

*Mobilization Act—Mr. Cardin*

of his province. I have no excuse to offer. My conscience is at peace, whether I am understood or not in my province by proprietors of newspapers. I may have something to say later on in this debate in regard to propaganda that is being carried on in the province of Quebec in an endeavour to frustrate the effort that I have been making and the effort that other members from Quebec are trying to make. Some other day I may have something more to say.

Who can raise his voice in this house and say that the province of Quebec has been lacking in cooperation with the rest of Canada in every activity, in war as well as in any other line of endeavour? We have been doing our share every moment, in every crisis, in every difficult time that confronted Canada. We have measured up to the standard. But we have never been able, even to this moment, to know definitely how many French Canadians have enlisted in English-speaking regiments. A member of the administration of 1917, after he was out of politics, complained that even in his day, in 1917 and subsequently he could never get information as to the number of French Canadians who had enlisted in so-called English-speaking regiments. We cannot get that information. We have never been able to get it.

When you start to compare the enlistments in other sections of Canada with the enlistments in the province of Quebec, you should be sure of your figures. There are many factors that have to be taken into consideration before condemning the population of the province of Quebec or before we sustain the censure of certain military men who are mixing in politics instead of fulfilling their military duties. This is a point that needs to be emphasized, and a point upon which many details should be obtained before condemnation is passed on the race which was the first established on the land of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, yourself and most hon. members of this house belong to the British race. You are proud of it, and I compliment you upon it. You have many reasons to be proud of being descendants of the great British race. But it is not your fault; it is an accident of nature. I am a descendant of the founders of Canada, those who first discovered and established this land as a civilized country. I am proud of my race. It is not my fault; it is an accident of nature. But when we come to consider problems such as the one confronting us at the present time, immediately any man who has any elementary knowledge of psychology will understand that your response is going to be much quicker than mine. Why? Because I have to

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reason in my mind why I have to support the British flag and spend my energies and my life for the defence of the British rule in this country or perhaps elsewhere. It is the result of thinking, the result of reasoning, if I come to that conclusion. With you it is the impulse of the heart. Your heart becomes inflamed as soon as the name of England, of the British empire, is mentioned. It is quite natural, it is in your blood; it is your blood that makes that impulse. It cannot be the same with me. It would be against nature. I have to reason why I should take that step or not take it. I hope that my position is understood from that point of view. My position being understood, the position of the French Canadian is also understood.

We are law-abiding citizens. But we have been left alone, outside of the economic field, for years and years. An hon. gentleman spoke of the conscription of wealth; there is no great wealth to be conscripted from the hands of French Canadians, because they have no great share in the economic development of Canada. They have been kept outside of that field, through circumstances, through conditions of which I have no time at present to give further explanation. But we have lived alone in our corner, in our little part of Canada. We have always been told by the representatives or the leaders of all parties in this house, when they wanted our votes, that we should not be forced to go and fight outside the limits of Canada. This is not new; it has been repeated over and over again since confederation. Is it surprising that to-day the same answer is not as readily obtained in my province as is found elsewhere?

The French Canadians, in order to maintain unity in this country have been making many and many concessions to the majority. We are a minority. It is true, it is the duty, unfortunately, of a minority to make concessions to the majority. We have been fulfilling that duty freely since confederation. I venture to say to the face of the country that we have made concessions upon concessions since confederation, in order to keep peace, harmony, good-will and good understanding between the two races in Canada.

But there comes a time when concession means betrayal of the people one is representing in parliament. I do not want to pass that limit.

It was not a pleasure for the late Mr. Lapointe and myself to leave our duties here when we were ministers of the crown and go into Quebec province to take part in a provincial election and turn the provincial issue into a federal issue in urging our people to approve the participation of Canada in the