

MILITARISM
WILL DESTROY
THE
PEOPLE

THE CANADIAN FORWARD

THE PEOPLE
WILL
DESTROY
MILITARISM

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SOCIAL - DEMOCRATIC PARTY



TORONTO, CANADA



May 24, 1917

"COMPROMISE" AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

RUMBLINGS OF REVOLUTION

Social - Democratic Party of Canada DOMINION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MANIFESTO RE CONSCRIPTION

Quebec

LAVERGNE TO ANSWER CALL.

But He Says All is Wrong—Speakers at a Liberal Meeting Air Views Which Are in Opposition to Conscription.

Montreal, May 21.—A despatch from Quebec to the Star says: "Being an officer in the militia, I shall be one of the first to be called out. I shall present myself without grumbling, and be a good soldier, for the Government will have spoken, and I shall obey. But the whole thing is wrong. Canada is already practically bankrupt through this war, and now she is taking another step toward ruin and annexation." Such was the comment made by Colonel Armand Lavergne regarding the conscription announcement.

"I believe in Canada first," he said. "If it came to a question of Canada's interest, I would let that little island which governs us go, just as she would let us go were the allies beaten by Germany and Canada demanded as a condition in the terms of peace."

"And assuming that you have Canada's interest at heart, regardless of the Empire as a whole, you do not believe it is to Canada's advantage to help the allies defeat the Germans."

"They should wait till the Germans come over here," he said.

Conscription Opposed.

"Borden is taking your sons by force and sending them away to be killed. We have done well by sending four hundred thousand soldiers to the front, all of whom have gone of their own good will, but for my part I do not want my sons sent to fight by a partizan government when England has a national Government in power," said Charles Query, at a meeting at Ste. Anne de Bellevue, called by the Young Men's Liberal Association of Montreal.

I. Vautrin, president of the association, said this was a free country, and the Government had no right to bring in conscription without authority from the people. "I for one," he declared, "have no confidence in conscription from such a cabinet as the one now in power."

National Government.

D. A. Lafortune, M.P., while expressing himself against conscription before the Government, was sure that the people willed it, said he had as yet received no intimation as to his leader's decision. He referred to the idea of a national Government, expressing the belief that it would be unwise for a partizan government like the one in power at Ottawa to impose enlistment by force.

Senator Choquette, of Quebec, says he will oppose conscription on the ground that the people should be consulted either by a referendum or a general election.

ANTI-CONSCRIPTION MEETING IN MONTREAL.

Montreal, May 23.—"Down with Conscription!" was the sentiment which pervaded a gathering in Park Lafontaine to-night, estimated at between 15,000 or 20,000, largely comprised of men whose ages ran from 15 to 30, the open air meeting having been called for the purpose of opposing conscription. Mr. M. Britton, who presided, said it was the duty of all men to "protest against this — conscription."

Further, he said, "Let us show the Government that the French-Canadians are not sheep." He considered that Canada had done her whole duty when she "sent 400,000 of our fellow-citizens to England."

Mr. Tancrede Marsill, proprietor of a local French daily, La Liberte, said he had received a letter from Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in which the Liberal chieftain had said he would oppose prolongation of Parliament and conscription. "I want to register this statement," said Mr. Marsill, "that before we have conscription we will have revolution."

Mr. Marsill said the French-Canadians were ready to do their duty as volunteers to defend the Empire, but they did not want conscription, especially conscription imposed by a Government which has had no mandate since September, 1916.

"We claim," said he, "general elections, so as to put an end to this Government."

The meeting was orderly, but was watched by a large force of policemen.

Mr. Ubald Paquin, a young newspaper man, said:

"Borden has come home here to murder some more thousands of citizens. This measure he proposes is organized murder."

Stating that General Hughes had said in Toronto that conscription was to be applied only to places where they had not done their duty, Mr. Paquin said:

"That means that they want to take men from the French-Canadian race, where the women are not afraid of having children."

He was in the midst of a sentence asking that protestations be made, and was saying: "If these means do not prevail—" when he was interrupted

In view of the Conscription Legislation foreshadowed by the Borden administration, we, the members of the Dominion Executive Committee of the Social-Democratic Party of Canada hereby place ourselves on record in relation to the proposed legislation.

RESOLVED:—That the first duty of a Democratic State is to refer to the people any proposed legislation which may vitally affect their welfare and civil liberty. In this regard we strongly condemn the suggested action of the Government for their announced intention of enacting compulsory military service without any such referendum being taken, thereby undermining the function of democratic Government—"Government by the people for the people."

AND WHEREAS:—We believe this is an attempt to coerce the people of this country into sustaining a proposal or policy which is alien to the wishes of the community (and akin to the military Junker system of Germany, which is a blight to the workers of that country), and in so far as the Borden administration is openly supporting this principle of militarism which is the greatest enemy of democracy; and has been so remiss in its duty to our people by permitting the profiteers and speculators to press down the said people to the lowest limits of human subsistence.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:—that the first duty of the Government is to protect our own people from the enemy in our midst, by destroying the principle of Profit, Patronage, and Graft, and to forever put an end to the destructive power of vested interests by subordinating all the material resources of Canada to the general welfare of our people, and by granting security and protection to those least able to defend themselves, "the wealth producers," and the extension of this principle to the injured soldiers and the dependents of those who have fallen in the fight.

AND WHEREAS:—We have received no clear declaration of the Government's object in prosecuting the war, and so far as we are aware, has taken no action to bring about a lasting peace; and further, having on record the statement of a British Cabinet Minister, Lord Robert Cecil, "that the allies cannot consider terms of peace without territorial compensation and indemnity," we are forced by circumstances to conclude that the men who would come under the provisions of the proposed legislation would be engaged in a war of conquest—to which principle we have a distinct objection; and so far as we are concerned will not acquiesce in the sacrifice of Canadian manhood for such base material purposes.

We further declare our uncompromising hostility to all measures of "Industrial or Military Conscription," as a menace to the liberties and social aspirations of the Canadian people, and strictly adhere to the spirit of the "Basle Socialist Convention of 1913," declaring it to be our duty to bring the war to an end, and with all our energies to use the Political and Economic power at our disposal to hasten the fall of Capitalist dominion (which is the cause of war) by placing society upon a stable economic foundation which will bring as a natural corollary—The blessings of Universal Peace.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

I. BAINBRIDGE,
Secretary.

363 Spadina Avenue,
Toronto, May-22nd, 1917.

by cries of, "We will take other means."

Later a crowd which had followed Mr. Marsil down town smashed windows in the offices of La Presse and La Patrie.

ANTI-CONSCRIPTION FIGHT.

Begins in Quebec—League to Be Organized in Quebec City District—Montreal Council Asked to Go on Recess.

Montreal May 22.—A Quebec despatch says: "Ald. Dussault at last

night's meeting against conscription. He also announced the near creation of an anti-conscription league throughout the entire district."

Meetings against conscription were held last night in Montreal. The Club Letellier agreed to ask Mayor Martin to introduce a resolution in council against obligatory military overseas service. At a meeting on St. Lawrence Boulevard it was decided to organize a mass open air meeting in Parie Lafontaine on Wednesday evening against conscription.

A petition from a number of citizens

(Continued on page Two)