

to stir up strife in connection with the confederation act:

Without denying his origins, without abjuring his language or his faith, without forgetting the traditions of his race, every Canadian should, instead of shutting himself up within the narrow confines of a retrograde provincialism, rise higher, widen his outlook, aim at the ideal of a Canadian nation in the broadest and most generous sense of the word. With this objective the self-governing provinces, while operating within their powers, will show greater cohesion and each one, in the ardour of mutual emulation, seeking to become the main factor of common progress, will ensure general prosperity. Because of its traditions, its geographical situation, its boundless wealth, our province should hold first place in the dominion and should be, if we so wish, the principal factor of this general prosperity. . . . Such is the noble and patriotic aim to which we should devote all our efforts.

The problem arose again later on, and in January 1918, answering those from other provinces, especially from the western and the maritime provinces, who were asking us what we of the province of Quebec wanted, I said:

What we want is to live and let live. To live while observing not only the letter of the constitution but especially its spirit; to live according to our tastes, our temperament and our mentality; to live as free citizens conscious of our duties and of our responsibilities; to live while working for the progress and development of our province, in the conviction that we are thus ensuring the progress and development of the country; to live while maintaining our language, our beliefs, our traditions, our institutions and our laws; in short, to live as loyal Canadians devoted to the British crown. To let live: giving to others the respect we ourselves demand; recognizing to them the liberty they claim in the exercise of their own vested rights; leaving them free to speak and teach their mother-tongue, to preserve their beliefs and their traditions, and even fighting with them, if need be, for the defence of this heritage which they cherish as much as we do. . . . Thus it is that we shall become a truly Canadian nation in which shall prevail that "strong community of interests constituted, as has been said, by the consciousness of sacrifices that each has made and is ready to make again." We would thus be protected against the causes of ruin which threaten us from within at the same time as we ward off dangers from without. We should then appear as a nation bound not solely by common interests, but also by a true union of hearts and minds.

Such were the considerations which we put forward throughout the last campaign in Lotbinière county in replying to those who, stirring up strife, ignoring the policies and accomplishments of the present government, endeavoured to turn public opinion and capture the vote of the people.

The other problem is that of national defence. In accepting to stand for Lotbinière county, I did not hesitate to tell the electors that I did not on this point to support the policy of the present government, because I

considered that a citizen's first duty is to defend his country. My friends and I stated at every public meeting that we were in favour of defending our country, that we believed that the first line of defence was now in Canada, but that we did not want to contribute one cent for arming or equipping an expeditionary force, in short, that we do not intend to take part in foreign wars. Thus did we present the question and thus did the electors of Lotbinière understand it. The answer they gave on December 27 last shows that they wish, like all other citizens of Canada, of whatever race and whatever religion, to exercise the first duty of all citizens, that is the defence of his country.

The vote given in Lotbinière on December 27 has received various appraisals. It would serve no useful purpose to repeat here all the comments to which it has given rise. Some saw in the verdict a deeper meaning than the electors wished to give to it, going so far as to say that the voters of Lotbinière had declared themselves militarists. Others said that the result had no significance whatever and that it did not indicate approval of the government's policy.

Mr. Speaker, the vote cast in Lotbinière on December 27 last on the question of national defence means that the French Canadians of the province of Quebec want to do their duty. They are ready to contribute their share of the expenditure required for the defence of the country, but nothing more. They are not militarists. They want peace just as much as any citizen of any other province, but they also wish to see all needed measures taken for the reorganization of our militia according to the government's plans in order to ensure peace within and prevent attack from without. Such, I repeat, is the way the question was presented. And such is the way the electors of Lotbinière have understood it. At every meeting not only the older men, but especially the youth of the county, in great majority, applauded the statements made by the members of this house who assisted me in the campaign on this important question of national defence. That does not mean, though, that the province of Quebec wants the government to enter into the armament race. The result of the election means that Quebec is conscious of its duty and aware of its responsibilities and wishes, according to its means and in the light of the new conditions, to furnish its share of the expenditure essential to ensuring peace within the country and to prevent attack from without.

Mr. Speaker, the speech from the throne foreshadows measures of considerable importance. I do not propose to discuss them now.