

not of Ministers at all. They should act fairly, and say, "I do not think it is the fault of the Minister or of the National Government; it is the Department, and I am sure that if I bring the matter before the Minister he will do his best to see rectified that which is wrong"; and they must admit that that is the fair explanation of many complaints. Therefore I ask those members to present the case fairly, and not to blame the Minister when it is a matter of the Department. Another matter that has been brought under my notice by some people who will be affected is that of the date of the marriages. I have received one or two letters on the subject. In one case that I have in my mind the couple were engaged long before the war broke out, their house had been bought, and also the furniture, and they were married just after the time when the war began. I think that an alteration should be made in the date from which this Bill is to affect the newly married men. I rose to assure the National Government that I am prepared to support them as far as this Bill is concerned, and when I go before my constituents I will see that the fairest construction is placed upon it. I certainly will not suggest that the Government will not do their duty; I know they will, and that they will carry out the wishes of Parliament, which undoubtedly are that they should put the most liberal construction upon the Bill as regards pensions. We have the assurance of the Minister that as soon as they know what the liabilities of the country are in the matter they will see what can be done towards augmenting the pensions, and I accept that as a definite promise. As a business man I think they are taking a wise precaution. As to the matter of the financial obligations of the men and the separation allowances, I may say that I discussed that point in the canvass that I undertook on behalf of the Recruiting Board, and was assured by married men that the separation allowance was not sufficient. I promised that in Parliament I would do my best in placing the matter before the National Government, and I believe that more liberal provision will be made in the matter. I do not propose to take up any further time. I have already supported the principle of the Bill in the division which was taken last night. I believe that when the measure comes into operation the Government will require the assistance of members of Parliament in smoothing away the difficulties that are bound to arise, and it will be the duty of members to give that assistance. This kind of legislation is new to us, and it is likely to be viewed with suspicion in certain quarters. It will be the duty of members of Parliament to help in allaying that suspicion, and to help

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in making a satisfactory and thoroughly workable measure of the Bill, and one that will carry out the intentions of Parliament and give the country satisfactory results.

The Hon. Mr. NGATA (Eastern Maori District).—I do not propose to discuss at this stage the question of compulsion as against the voluntary system. I want to discuss the principle contained in the Bill so far as it affects the Maori race. I regret that I missed the speech of the honourable member who represents the Maori race in the Executive Council, when he outlined on behalf of the Maori representatives in the House their general views on this question. The honourable gentleman is the chairman of the Maori Contingent Committee, which was responsible in the early stages of the war for organizing the first Maori Contingent. I believe he outlined briefly the genesis of that contingent and the circumstances under which it was offered for service. There are very many good reasons why the Maori people should be exempted from the provisions of this Bill. Some of those reasons have been adduced by honourable members who have spoken, and I thank them for their consideration of the race to which four representatives in this House belong. It would appear from their speeches as though they regretted the action of the Government in not excluding the Maori race from the provisions of the Bill. I want to explain, from the standpoint of the Maori representatives, that the responsibility rests on them and not on the Government in not exempting the Maoris from the operation of the Bill. I was shown early in the session a draft of the Bill, and it contained among other exemptions the exemption of Maoris, half-castes, and those intermediate in blood between Maoris and half-castes. The Hon. Dr. Pomare on the second day of the session called a conference of the Maori representatives, and asked them to state their views. I was present at the conference, at which the general opinion of the representatives was that they should not ask for exclusion from the provisions of this Bill. That decision was conveyed to the Government. The consequence is the omission from the Bill of the clause exempting the Maoris. It is my duty as representing my own district to explain my position with regard to this Bill and the responsibility I undertook in advising that the Maoris should not be excluded. In doing so I want to refer to the organization of the Maori Contingent, its subsequent history on the peninsula and in Egypt, and the need for maintaining its fighting-strength as the chief reason for urging—not enthusiastically, by any means, for we are not enthusiastic over compulsion—the adoption of the method provided in this Bill of raising

the necessary reinforcements; because, after all, this is merely a device for raising reinforcements required at the front. The correspondence that we as members of the Maori Contingent Committee have received from time to time from officers and from members of that contingent continually calling for more men is our chief reason for urging that until the war is finished the reinforcement of the Maori Contingent should be maintained. It is because of the reluctance—not to use a harder word—of some of the tribes of the North Island to contribute their quota that some of the Maori tribes in the other districts have urged that the “broom” should be applied to those who are remaining behind. That is their figure of speech. They define “compulsion” as the Government broom for sweeping shirkers into the trenches. The five hundred Maoris who left in February of last year were accepted with a good deal of reluctance at first by the Imperial authorities for garrison duty in Egypt. At the time of their formation we were not at war with Turkey. Just prior to their leaving New Zealand the first attempt at opening the Dardanelles was made by the British fleet. When the contingent landed in Egypt that country was already the scene of military operations, and it was decided to send that contingent to Malta so as to keep them away from the firing-line. But while they were in Egypt the military authorities saw what splendid material they were, and prominent officers expressed regret that the contingent had not been accepted for active service. It was there that the five hundred petitioned that they should be sent to the firing-line. They considered that it was not proper for them, as the descendants of a warrior people, to be cooped up in barracks doing nothing. They could not understand that even in barracks they were rendering service, and a splendid service, to the Empire by relieving other men to go to the trenches. It was some time in May when wounded men began to arrive at Malta from Gallipoli. It was then that these five hundred men, beginning to see “red,” made their voices heard by the authorities at Malta, and in Egypt, and in the Old Country. The Hon. Dr. Pomare has related the incident of the non-sloping of arms at Malta, when the contingent to a man volunteered for service in the trenches. We who remained behind—the Maori representatives and our elders in the various districts—had no idea that these men were pressing to be sent into the firing-line until a communication was sent to us some time in June of last year, through the Hon. the Minister of Defence, asking whether in the event of the Maori Contingent going into active service we could guarantee the neces-

sary reinforcements. That was the first time the question of maintaining a contingent of Maoris was put to us as Maori representatives and to the Maori tribes throughout the two Islands. As a result a conference of Maori members was held, and we guaranteed one if not two reinforcements of 250 each, but beyond that we said we could guarantee nothing. We supplied the first of these reinforcements, and they left in September of last year. We were prepared to raise further reinforcements of 250 last summer, but in the interval certain reports reached us from the front which brought us into collision with the Minister of Defence. In the first place, we questioned the action of the authorities at the front in sending back three officers. We thought the matter out, but we could not understand why these three officers were sent back to New Zealand. We discovered that they were charged with incompetence, and there was also a suspicion of cowardice. But that slur on these officers, Sir, we could not accept at all. However, we got over that difficulty, and as a result of representations the three officers were sent back to Egypt. A further difficulty arose about the organization of the contingent, and in consequence of that we had differences with the Minister of Defence which lasted for months. Every letter that we received from the front intimated that the Maori platoons were split up, meaning that they no longer constituted a distinct Maori Contingent but that they were mixed up with various platoons of the Main Expeditionary Force; and so it was said that the Maori Contingent had lost its identity. The question that confronted us was this: Were we being asked by the Defence Department to reinforce an existing Maori Contingent, or were we being asked to supply deficiencies in the reinforcements for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force? We said we were perfectly prepared to maintain the numbers of the Maori Contingent, but it was another matter if we were asked to supply deficiencies in the main reinforcements. There came a lull in the recruiting, largely because the members of the Maori Contingent Committee, who are the Maori representatives in this House, hung back. It was during that period that I personally made up my mind that the Hon. Mr. Allen, Minister of Defence, was a very bad man indeed, and I dare say many other members when they came to Parliament this session had the same view regarding that honourable gentleman. But time heals many things; and not only that, but time also explains many things. I am glad that I made no noise at the time, and that I patiently waited for more light on the situation. I confess that during the period of waiting I was not enthusiastic in the mat-

ter of recruiting among my people. I advised them to wait until I could assure them that things were once more right with their boys. Further communications have been received from the front which satisfy me

8.30. that the organization and status of the contingent are satisfactory, and I want to say that I withdraw what I said to myself about the action of the Hon. the Minister of Defence in connection with that contingent. The Minister's chief fault is that he stands by his officers. I think it is a good fault, but it is sometimes annoying. The period of my annoyance lasted about three months, during which I vowed that not another recruit would leave the East Coast until I squared things with the Hon. the Minister of Defence. Once the five hundred men who were at the front made up their minds to go to the trenches whether we who remained behind liked it or not, once we guaranteed the reinforcements, then the argument which some honourable gentlemen have used—it was sentimental, I think—against sending any more Maoris from New Zealand because the Maoris are a declining race went by the board. That argument has no force whatever in connection with this measure. The responsibility was taken more than twelve months ago, when we agreed to let them go from this country. They volunteered their services. There was a good deal of trouble in inducing the Imperial authorities to accept them at all. The Government of New Zealand had no hesitation in accepting them, because they knew what the Maoris were capable of. The view held by my people is that it is too late to talk about keeping the Maoris back. They have shed their blood on the peninsula, and they are now shedding their blood in France. No Maori blood can be shed anywhere in the world without calling for revenge. Every letter I received from the front, as well as those received by other members of the Maori Contingent Committee, has the same burden—"Send us more reinforcements." They are appealing to tribe after tribe. That is our reason for asking the Government not to exempt the Maoris from the provisions of this Bill. I say that the objection to the ablest of the male Maoris leaving New Zealand because their race is a declining race is sentimental. I think it is going to be the very best thing for the Maori race that their ablest-bodied men are going into action. That race has declined largely because it gave up fighting. Among other things, I have made a study of the race to which I belong, and I have seen hapu after hapu and tribe after tribe declining in numbers because they could not fit themselves into a scheme of life where there was no fighting—fighting with their

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hands and bodies, not fighting with their minds. Your civilization requires fighting with brains; it requires special equipment for the battle of life. It takes more than half a century for some of these warrior tribes to accommodate themselves to these new conditions. They pine away, they die, largely because there is no fighting.

Mr. POOLE.—There is an Irish element in them.

The Hon. Mr. NGATA.—I suppose so. When the call to battle came the people showed some hesitation, because they did not see at first that it was their fight—this great world war. They did not understand the reason for it. Talk about patriotism: that was not the reason for their enlistment. Talk about the flag; that was not the reason either. Those considerations come afterwards. It was the spirit of their fathers within them that called them to fight, and they went to fight. Patriotism and those other things came afterwards as excuses. I dare say it was the same in the case of those that comprised the first Expeditionary Force. After they had gone we began flag-waving and called them patriots, but it was the sheer love of adventure in them and it was the spirit of their fathers within them that moved them to go. I repeat it will be the best thing for the Maori race that their best young men have gone to the front to fight side by side with the best of yours. It is not going to hurt the race physically. For a time the birth-rate will not be as much as it is. I believe the race will be reinvigorated after the war. Many misunderstandings that exist at present between the two races will disappear. Men who fought side by side must understand themselves very much better for that fact. Those who know the lines from Kipling's "Ballad of East and West" will agree with the spirit of them:—

But there is neither East nor West, border nor breed nor birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

There are a good many reasons why the Maoris should not be excluded from the Bill. I think the honourable member for the Western Maori District referred to the inadvisability of drawing the colour-line. I never went very much by that myself. I am not one of those who resent the drawing of the colour-line in certain respects, because very often deficiencies run along colour-lines; they are racial. But the word itself is not nice, and that is why people object to the use of the word "colour-line" in its application to the two races. However, there is something in the statement of the honourable member for the Western Maori District that he did not like the exemption of the Maoris from compulsion

because it might be regarded as drawing the colour-line. The reason is somewhat deeper than that. We could not maintain our self-respect and ask the Government of New Zealand during this war, which is being fought for the safety of the Empire everywhere, that we, the Maoris, should stay at home while the pakehas went. We would lose our self-respect. It was to maintain the self-respect of the people we represent that we asked the honourable member for the Western Maori District to intimate to the Government that it was objectionable from our standpoint if the Bill said straight out that the Maoris were to be excluded. It would be regarded as a reflection on a warrior race. I wish to point out a difficulty there will be in applying the provisions of the Bill, as introduced, to the Maori people. The difficulty will be one of administration, and I desire to point it out to the Government before the measure reaches the Committee stage. The basis of the Bill, or of its machinery, is the National Register. The Government Statistician has to make use of that register in compiling two divisions of the Reserve and the various classes within the Second Division. Now, when the register was taken last year instructions were sent out, as a consequence of the deliberations of Cabinet, that Maoris and half-castes need not fill in the forms. If you are going to apply this Bill to them now you will have to set the machinery of the National Register in motion again in order to compile a register of Maoris and half-castes. Now, it is one thing to compile a National Register before you bring down a measure for compulsory service; it is quite another thing to compile it after you have brought down such a measure. When the National Register was compiled last year there was a suspicion in the minds of the public that the Government proposed later on to introduce compulsory service, but it was only a suspicion. Now the Government will be faced with the difficulty of compiling a register within districts inhabited by tribes that are reluctant, with the full knowledge of what registration entails. That is one difficulty. A second is this—it is a matter for the Minister of Defence to consider: Are you going to call up Maoris as part of your main divisions as outlined in the Bill, or are you going to call up special divisions of Maoris for the purpose of reinforcing the Maori Contingent? Are you going to have districts within districts—special Maori districts? I believe the honourable gentleman who administers the Defence Committee is of opinion that the Maoris should be called up separately, because his idea is to use the Maoris and half-castes for the purpose of rein-

forcing the Maori Contingent, and not for completing quotas with the Main Expeditionary Force. It will be a much simpler undertaking to call up Maoris separately to reinforce their contingent at the front. A further difficulty—and it is going to be the greatest difficulty—is the question of the married men and of Maori marriages. You are right up against the question of marriage according to Maori custom, which is a different thing from the pakeha marriage. It has very many complications, as members of the Native Affairs Committee know. These Maoris marry very much earlier than pakehas. The difficulty we found in recruiting was that such a large proportion of young Maoris just over the minimum age of twenty were married. Some of them were married before that age. A much larger proportion of our young Maori men marry at an early age than do the pakehas. Economic reasons for not marrying are not so potent amongst the Maoris as among the pakehas. They marry first and provide for their families later. That is only natural, and I wish the pakehas did the same; they would be better off than they are now. That difficulty is going to be in some districts almost insuperable, particularly in those districts which have been drained almost dry to supply the first Maori Contingent and the subsequent reinforcements. To obtain men it would almost be necessary in those districts to call up the Second Division forthwith. Further difficulties will be met in the allocation of quotas. I understand in carrying out the machinery of this Bill it is proposed to adopt the quota system. Each area will be given so many to make up. Now, apply that to the Maori districts. We found in our recruiting that the most satisfactory method was to appeal to tribal feeling. You appealed to the pride of a tribe. There was some competition amongst the tribes as to which tribe could raise the largest number. That was under the voluntary system. In allocating quotas, are you going to form special Maori districts, or are you going to call up tribe by tribe? That is going to be a further difficulty. While pointing out all these difficulties, I yet maintain that they can be overcome by tactful administration. If you are going to have a Military Service Board composed of officers of the Defence Department, the whole system is going to fail so far as it will apply to the Maori. These officers will be after numbers all the time, and not concern themselves much about the difficulties of the conscripted tribes. Some curious tales can be told of how the Defence Department in some of the outlying districts carried out their recruiting. It was really ludicrous in some districts. The expense of

obtaining recruits, I think, in the Rotorua district for a short time was something like £40 per recruit; but, of course, they were just learning the business.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is terrific.

The Hon. Mr. NGATA.—They have overcome that since. My suggestion to the Government is this: Now that the views of the Maori representatives—and, through them, of the great bulk of the Maori people—are made clear, there can be no harm in exempting the Maoris generally from the provisions of the Bill before us. I do not propose to exclude them eventually; I only suggest a reshaping of the Bill. After generally exempting the Maoris, power should then be taken to bring them within the provisions of the Bill by Order in Council; and power should be given to the Governor in Council to frame regulations, because otherwise the Department will run up against several provisions in this Bill that will not apply in practice, and there will be difficulties. We only want our position thoroughly understood. Just one word about Prussianism, before I sit down. The English people are the most curious on earth—at least, the most curious that I have met—and the most contradictory. Prussianism with them is like a *taipo*; but I do not think that very many of them understand what Prussianism is—at least, did not understand what Prussianism was before they objected to it. The British race will have to swallow the pill of Prussianism before they can be reorganized. They have got to swallow it. A dose of Prussianism will be the best possible tonic for them. Prussianism, as I understand it, simply means organizing yourselves in every respect so as to carry out your work as human beings on this earth most efficiently. That is Prussianism.

Mr. WILFORD.—It means more than that.

The Hon. Mr. NGATA.—That is all it means in the best sense. Prussianism will not take on with your people the aspects which have made it so obnoxious in the German. You cannot have brutality, you cannot have frightfulness, attached to the sort of Prussianism that is going to suit the British Empire, because the Englishman is a different man from the Prussian. Have what Prussianism means in essentials: you will never have with it, so long as you are Englishmen, the brutality and the frightfulness which this war has revealed to be not characteristics of, but excrescences on, the Prussian character.

The Hon. Mr. MYERS.—Might is not right.

The Hon. Mr. NGATA.—I am speaking of Prussianism as the keystone of efficiency;

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and I think the British Empire wants efficiency from top to bottom.

An Hon. MEMBER.—But by a different method.

The Hon. Mr. NGATA.—By the same method. I doubt whether you can devise any other method that will be so efficient as that adopted in Prussianism. My judgment of the British race is that it is one of the finest races on earth—probably as good as the Maori. It is an interesting subject to pursue, this Prussianism. I believe that after this war is over the cry throughout the British Empire will be to organize—if they do not forget the chief lesson of the war, and I am afraid they are going to forget it.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member's time is up.

The Right Hon. Mr. MASSEY (Prime Minister).—I have been very much interested in the speeches which have been delivered in the course of this debate, and I think I may say I have been specially interested in some of the speeches which have been delivered this evening—for instance, the speeches made by the member for Hurunui and by the member for the Eastern Maori District. In the course of the speech delivered by the member for Hurunui that honourable member asked members to refrain from adversely criticizing the Government until the war comes to an end. The honourable member knows, and I think the House knows, that the Government does not mind being criticized in the very slightest. However, I appreciate the good advice which the honourable member has given to the House, and I would remind him and honourable members generally of the old saying that "the tree is known by its fruit." A man is known by his works, and I think I may also say that a Government is known by its policy and its administration. Before honourable members make up their minds as to what the Government has done I ask them to think back to the commencement of August, 1914, and I ask them to think of what occurred then. We made up our mind—I am not speaking particularly of the National Government, because there have been two Governments in office since the war commenced—the Government which was in office for the first year, and the National Government, which has held office since that time; but the policy of the two Governments so far as the war and duty to the country is concerned has been the same. The policy of the National Government is this, and has been all the time, and it has been the policy of New Zealand ever since the war commenced: to do our duty to the Empire and to keep the country prosperous so far as it was possible for us to do so. I admit that mistakes have sometimes been made.