

We, the Allies, have the superiority in numbers, and in the French-British lines we have even 1,000,000 more men than the Germans who face us. As to industrial superiority, it is decidedly on our side by reason of America coming into the war.

In another French newspaper, *Le Journal of Paris*, Senator Humbert has written as follows:

There is no longer any stock. The neutrals even have to ration themselves. New arrivals grow less. Famine menaces the entire world. I foresaw this supreme outcome of this awful crisis some twenty months ago, when I said: let us be sparing of our reserves in men. I was not heard, any more than when a year earlier I called for cannons and munitions. To-day is the danger not self evident? There is but one remedy: Bring back 200,000 or 300,000 Frenchmen of the older classes, to place the fields again in a state of cultivation. Such is the necessary means of recuperation. The condition of the armies, the large numerical advantage enjoyed by the Allies on the western front, compared to the Germans, allow the adoption without delay of this plank of salvation. Let us hasten; it is already late in the day; to-morrow it may be too late.

Surely those men know what they are talking about, and it would be better for the Government to urge on and help the farmers and workingmen of this country to supply the troops of our Allies with all food and material absolutely necessary to carry on the war, instead of breaking national unity and antagonising public opinion by the enacting of an improper measure of compulsion.

I am opposed to this Bill also because it is a direct violation of all the pledges given by this Government, this Parliament, and all the public men of this country, to the Canadian people. The right hon. the Prime Minister has solemnly told the people of Canada that there shall be no conscription. If compulsory service is enforced, I do not hesitate to say that many sacrifices volunteered by Canadian citizens would have been obtained under false pretenses. The right hon. the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir George Foster) spoke in rather light terms of pledges, and even of the constitution of the country. In time of war, he said, all these must be put aside. Sir, this is not good British doctrine. This is the German method, it is the very argument brought forth by the invaders of Belgium when they crushed the heroic little nation in violation of their pledges. But surely we must keep faith with our own people, and the spoken and written pledges of the rulers should not be treated as mere scraps of paper. Let me give a few quotations from speeches of our public men. Speaking in this House

[Mr. E. Lapointe.]

of Commons in 1914, the Prime Minister said, page 17 of Hansard:

The men of Canada who are going to the front are going as free men by voluntary enlistment as free men in a free country. They are coming forward voluntarily for the purpose of serving this Dominion and this Empire in a time of peril.

At the opening of the session of 1916, the right hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) said, in commenting upon the offer of 500,000 men:

But let me say—and I believe that upon this we should have an expression of opinion—that we must repel at once the impression which has been sought to be created that this offer is a preliminary step to conscription. There is to be no conscription in Canada.

To this the right hon. the Prime Minister replied:

My right hon. friend has alluded to conscription—to the idea in this country or elsewhere that there may be conscription in Canada. In speaking in the first two or three months of this war I made it clear to the people of Canada that we did not propose any conscription. I repeat that announcement to-day—with emphasis.

Speaking at Sohmer Park in Montreal on October 15, 1914, my right hon. leader (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) said:

It is a sacrifice that is quite voluntary. Canada is an absolutely free country. What has been done up to the present, what will be done in the future, will be absolutely voluntary.

Speaking at Montreal in August, 1914, the former Minister of Militia (Sir Sam Hughes) said:

No man who leaves these shores will go except of his own free will, purely voluntary, and no married man shall go except with the consent of his wife and family, and when they go to vanquish our enemies, as vanquish them they will, they will go as free men, subjects of the British Empire, soldiers of His Majesty.

Speaking at Vancouver at the Canadian Club on November 16, 1915, the hon. Minister of Public Works (Mr. Rogers) said:

We will continue to recruit just as long as there is an able-bodied man in the country who is willing to volunteer his services to his country, and just as long as we have a dollar or can raise a dollar to equip him and send him across the ocean.

In a statement issued at Ottawa on July 28th, 1915, the late Postmaster General (hon. T. Chase Casgrain) said:

I am pretty accurate in my political predictions, and I can say that there will be no conscription.

I could give many other quotations from many other gentlemen and from 10 p.m. the press of this country, but it is useless for me so to do, so