do or what any newspaper might say. (Liberal applause.)

Better Sook to Persuade People.

He declared that Parliamentarians would be better employed in going through the country endeavoring to induce people to agree to this law rather than in endeavoring to enforce

it against the people's will. If they could not win the people by moral suasion and dispassionate appeals to agree to it, then they could never get any good results by enforced legislation. Such legislation could never be enforced against the will of the people. The experience of the past was a better guide than present theories.

Believes People Would Vote for It.

Mr. German declared that if the measure were placed properly before the people he was convinced that they would vote for it, and that was why he favored the amendment. Sir Wilfrid Laurier had declared that if a referendum were taken and carried, he could pledge his word that every man in his Province would abide by it. That was in accordance with democratic principles.

Would Not Impede the Bill.

Mr. German declared that if the Government did not accept the proposals contained in the referendum, then he would not stand in the way of the Government passing the bill and making what success they could of it. (Conservative laughter.)

Mr. German's Forecast.

He predicted that within six weeks the bill would receive the Government's assent. The Government would then appoint their officials, who would draw their pay. They would then, perhaps, issue a proclamation, calling out the first class of troops, and they would stop there. The Courts of Appeal would put an end to the proceedings. Then the Government would have an election, declaring that they wanted the approval of the people on the bill, and the issue would not be conscription. It would be English and French, Protestant and Catholic. It would be an election which

would surpass the villainous "P.P.A." election against Oliver Mowat, the effect of which has not yet disappeared. Mr. German feared this was not a bill to gain recruits, but a bill to gain an election. The Government had a Minister of Militia to win the war and a Minister of Public Works to win elections. It had fired the Minister of Militia and kept the Minister of Public Works.

Appeal and Trust the People.

Mr. German closed with an impressive appeal to trust the people in the present crisis. He recalled the words of the Premier, and appealed for the course that would "avoid discontent, discord, distrust, disunion and disaster," the course which would mean triumph for the great principles of freedom and democracy for which Canada's gallant sons had made their sacrifice. When Mr. German took his seat he was accorded an enthusiastic demonstration from the Liberal benches.

Consentance Furnished Mandate.

Hon. Albert Sevigny, Minister of Inland Revenue, followed. He declared that in 1911 no member of Parliament had received a mandate to enter the war, but the people had not retracted their consent to the mandate. The conscience of the people furnished the mandate. When an extension was asked for, he said, perhaps, issue a proclamation, calling out the first class of troops, and they would stop there. The Courts of Appeal would put an end to the proceedings. Then the Government would have an election, declaring that they wanted the approval of the people on the bill, and the issue would not be conscription. It would be English and French, Protestant and Catholic. It would be an election which

Does Not See Why He Should Resign.

"To those who are threatening my life," he exclaimed, "I say that I am not more in danger than those who are in the trenches." Mr. Sevigny complained that his life was threatened, and that pressure had been brought to bear upon him to resign from the Government. Before he entered the Government, he said, the Premier had declined to give assurance that conscription would not be enforced. At the by-election in Dorchester, he declared, his opponent had raised the spectre of conscription through the National Service cards. He had rejected the cards had nothing to do with conscription, and that if conscription were decided upon it would be introduced in Parliament. His electors with this knowledge had returned him by a good majority. His opponent had approved the Government's policy. He thought his mandate was clear. He did not see why he should resign and leave the French-Canadian minority without representation in the Cabinet.

Criticism of Sir Wilfrid.

Amid murmurs of protest Mr. Sevigny attacked Sir Wilfrid Laurier as "an old man of seventy-six years of age who is ending his career by seeing the two races further apart," while Mr. Blondin and himself, history would say they "have done what they wanted to do, and succeeded in a certain measure." He read a letter from Sir Hugh John Macdonald of Winnipeg, congratulating him on his patriotism in deciding to retain his portfolio.

Not a Question of Debt to England.

Mr. Sevigny declared that French-Canadians in Quebec had been influenced by people who declared that Canada had done enough, that she owed nothing to England, and that she was being ruined by war. "We are not fighting for England or for France," declared Mr. Sevigny. "We are fighting with England, with

France, for ourselves, so it is needless to ask if we owe anything to England."

But We Do Owe Sacrifice.

Mr. Sevigny, however, thought that Canada now did owe something to England. The British fleet had kept the seas open for Canadian commerce, and without that fleet, Germany would have conquered Canada as Great Britain captured the German colonies.

Apportionment of the 100,000.

Of the hundred thousand men who were to be raised under conscription, Mr. Sevigny allotted ten thousand to each of the western Provinces, 25,000 to Ontario, 25,000 to Quebec, and five thousand each to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, with an extra two thousand thrown in for Prince Edward Island. He did not think it would ruin Quebec to furnish another 25,000. In any case, the people of the Province would be protected in individual cases by the safeguards of the selective tribunals.

Should Keep Up Their End.

It was worth while, he declared, in conclusion, for the French-Canadians to do their share, so that in future years they could recall with pride that their honor had been saved, that they had fought in a sacred cause, that they had helped, as in 1812, to protect the British flag and keep Great Britain still the greatest Empire in the world. "We should keep up our end, so that we shall not be isolated or despised when the bell of victory rings," he declared. "Others may say what they like. As for my part, I accept the bill."

Dr. Pugsley's Sarcasm.

Hon. Dr. Pugsley, after noting that history would record of Sir Wilfrid Laurier that no man had done more to promote harmony between the races in Canada, commented caustically upon Mr. Sevigny's changed attitude. Just six years ago, Mr. Sevigny had been preaching in Quebec that Canada "owed nothing to England." Evidently feeding at the Government crib had improved his brain. In the Maritime Provinces, said Dr. Pugsley, they considered fish was a good brain food. With

Nationalists a Government job seemed to have the desired effect.

Legal Aspects of Militia Act.

Dr. Pugsley dealt at some length with the legal aspects of the militia act, maintaining that the proper interpretation of the wording of the act as revised in 1904 would not bear the interpretation which the Government now sought to place upon it. Conscription, he said, to send Canadian overseas was an absolutely new principle, and the Government should not take shelter behind the plea that nothing not already incorporated in substance in the statutes was being invoked. The conscription bill was a breach of faith with Parliament and a breach of faith with the country. The life of Parliament has been extended after repeated assurances to the country by the Prime Minister that conscription was not thought of; yet a moribund Parliament, without further appeal to the people, was now asked to pass a measure on which the country was divided, and for which no mandate had ever been given.

Where Government Failed.

Apparently, said Dr. Pugsley, all the Government thought of was political expediency, patronage, and sending men to the trenches. There had been no strong and vigorous effort made for a non-party trial of the volunteer system; there had been no adequate organization of the resources of the country for war work; not a ship had been built; no real effort had been made to control food prices, or to secure cultivation of immense land areas now lying idle.

Wants Further Explanation.

As for the immediate necessity for conscription, Dr. Pugsley pointed out that the Government had not attempted to demonstrate by actual figures what the real needs of the case were. The figures which had been given showed 420,000 men enlisted, and only 330,000 sent overseas or left in Canada. The disappearance of 90,000 men had not been explained. With 145,000 men still in England or Canada, according to the Government's own figures, and with recruiting still proceeding at the rate of about 7,000 per month under the voluntary system, Dr. Pugsley thought Parliament was entitled to some further explanation as to why the voluntary system should be dropped and conscription with all its difficulties and dangers, now resorted to. Sir Robert Borden on his return to Canada last April had told Parliament that what the Imperial authorities asked for was more men for the Forestry and Railway Construction Corps. Just a few days later, when he announced the conscription policy, he declared that what they wanted was infantry.

Voices of Partisans Echoed.

"It is not the voice of the Imperial authorities that the Prime Minister echoed," exclaimed Dr. Pugsley; "it is the voice of Toronto, and the voice of political parties with recruiting still proceeding needed immediately, he asked, had the Militia Department issued an order a few days ago actually stopping voluntary recruiting for the artillery?" He recalled that Parliament had granted the extension sought by the Government only after assurance was given that there would be no conscription.

"I will not again commit the blunder I committed last session," he commented. "Never again will I rely on the pledges of gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury benches."

Raising of Passions Depreciated.

He likened the situation to that of Ireland, recalling some of the tragic history of the "distressful isle." In solemn words, he urged the Administration to avoid the raising of religious and racial passions. "I pray God," said he, "that the passions they

are inciting do not grow to proportions which we cannot realize." No attempt should be made, in the face of the bitterly hostile sentiments, to enact conscription until the judgment of the people had been obtained.

Leading, Not of That Kind.

Sir Thomas White had stated that the people were anxious to be led. "Led by this Government!" exclaimed Dr. Pugsley, "led further through the mire of scandal, and graft, and bungling, and mistakes of all descriptions! Led through the dishonesties of horse-buying, binoculars, drugs, and what not! The people want no more such leading. They have reached the conclusion that they are just as capable of deciding matters for themselves as this Government is of deciding for them."

Utterly Opposed to Bill.

Parliament, concluded Dr. Pugsley, had no right or mandate to enact the bill. It was an autocratic attempt to disregard the wishes of the people. He was utterly and unalterably opposed to it, and was heartily in favor of the referendum. He was glad to be able to speak for the grand old Loyalist city of St. John, founded by United Empire Loyalists, and on their behalf to go upon record for the principles of democracy and freedom, for national harmony, for public weal, and for the greatest and most effective way of winning the war. Dr. Pugsley was cheered again and again as he concluded.

Col. James Arthurs moved the adjournment of the debate, and the House arose.