

partnership with him, because I would be considered no better than him; if his financial standing is not good and I become his partner, he will ruin me; if his character, honour, integrity, responsibility, are not good, I will have nothing to do with him.

Well, I say that it would have been more than a blunder, it would have been a crime on the part of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, to have entered into a partnership with those gentlemen under such circumstance. What! to go into partnership with those ruined men, lost in the estimation of the public several of whom are discredited, men who are not fit to remain in the cabinet, whom the Prime Minister is bound to turn out. To join in with men like those, that would have been a crime on the part of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. We only associate with men whose moral and financial standing, whose character and respectability are on a par with our own. We cannot associate with people who are fallen or on the point of falling.

What! The Prime Minister asked Sir Wilfrid Laurier: Do come and help me, Sir Wilfrid, I can't stand it any longer, I can no longer do anything, I am sinking. I am going into bankruptcy, do come to my rescue, I will take your hand and settle matters. The honourable leader of the Opposition might have agreed to that, but your humble servant would certainly not have given his consent nor would he have associated with the Government.

Everything is going from bad to worse in the cabinet. Let us take for instance the late Minister of Militia (Sir Sam Hughes); they just told him: Get out of here; they have just told the honourable Minister of Public Works (Mr. Robert Rogers) that his conduct is so honourable that he must temporarily withdraw from the cabinet; but as a consolation, they add that two Superior Court Judges will do their very best to whitewash him; and it is with men of such a character they would have us associate. Was it not taking Laurier for a school-boy? If my honourable leader had fallen into such a trap, I would have despaired of my race, of my country and of my chief. No, Mr. Speaker, there is no possible association with people in such a bad plight with people who are always at loggerheads with one another and who have no confidence in one another. I say that it is preferable to spend your whole life in the shades of Opposition than to find yourself in such bad company.

The general demand to-day is to encourage the farmers to promote agriculture and to increase production. That's very easy to

say, but you must have the means to do it. How do you want the farmer to increase his agricultural production? How can the farm increase its revenue? Labour is getting scarcer all the time; farm labourers are demanding excessive wages and even if you are willing to pay the price, you cannot get them. Labourers living near the large cities, prefer working in the factories and mills of every description, the farmers being unable to pay them sufficient living wages. It is the same with people of various trades, they quit their workshops to go into the shell and munition factories, for the good reason that it pays them far better. Those who are familiar with farming can speak knowingly, and they will tell you that if you send any more of our Canadians overseas you simply expose agriculture to complete ruin, and the farms will be deserted. Upon this topic, Mr. Speaker, I can speak from experience, for I have been operating for the past thirty-two years a thirty acre farm near Montreal. I have made great sacrifices towards improving that property; labourers work it year in and year out, and I tell you that, presently, farming is seriously shackled for want of hands. I say, moreover, that it is an impracticable undertaking to try and take away more men from this country for service abroad. Should we not begin by providing for our industries and the operating of our manufactures; how shall we do it if we have not the required hands? The Government certainly must know that the country is already suffering from this lack of men. Frequently, we see steamers coming into port with some 700 or 800 young Englishmen on board; we see them strutting, with a new walking stick, along the streets of Montreal. They come over to our country to fill the places of our French Canadian boys who are expelled from our stores and our mills, in order to force them, in a sense, to enlist.

Mr. PAQUET (L'Islet) (Translation): Will the hon. member allow me one question?

Mr. LAFORTUNE (Translation): Certainly.

Mr. PAQUET (Translation): Has the hon. member information to justify his assertion that the French Canadians are replaced in the munition factories by Englishmen just come from the British Isles?

Mr. LAFORTUNE (Translation): Certainly, I am not afraid to assert it.