

We notice that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, although favourable to our voluntary participation in the war, did not lose sight of Canada's interests. His idea was to gauge our efforts in proportion to our resources rather than engage ourselves thoughtlessly in the war and to give up our last man and last dollar, as the Tories wished, first including the leader of the opposition (Mr. Meighen). The Liberals were opposed to conscription and to senseless recruiting. I, myself, at that time, wrote a number of newspaper articles, criticizing the government in this connection. I stated that useless recruiting was being carried on, which was unnecessary for the needs of our expeditionary army; that this excess in recruiting and the poor equipment of our troops would cost enormous sums to the country, without bringing any advantage to the Allies. The Liberal's contentions are, to-day, fully justified. On September 11th, 1924, at the Windsor hotel, in Montreal, at a dinner given by the Citizen Research Institute of Canada, Sir Arthur Currie, at present Principal of McGill University, and ex-Commander in Chief of the Canadian Army during the Great war, stated:

1. That during the said war, the Canadian government enrolled and sent overseas at least 100,000 men who were of no help to the army; that the total cost of this useless expenditure amounted to at least \$150,000,000, exclusive of the yearly disbursements which these men still cost and will in the future cost us in pensions and hospital expenses and that the opinion of medical experts has in many of these cases been ignored.

2. That in the opinion of experts the Ross rifle was worthless and that notwithstanding said advice, successive contingents were armed with said rifle.

3. That, in the opinion of experts, part of our equipment was worthless, nevertheless contingent after contingent were sent overseas with said equipment.

4. That, in the opinion of experts, the Oliver equipment was not what was required, nevertheless contingent after contingent were sent overseas with said Oliver equipment.

Mr. Speaker, let us not forget these things when we closely look over the country's sad financial plight and when we are trying to find out the parties responsible for the taxes which burden the Canadian people.

Yet, we are told, you approved of all the funds asked by the government for the prosecution of the war. No doubt, we could not do otherwise then, without endangering the success of our participation in the war. It was impossible at the time to separate the tares from the wheat. We had a two-fold duty to perform: that of condemning the waste that we could discover, we did so; and that of voting the appropriations required for the Canadian army; this we also did, from a patriotic standpoint. It is almost

a crime, in war time, to cut off the government's supplies.

Mr. Henri Bourassa, although strongly opposed to our exaggerated participation in the war, himself wrote:

It is not the time for controversies, bitter recriminations, settling of petty quarrels, still less for party intrigues..... One may disapprove, on the whole or in part of the government's actions, deny the opportunity, the way or the reasons for its intervention in the European conflict, lay aside for the future all the principles involved, but we have no right, at present, to launch out into a bitter debate on this measure.

The hour to judge and condemn came later. The people in irons, in 1917, spoke freely in 1921.

One of the worst transactions carried out by the Tories and which the Liberals fought strongly against, was the purchase of the railways, which threw on the shoulders of the Canadian people the heaviest part of the burden that overwhelms them. Our opponents tell us that there was no other solution to the problem than to buy the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk which were bankrupt. Nonsense! The great majority of business men, without distinction of party, have condemned this purchase for which Canada paid many million dollars for shares which had not cost a cent to the holders, a transaction which has made the country responsible for a debt of many hundred million dollars and which has hurt our finances more than all the legitimate expenditures of the war. Has one forgotten the protests of the Chambres de Commerce and the Boards of Trade, especially those of Montreal, protests signed by prominent Conservatives, such as the Ekers, the Chaputs? And the merchant marine, established by the Tory government by lavishing millions, are they not also for the greater part, responsible for the financial mess in which we find ourselves? The Conservatives who are in the habit of trying to make us share the responsibility of their failures, tell us that we approved of this merchant marine scheme. Even if that be true, they alone, would not be less responsible for this act of poor administration since they were then in power.

However, such is not the case, and it is untrue to say that the Liberals approved of the establishment of a large merchant marine. They agreed to the construction of a few merchant ships during the war; however, they always condemned the government for having launched out into the costly venture of a merchant marine, without calculating and foreseeing what it would cost the country already crushed under by the burden of the state ownership of railways. In 1918, the government owned four ships and