

now know that it was founded upon nothing, but a desire to supply supporting argument. There is nothing that Sir Robert knew then that we do not know now—indeed that we did not know then.

Another reason for Sir Robert's sudden change of opinion was suggested; namely, a request from the British government. But in his speech he repudiated that suggestion as the produce of

"a diseased imagination. . . . The subject was never discussed between myself and any member of the British Government; if there had been any such suggestion from them, I for one, would not have tolerated it" (a).

Another suggestion (we must, if we can, find some reason) is that fearing defeat at the unavoidable elections, Sir Robert, lending himself to the sinister counselling of Mr. Robert Rogers, callously and criminally adopted conscription as a bit of excellent party strategy. No one who has the honor of Sir Robert's acquaintance believes that story. Why then the change?

SIR ROBERT.—Let us examine Sir Robert a little. He is a fine type of man—a student, a capable administrator, an effective speaker, an excellent debater, as honest as a politician can very well be, but impressionable—very impressionable. Like the rest of us, he has a point of view; he has a political ideal; everything is seen from his own standpoint; very many things have a right or wrong color, according as they harmonize with, or disfigure, his mental concepts; and while he would rightly repudiate the attribution to him of the principle that the end justifies the means, he might regard occurrences which led one way much more complacently than if they tended in a contrary direction. If, in 1910-1911, for example, he had been suffering from, instead of profiting by, the anti-British propaganda of the Quebec Nationalists, his party would hardly have given it their benediction and its prophets their reward.

Sir Robert is an imperialist—very much more an imperialist than a Canadian—an honest, convinced, intense imperialist. He regards Sir Wilfrid (and me, if he ever gives me a thought) as an imperialistic menace. He considers that control by a Canadian government of the disposition of a Canadian fleet in time of war would be "ill-advised and dangerous" (b). He believes that Canada ought to participate in all British wars, whether the cause be just or unjust (c).

(a) *Hansard*, p. 2280.

(b) *Ante*, p. 4.

(c) *Ante*, p. 4, 5.