

MILITARY SERVICE BILL CARRIED BY MAJORITY OF 57 IN 145 VOTES; NO SURPRISES AND NO SWITCHES

Sir Wilfrid Laurier Urges Referendum on Conscription, Renewing Pledge to Abide by Result — Opposes Coercion, Dreading Discord and Disunion—Hon. Mr. Meighen Replies That All Statutes Are Coercive; Conscription Now Necessary

(Staff Correspondence of The Globe.)

OTTAWA, July 24.—The Conscription Bill is through the Commons. At 5.32 this afternoon, after a final three hours of debate, the third reading was carried by a vote of 101 to 44, a majority of 57. It was carried with the help of twenty-two Liberals, eight of them from Ontario, two from the Maritime Provinces, and twelve from Western Canada.

Ten absentees, five Liberals and five Conservatives, who voted on the second reading of the bill, and who were not paired this afternoon, would have brought the majority up to sixty-eight.

Of the Ontario members, all but two, Hon. Chas. Murphy and Mr. Proulx of Prescott, are recorded in favor of the bill. This fact alone corrects a misinterpretation which seems to have been placed in some quarters upon the conclusions reached at the Liberal conference of members and candidates in Toronto last Friday.

Reference was made to this briefly at the opening of the House this afternoon by Messrs. Pardee and Guthrie, both taking occasion to reaffirm their attitude taken on the second reading of the bill in favor of the principle of conscription to be applied under a Union or National Government. While intimating that they did not agree with all the conclusions reported to have been reached at the Toronto conference, they did not specify wherein they differed.

Mr. Turriff, Assiniboia, who also spoke briefly at the opening of the debate, aligned himself unequivocally with the Liberals supporting the principle of conscription, explaining that this was his first opportunity to indicate his attitude. Mr. Turriff was absent at the time of the debate on the second reading.

Sir Wilfrid's Vigorous Speech.

Then came Sir Wilfrid Laurier, despite the intense heat of the chamber, the veteran Opposition leader spoke with all his old vigor, aptness of phrasing, and cogency of argument. For nearly an hour he reviewed the salient points at issue in regard to the bill. On the second reading of the bill Sir Wilfrid devoted the main portion of his argument to the constitutional principles at stake, leading up to his conclusion that the wisest solution lay through the medium of a referendum. Today he emphasized more the dangers of general disunion and general discord threatened and already apparent from a policy of coercion without a mandate from the people, without whose mandate the enforcement of the measure was both dangerous and impracticable.

"It is," declared Sir Wilfrid in his oration, "a denial of those principles of democracy which we hold dear and sacred. I oppose this bill because it has in it the seeds of discord and disunion; because it is an obstacle and a bar to that union of heart and soul without which it is impossible to hope that this Confederation will attain the aims and ends which were had in view when Confederation was effected. All my life I have fought coercion, and all my life I have promoted union, and the inspiration which led me to that course shall be my guide at all times so long as there is a breath left in my body."

Sir Wilfrid eloquently declared that his sole motive was to do what he thought would be best towards helping Canada to give her best services to the allied cause, and any difference he had with his friends on his own side of the House or with those on the Government side was as to the wisest methods to be pursued to attain that end.

"I am in this war to the finish," he declared. "I am in this war as Australia is in it to-day. Australia

voted against conscription, but she still is in the war. I respect the convictions of all men, and I hope my own convictions will be respected. From the beginning of the war up to the 18th of May last, no man in any of the allied nations occupying a position similar to that which I occupy in the constitution of the Government, whether in England, France, New Zealand or South Africa, gave to the Government a more consistent support than I had given them up to that date. But when the conscription measure was proposed I had to oppose it, because presented as it had been presented, and under the conditions which it had been placed before the country, it had been made an instrument of coercion."

Sir Wilfrid maintained that, all being considered, his policy of a referendum was the wisest and most constructive one. When the majority of the people had spoken, the country would again become unanimous. If conscription should be defeated, there would be a new duty cast upon the people. A new appeal would have to be made to the whole people of Canada to come forward with their best endeavors in the defence of a noble cause. But of one thing he was convinced, the majority must rule. His policy, he declared, he would be prepared to defend in Ontario as well as in Quebec.

Hon. Arthur Meighen, the only speaker on the Government side, took up, somewhat briefly, the arguments advanced by Sir Wilfrid. On the question of disunion, feared by Sir Wilfrid as a result of the conscription measure, the Solicitor-General declared that were Sir Wilfrid himself to give the proper lead in his Province and explain the needs and meaning of the measure clearly to the people of Quebec there would be no real cleavage of opinion among the people of Canada and no resistance to the enforcement of the act. The blame for the present situation he placed on the shoulders of Sir Wilfrid himself.

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1.)

HOUSE PASSES MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1917

(Continued from Page 3, Col. 7.)

any deviation from the voluntary system? But we are told, and it is the whole basis of this bill, that voluntary enlistment has failed." Sir Robert Borden—I must take exception to my Right Honorable friend's quotation. I do not think that I put it in the way he suggests. Sir Wilfrid—My Right Honorable friend stated, if he stated anything, that conscription was not contemplated. Sir Robert Borden—Yes, exactly.

Differences Over Recruiting.

Sir Wilfrid referred briefly to the recriminations and differences between the ex-Minister of Militia and Defence (Sir Sam Hughes) and the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance as to what has taken place in regard to recruiting. The ex-Minister of Militia complained that he had been interfered with in his recruiting by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. "Explanations or excuses have from time to time been offered. It may be true that the Minister has never been actually stopped in his recruiting, but he was told how not to recruit."

Union Government; Why He Did Not Join

Proceeding, Sir Wilfrid said: "The strongest indictment which was made against this bill in my humble judgment was made by the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie), in a speech which he delivered a few weeks ago. He said that this bill, if it became law, could not be carried out unless it were by the joint effort of a union Government. What does this mean? If it means anything it means this, that the sentiment against this bill is so strong, is so rooted in all parts of the community, that the bill is such a departure from the traditions of the past, that it requires the efforts of the two political parties to put it into operation. If that be true, and if this measure was unavoidable, it should have come in, not as the measure of a party Government, but as the measure of a coalition Government."

"I may be told that I was asked—and my hon. friend from South Wellington may have had it in his mind—that I was asked to be a party to a coalition Government. Sir, I was asked to form part of a coalition Government when the policy had been framed, when the bill had been prepared as a party measure by a party Government, and when it had been framed, deliberated in Council, determined upon, and launched before the public, when the Government could not retrace their steps, my poor assistance, such as it might have been, was sought."

"If, sir, the Government had been in earnest they would have consulted me before they determined on their measure. But they did not consult me, they did not ask my opinion upon conscription; they did not ask me what would be my opinion upon its possibilities, its results and its dangers; they did not ask me to discuss with them the situation against which they were determined to close their eyes; but when they had concocted a measure, then they were kind enough to ask me to carry on what they had devised in their wisdom. As in the play of children they asked me: 'Close your eyes and open your mouth and swallow?' I refused."

Not Approached Like George Brown.

"Sir, some of my friends have reminded me, some of my Liberal friends have reminded me, that George Brown once entered into a coalition Government. He did, and under such circumstances nobody would blame him. But, sir, I was not approached in the same way. I have my views upon conscription. They have not changed. It is not a pleasure for me to find myself at variance with so many of the friends I have around me; but I thought, and I still believe, that a measure of conscription under the circumstances was an apple of discord, and I could not accept it. That is all I have to say upon this point."

"But I may be asked: What is your policy? It is not sufficient for the Opposition to say nay to any propo-

sition, what is your policy? Sir, I said my policy before Parliament upon the second reading of the bill. I asked that a referendum should be taken and the judgment of the people taken upon this question. I have not the merit of this policy; it did not originate with me; it was not my own device. But, sir, it was asked by the whole organized body of Labor in the Dominion of Canada. We are familiar with the strong resolutions which have been placed upon the table of this House by the central organizations. Every member of this House, I would venture to say, at all events the large majority of the members of this House, I am sure—have received from delegations from Labor organizations within their ridings, petitions, resolutions and communications to that effect. I have received them by the bushel. They are there before the House, and, sir, under such circumstances I say I have no merit in having proposed that policy, because that policy would have given us peace, harmony and concord, which to-day are in such danger."

Objection Because Soldiers' Poll Difficult

"Objection was made to it, and what were the objections? The objection: were that this policy of a referendum should not be granted because, forsooth, the soldiers would not vote. Well, sir, we passed a law two years ago to give the franchise to the soldiers, and by this same measure we established machinery to give facilities to the soldiers to exercise their views. Are we to be told that this law is a mere scrap of paper, that it is a mere dead letter, that it cannot be put into execution? Why, sir, are we to be told that those who two years ago were so insistent upon passing this law intended it only as a claptrap? If, sir, when this measure was proposed, we in this side of the House had opposed it, and if we had defeated it, the welkin would have rung and would be still ringing with denunciation against those who had deprived the soldiers of the sacred right to vote. We did not oppose it; the law is there, and when we are told that the law cannot be put into force upon a referendum or an election when we have given the right of voting to the soldiers, hon. members are simply playing with the common sense of the country. I know for a fact that the soldiers of New Zealand voted in the election of 1914."

Sees No Weight in That Objection.

"If there is to be a referendum, the law would have to be passed by this Parliament, and this Parliament could as easily give a vote to the soldiers on a referendum as on an election, and I would be the first to vote for it. The objection that the soldier could not vote has no weight. It would imply that this Parliament refused him the right to vote, and nobody would suppose that. Moreover, as I said a moment ago, in Australia there has been both an election and a referendum upon this very question of conscription, and the soldiers voted upon both issues. That I do not know personally, but I am told it, and I have reason to believe it is true. I will go farther than that. In British Columbia there has been an election, and there has been a referendum on the question of prohibition, and the soldiers voted in the referendum and in the election also. Are we to be told that what can be done in British Columbia, Australia and New Zealand cannot be done in Canada? To state such a proposition is simply to refute it."

"Furthermore, to-day I heard my honorable friend from Assiniboia (Mr. Turriff) tell us that he was against the referendum because he was sure it would not carry. In other words, he said that a referendum would be defeated. Well, sir, I ask, is that a reason why a referendum should not be taken? Again I ask, where are we living now? Is it Canada or is it Prussia? We want no more hypocrisy. If that is the position, no more can it be said that we are fighting to maintain the Government of the people, for the people and by the people."

Does Not Want Kruger's Policy.

"Sir, we have a vast country, composed of different nationalities, brought here by the force of circumstances. We have opened our doors to all the workers of Europe to come here and help us build up this country, to develop it and bring it up to the standard we hope it will attain some day, and are we to be told that from this year, 1917, we are going to deny a vote to the men whom we have made British subjects under the law? That is not British policy. It is the policy of Paul Kruger, the very policy which started the war in South Africa. When Kruger, after inviting British subjects to come and stay in the country, denied them the privileges he promised them, and after giving them the privileges of citizenship, took away their right by an act of Parliament, the war ensued. For my part, I do not believe in such a doctrine as that."

Deprecates Division in Country.

"My honorable friend from Assiniboia (Mr. Turriff) said a few minutes ago that if there was to be a referendum the whole of the French Province would vote against it, the foreign voter would be against it, I do not want in this country to hear of any such division. I stand upon the broad line of Canadian citizenship."

Settle by Appeal To Better Instincts

"I know very well that the same feeling does not appeal to all Canadians. I know that the majority of the French Canadians have a certain way of looking at these things. I know that the English-Canadians look at them in another way, but when you tell me that French-Canadians are on the one side and English-Canadians are on the other side, I do not believe one statement or the other. It has been said that all the French-Canadians are on one side and all the English-Canadian are on the other side, and that the English-Canadians are more numerous, and that they would carry the vote. It is not by such appeals as this that we can hope to settle this vexed question. It is simply by appealing to the better instincts of the people, and for my part I hope that the day will never come—and I am sure it will never come—that I shall appeal either to the prejudices of one man or of another."

Speaks Voice of His Conscience.

"Referring to the position which have taken upon the floor of this House on this question, if I cannot defend it in Ontario as well as in Quebec I want to leave my name as a French-Canadian citizen, as an English-Canadian citizen and as a Canadian. I am prepared to defend my policy. I may be right or I may be wrong, but at all events, I am sincere in my conscience, and when a man speaks the voice of his conscience there is no part of Canada where he should fear to state his views."

"I have been told that there is no constructive feature in that policy o-

a referendum. On the contrary, it is the most constructive policy which has yet been presented in this debate. I do not know how the vote will go. I have taken my pledge, and I repeat it again to-day with more fervor than before, that if the vote had gone for conscription the verdict would be accepted in every part of Canada, even in that Province where it has been said it would not be accepted—in Quebec. When the majority of the people have spoken by way of a referendum, I say that the party will become unanimous, and every man who recorded his vote against it will come forward to do his duty according to law. If it be defeated, duty is cast upon the people, and there would be a new basis, a new appeal to the whole of the people of Canada to come forward with their best endeavors in the defence of a noble cause. But my hon. friend said that the minority must govern sometimes. I do not admit that proposition at all. If you admitted the policy that the minority can govern, you could say good-bye to representative institutions."

In War as Australia Is.

"I have been asked as to how my policy is. I may say that it is the same as it has been from the first. I am in this war to the finish. (Hear, hear.) I am in this war under the voluntary system to the last. I am in this war as Australia is in it to-day. Australia voted against conscription, but still she is in the war."

Consistently Supported Government.

"I am sorry that on an occasion of this kind I cannot see eye to eye with my hon. friends on the other side. I do not want to speak severely of anybody. I do not want to introduce any more bitterness than it is possible to avoid. I respect the convictions of all men, and I hope my own convictions will be respected, but I may say that from the beginning of the war up to the 18th of May last, no man in this country who occupied a position similar to that which I occupy in the constitution of the Government gave that body more consistent support. After all, I can say, in the position which I occupy on this side of the House, I am part and parcel of the machinery of the Government, and up to the 18th of May no man occupying a position similar to that which I occupied, in any country, whether in England, France, New Zealand or South Africa, gave to the Government a more consistent support than I have given them up to the 18th of May last."

Opposition as Coercion.

"But when the conscription measure was proposed I had to oppose it, and why? Because, presented as it has been presented, under the condition before the country, it has been placed an instrument of coercion. "It is a denial of those principles of democracy which we hold dear and sacred. I oppose this bill because it has in it the seeds of discord and disunion; because it is an obstacle and a bar to that union of heart and soul without which it is impossible to hope that this Confederation will attain the aims and ends that were had in view when Confederation was effected. Sir, all my life I have fought coercion; all my life I have promoted union, and the inspiration which led me to that course shall be my guide at all times, so long as there is a breath left in my body."

Mr. Meighen Charges Several Inconsistencies

Hon. Arthur Meighen, who followed the Liberal leader for forty minutes, continued his speech largely to a consideration of the arguments advanced by Sir Wilfrid, and broached no new ground. The Solicitor-General noted in the first place that Sir Wilfrid, in still adhering to his policy of a referendum, was inconsistent with his declarations of former years that State issues should be decided by a general election rather than by a referendum. Moreover, when Sir Wilfrid said that the majority must rule, that declaration belied the attitude he had taken in 1897, when the prohibition referendum gave a majority in favor of prohibition, but that verdict was not acted upon by the Government.

As to the issue of whether the votes of the soldiers could be taken or not in a referendum, Mr. Meighen noted that at the time the soldiers' vote bill

was passed Sir Wilfrid had maintained that it would be impracticable for the soldiers to cast their ballots under war conditions. Now, when conditions at the front were even more difficult, Sir Wilfrid seemed to think that the soldiers could vote. As to the British Columbia precedent cited by the Opposition leader, Mr. Meighen declared that only 20 per cent. of the British Columbia soldiers in France marked their ballots, and to-day Commissions were at work trying to find out whether that balloting had been properly taken.

Says Referendum Would be Outrage.

With the moral influence of 330,000 soldiers now overseas removed from the determining of the conscription issue under a referendum, Mr. Meighen declared that it would be an outrage to accept a referendum verdict under those conditions—an outrage only to be submitted to if worse were to be avoided. And there was no worse to be avoided if Sir Wilfrid Laurier did his duty.

Commenting on Sir Wilfrid's passing reference to the proposal that several hundred thousand Canadian citizens of alien enemy extraction should be disfranchised, the Solicitor-General caustically referred to Sir Wilfrid's solicitude for this element of the population, and intimated that perhaps it was because Sir Wilfrid thought he might get support from them for his war policy.

Sir Wilfrid Had Scouted Conscription.

Dealing with the coalition proposals made to Sir Wilfrid by the Prime Minister, the Solicitor-General said that in view of the fact that the Opposition leader said he would not come into coalition at all on any conscription policy, there was little use in discussing the question as to whether Sir Wilfrid should have been consulted before or after the Government had determined on that policy. "Coalition would have been no good to us except on a conscription policy," declared Mr. Meighen.

Conditions Now Make Conscription Necessary

As to Sir Wilfrid's argument that the people had been misled by the Government's repeated declarations that conscription was not contemplated or would not be introduced, Mr. Meighen declared that Sir Robert Borden had never given an unequivocal pledge that conscription would never be introduced. All the Prime Minister had said last year was that conditions then would not warrant the introduction of conscription. But now, with seven casualties for every one recruit in the past two months, and with the insistent appeal from the men overseas for reinforcements, conditions made conscription absolutely necessary.

Every Statute is Coercive.

Referring to Sir Wilfrid's claim that he would not be a party to enacting Canadian people, Mr. Meighen declared that every statute was coercive. Sir Wilfrid had coerced through the people of Canada by forcing through the Grand Trunk Pacific legislation, and the militia act itself provided for coercion in a much wider and more drastic form than the present bill, which had only a restrictive and moderate application.

No Serious Cleavage.

It was true, continued the Solicitor-General, that there was a great cleavage of opinion throughout the country over conscription, a cleavage intensified among Sir Wilfrid's own followers, as evinced by the statements made this afternoon by Messrs. Guthrie and Pardee. But, said Mr. Meighen, if every member of the House would honestly explain to his constituents the meaning and need of the military service bill, and would present the issue squarely to the people without any party bias or misrepresentation, there would be no serious cleavage of

opinion, and no resistance to the enforcement of the act.

Even if there were disunion threatened to the extent of resisting the law when once passed, it would be better to risk such disunion than to risk the greater disunion between the soldiers and their dependents and the rest of the country. "If there is one man responsible for the disunion which he now sees, it is Sir Wilfrid Laurier," declared Mr. Meighen. "He declined a most generous coalition offer, and he declined it only on the ground that he chose to walk with those who hold back rather than with those who press forward."

Believes Quebec Will Do Duty.

"But there is a coalition among the people of Canada, the great majority of whom are united now, and will stay united to get a win-the-war Government, irrespective of politics. Let him tell his people what this bill really means, that it is fair to all Provinces and races in this Dominion, and I believe the people of Quebec will do their duty, once they are properly led by those who should lead. For harmony in Canada, the price we must never pay is national dishonor. No nation can survive that."

The Vote was Then Taken.

Income Tax Proposals To-day.

Just before the House rose to-night Sir Thomas White, Minister of Finance, rose to announce that tomorrow (Wednesday) he would submit to Parliament the Government's new proposals in relation to the imposition of a war income tax. This measure has been persistently pressed for by Liberals, those who supported conscription maintaining that it should be accompanied by a more adequate assessment of the accumulated wealth of the rich men of the country.

Mr. Graham's Version Of a "Misunderstanding"

Ottawa, July 24.—The following is a statement issued by the Hon. Geo. F. Graham to-day:

"In the first place, it should be made clear that the meeting was called, not to give members of Parliament an opportunity of expressing their views, but to hear what would be said by candidates who are not members. The members had already aired their opinions in the House, and everybody knew where we stood. Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Pardee, Mr. Nesbitt, and I all voted for the conscription bill in the House and spoke just as strongly at the Toronto meeting."

"Many of the candidates did not agree that we had adopted the proper course in leaving Sir Wilfrid Laurier on the issue as it presented itself. I may say, though, that most of them, though wanting a further trial of voluntary recruiting, were in favor of ultimate conscription if that failed. I heard only one man declare he would not vote for conscription under any circumstances."

"After the candidates, as distinct from members, had spoken, I said I would try to outline what might be called a composite view, which I certainly did not put forward as my own or that of other conscriptionist members, but which would in a general way cover the attitude of the majority of the non-members who are candidates. This summary was taken down and put into shape by Mr. Grange."

"The mistake seems to have been in supposing that it was unanimously endorsed, and the further unwarrantable inference has been drawn by outsiders that it represented the views of men who had already spoken in the House. As a matter of fact, there were three or four candidates who dissented from it, but the majority of non-members who are candidates were in accord with it; in fact, it was drawn to convey, as nearly as one statement could, the various views which the majority of the candidates had expressed."