

man would have supposed in those little nations; I refer particularly to Belgium and to Serbia, to whom defence and protection had been promised. France and England, who had undertaken to protect those countries, in respecting their treaties, found themselves in honour bound to fulfil their engagements, whilst defending themselves against the foe of the democratic nations.

Mr. Speaker, our mother countries being at war, their colonies are equally at war, and every one of them should, in proportion to its financial circumstances and the total amount of its population, aid by all possible means the Entente Allies to win a final victory and to establish a permanent peace. Patriotically, Canada rose up to the expectations of the mother country and of our allies by contributing over 420,000 volunteers, armed and equipped by the country and placed in the imperial armies' service. Of course, voluntary enlistment was bound to subside after a while, and such falling off was accentuated by the quarrels which arose among the members of the cabinet who in so doing have stopped recruiting; and also by the unspeakable manner in which the French Canadians of the province of Quebec were treated by certain fanatics who are ever making it their study to insult the French people of this province.

It has been said and repeated, in this House, that we should sacrifice everything, even to our last man and our last dollar for the Allies' defence. I do not hesitate to state, Mr. Speaker, that, under the present circumstances, it would be rashness. All the democratic countries are as much interested as we are in aiding the Entente Allies in this great conflict which threatens liberty and justice and in securing a final and universal peace.

How many of those countries, Mr. Speaker, have done as much as Canada, both in men and in financial aid, since this war began and up to date? How many of those democratic countries have been as generous as we, when their interests were at stake just as much as our own? Who, among all those people, would be ready to shed their blood, give their last man and drain their finances—as some Canadian Imperialists would want Canada to do—to secure a victory which can be hoped for without doing so much, when those other countries shall have contributed their proportionate share? Why, Mr. Speaker, should Canada give her men and drain her finances for the benefit of the neutrals and of the patronage sappers, profiteering out of our generosity, in favour of our political mountebanks whose patriotism

[Mr. Fortier.]

is limited by the manger and the fat jobs. I have no hesitation in stating, Mr. Speaker, that until now, Canada has done her full share, and more than her share. I do not hesitate to say that it is not necessary to establish this conscription which has been imposed upon the Prime Minister by certain financial vultures. In my opinion, the system of volunteering, if well organized, would suffice to contribute our quota of the necessary reserves. And were that system inadequate, we would only have to reduce the number of divisions which the Prime Minister has had the temerity to promise, on his own responsibility, without first submitting this rash pledge to the approval of the leading men of the country. To promise without previous consultation, for and on behalf of Canada, 500,000 men, or four full divisions with their reserve forces, without a mandate from the people. I say, Mr. Speaker, that only a wilfully blind man could have done such a thing. The conscription Bill, now before this House, would never have been needed, if the means taken to further voluntary recruiting had been rational and if certain classes of our fellow-citizens had not been wounded in their feelings by the aspersions lavished on their nationality, their patriotism and their loyalty to the British Crown, as well as on their mentality.

Under such circumstances, it was only natural that the province of Quebec should have contributed a smaller number of volunteers, and more than that, we see here in this very House, while discussing this measure, an individual arrogating to himself the title of the western lion,—attempting to compare the population of Quebec to a lamb, that faithful friend of John the Baptist, the patron saint of the French Canadians. Mr. Speaker, were I asked to give my preference to one of these quadrupeds, I would certainly grant it to the Quebec lamb rather than to the Imperialist bull from Red Deer, the representative of the region of the wild buffaloes of yore. When discussing this measure, our friends on the other side of the House rejoiced at the defection of certain Liberal members. To such, may I be allowed to say that Sir Wilfrid Laurier is, in this House, the personification of loyalty and of democracy, respecting in others the liberty of thought, of judgment and of speech. And that loyalty may advantageously compare with that of the Prime Minister who, one day, boasting of British fair play, was the first to apply the gag to the leader of the Opposi-