

Minister, and before Canada's participation has been decided, I ask every member of this house to consider the case of the Canadian born in Canada or settled here permanently,—the Canadian of Canada, the true Canadian, the 100 per cent Canadian,—proud of his freedom and independence, who has been taught to love the Canadian soil, to whom political leaders in Canada and England have said on numerous occasions. "With the statute of Westminster, Canada is now a sovereign, free and independent state," and who says to himself: I never refused to defend my country and I am always ready to defend it. My forefathers have even fought to keep it for the British crown in 1775 and 1812. In 1914, I was asked to go to Europe in order to fight for the triumph of democracy. I went and I sent my sons who died on the battlefield or came back crippled; I have been ruined myself, and what was the result? Dictatorship has replaced democracy in most countries—almost the only countries that retained democracy are those that had been neutral; there was frantic scheming to share in the spoils; my country got nothing. At the League of Nations, where every country is supposed to work for peace, I read somewhere—and I am quoting just one instance—that the French delegate Dumont insisted strongly on the advisability of recognizing submarines as legitimate means of defence—and that delegate had a large interest in the building of submarines. I learned that my sons were killed at the front with shells manufactured by countries at whose side I was fighting. I noticed that England was instrumental in Germany's recovery. I learned that the financiers of London were interested in German armament factories, while financiers of Berlin were interested in munition plants controlled in England. I learned that, not later than last month, while rushing to conclude alliances in order to put a check on Germany, England and France were selling war material to Germany.

And now a new war breaks out in Europe, far, far away from us, at a time when I am still crushed under the burden of taxation to pay for the last war; and, as in 1914, I am told that I must participate in it because one must defend democracy and liberty, while I notice that my neighbours, the United States, an American and democratic country like mine, and all the other countries of America, as well as Ireland, a member of the British commonwealth, and all the democratic countries of Europe like Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Belgium and others, remain neutral.

[Mr. Raymond.]

Is there any reason why I should go to war or send my sons to be killed, perhaps by shells manufactured in England or in France or by other war material supplied by these two countries—why I should ruin myself? And when I recall that the Prime Minister told me, in 1935, that a war in these remote countries did not interest him, or again in 1938 "that we had neither the power nor the competence to regulate the destiny of countries situated thousands of miles away from our own";—that the Minister of Justice told me, not later than December 12 last, in Quebec: "Instead of waging war in a foreign land, we shall remain here and defend our beloved Canada."

Well, as a one hundred per cent Canadian, I understand these words, I understand this state of mind, and I appeal to every true Canadian—is there a single person who could blame this Canadian for saying: "I shall take no part in this conflict, I refuse to fight on behalf of foreign interests, I refuse to ruin myself for the sake of others, and instead of going to war in a foreign land, I shall remain here to defend the country I love."

I appeal to every true Canadian in this house to understand these feelings, and to consider well, before thrusting upon us any participation in an external war, the future of this country and of confederation.

Right Hon. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the hon. member for Beauharnois-Laprairie (Mr. Raymond) to forgive me if in following him I use the English language, with my usual difficulty. I do so because most of my remarks are addressed rather to the English-speaking majority in the house, and I think perhaps it is best that I should be understood by them; I know my hon. friend will understand me.

These are indeed grave and solemn circumstances, and no member can rise in his place to take part in this debate without feeling a deep sense of responsibility. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) last night, at the conclusion of his remarks, which he had made with his usual freedom of expression, thanked Providence that he could speak and have freedom to express his opinions in the Canadian parliament, under British institutions, knowing that he could not do so in other places. I believe the hon. member for Beauharnois-Laprairie may have the same feeling. But I would ask the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the hon. member for Beauharnois-Laprairie whether it is not worth while for us to preserve those very institutions and that freedom of expression which we enjoy