

On November 4th, in Quebec City, the Hon. Louis St-Laurent, minister of Justice in the King Cabinet, made the following statement (I quote from the report in *Le Canada*, the Liberal organ):

"If the Federal Government had decided to have recourse to a coercive measure in order to send reinforcements to our troops overseas, as was proposed by Colonel Ralston, the immense majority of the people of the Province of Quebec would have felt that they had been betrayed by their fellow citizens of the English language."

Obviously, this is not the first time that the Minister of Justice has spoken regrettable words, but this time, he really went beyond the limits of exaggeration.

It is absolutely false, to say that the Province of Quebec would have felt itself betrayed by our English speaking fellow citizens, if the views of Colonel Ralston had been accepted by the government, and if it had been decided to send our conscripts overseas.

Since the beginning of the war, Quebec has done its share. Our Province has furnished a great number of volunteers. Our population has obeyed the mobilisation law and has subscribed liberally to the Victory Loans, as well as to the funds of the Red Cross and other works of relief and of charity.

If our Province has not sent so many volunteers to the war as some other Provinces, the reason undoubtedly no doubt is that too many of our people have believed Hon. Louis St-Laurent when he said, in the House of Commons, on June 16th, 1942:

"It may be great and glorious to fight and die for the world's salvation, for the salvation of the United Nations, for the salvation of Democracy and Christian civilization; but that is the privilege of each man, a privilege he has the right to choose for himself; it is not a duty which citizenship imposes as an obligation correlative to the rights which citizenship guarantees as a privilege."

This affirmation — that it is not a duty to go to fight overseas — can easily be found also, couched in different terms, in the statements of Hon. Mackenzie King, the late Ernest Lapointe, the late Fernand Rinfret, P. J. A. Cardin, all ministers of the King cabinet, in which they voiced the same principle. I will not quote these statements, since everyone remembers them.

We cannot blame our people for having believed in these statements. Those who are to blame, and severely to blame, are the Party leaders who made use of the overseas conscription argument as a weapon with which to defeat their political adversaries.

The Liberal leaders, beginning with the Prime Minister, have preached throughout Quebec for twenty five years, that there was absolutely no obligation to go to fight overseas. That is a fact admitted by all impartial minds.

And yet, Hon. St-Laurent now wants to place on Quebec the responsibility for the acts of his own government with regard to the sending of conscripts overseas.

It should be the opposite. The Liberal party should carry the responsibility for the attitude of Quebec province.

If the Liberal party had not made a political weapon of conscription, if its leaders had been honest enough to tell our Province that participation in a war would inevitably entail overseas conscription sooner or later, since it is ~~unavoidable~~ against a country overseas that Canada has declared war, and if these same leaders had had the courage to admit that the voluntary system can only give limited results and that conscription would become a necessity when the voluntary system had become incapable of furnishing the required number of reinforcements to our men in the battle line; and if these same leaders had not for years carried out as a policy of hypocrisy and lying, the people of Quebec, like those of all the other provinces, would have understood that a country cannot declare war without, by that fact, undertaking the heaviest of sacrifices.

More than that, and this is what I want to proclaim, from the ~~human~~ housetops, the people of Quebec, in spite of all the poison that has been poured into their minds by the Liberal party, will accept the overseas conscription law