

this country, with a population no more than seven million souls, they would make the world believe—and what is worse—impress upon the minds of the Canadians themselves the conviction that Canada has not done her duty. I say that no one has the right, excepting if he be an anti-patriot, to charge Canada with remissness in duty. By so doing, I repeat the value and nobleness of our sacrifices are set at naught. For my part, and I believe it is the same for all who truly love their country, and love it first and above all, I would prefer reading upon the tombstone of the Canadian soldier the word "volunteer" than the epitaph "conscript." Voluntary sacrifice compels emotion and enthusiasm, whilst the sentiment at the sacrifice of the conscript is only that of grief.

Besides, Mr. Speaker, conscription would unjustly put us on an equal footing with the autonomous countries who are presently at war; it would put us on a level with England, with France, with Russia, with Italy, with the United States. Equality as to obligations, but not equality as to rights, since war has been declared without our consent and will be settled without our co-operation. I will go further, Mr. Speaker, they are making much noise with these three words, "Win the War", which are nothing but wind.

What would become of all the theories built upon those words if the autonomous countries decided to settle the war by a compromise? What could we say? What could we answer; what explanation, what excuse could we give to those we would have enlisted after a campaign all of excitement and exaggeration?

This measure, Mr. Speaker, would moreover destroy the harmony now existing or which has existed among the races who inhabit this country. It would give a chance to the demagogues of both races to wave all over the country the incendiary torch of prejudices. And that has already begun, Mr. Speaker. By comparisons and figures, some are trying to prove the loyalty or the disloyalty of one or the other of the provinces of the Confederation. Since when have patriotism, love of one's country and self-sacrifice been a matter of figures? Since when can these questions be settled by ciphering and statistics?

Patriotism is a sentiment and sentiments have nothing in common with arithmetic.

They say: Quebec has not done enough. If we take into account the circumstances, if we consider the odious campaign which [Mr. Cardin.]

has been waged against the province of Quebec for several years past and the unfair treatment our compatriots have been submitted to in certain provinces, I say that the province of Quebec has done not only her duty, but even more than her duty. Had she listened to prejudices, had she allowed herself to be guided by sentiments, she would not have enlisted a single man. We have done our duty; and I consider, by reason of the position occupied by the province of Quebec, by reason of the mean consideration given to her citizens in the other sections of the country, that this province has done more than Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the French Canadian's first thought is for Canada. The English Canadian's first thought, however, is for England. I do not want to reproach him with it; but it seems to me he has no right either, resting upon a false theory, to accuse us of being too strongly attached to our land and institutions and of preferring above all Canada, the land where our ancestors were born and died and on whose soil we intend to die ourselves.

We have no personal sympathies, might I say, across the ocean; we have no relatives, no friends in England; nor do we cherish the hope of going back there to end our days, as probably do some members of the Government.

We have no longer, either, nor have we had for many years past, any attachment to France. Those ties have been broken, and to-day the French Canadians of the province of Quebec are, before all else, Canadians. Mr. Speaker, the province of Quebec says aloud what she has in her mind, and in doing so, she even says and proclaims what the other provinces of the Confederation also have in their minds. Do you want a proof of it? It comes from the lips of one of those who have seen fit to abandon their party. What does he tell us? "If conscription were submitted to a referendum, for my part, I would ask that the vote be not taken by ballot, but openly." It is for the province of Ontario, that these hon. gentlemen demand the open vote. It is not for the province of Quebec, for they know what her opinion is; they know what she thinks; they know her convictions and these have been expressed by her mandatories; no one is uncertain as to her decision and can be mistaken as to the verdict she would deliver. It is for the province of Ontario they would have the old absolute system of the open vote, so they might intimidate the people and prevent them from freely expressing their