

On the other hand, Sir Wilfrid's opponents assert that the question of conscription is a grave problem for experts, and should in no event be submitted to uninformed public opinion; that it is necessary to legislate upon it at once, and with the means at hand. To Sir Wilfrid's "invasion" argument they reply by asking if the present war is not really a war in defense of Canada, for Canadian troops in France are fighting to protect Canada from Germany's threatened future invasion and against an envelopment of what Sir Wilfrid Laurier has well called "the black shroud of Germany's insolence, cruelties, and barbarities." Finally, Sir Wilfrid's opponents call attention to his own eloquent speeches bidding God-speed to the soldiers departing from Canada, and his implied pledge that the country would support them to the final issue; and his opponents assert that, in view of the 35,000 Canadians killed in the war, the duty rests with the Canadians at home immediately to assure those still fighting of support to the final issue, and at once to give a guaranty that the sacrifices already made have not been in vain.

THE FRENCH-CANADIANS

Sir Wilfrid's position is peculiar. Foreseeing that the will of the Canadian people as a whole was for conscription, he thought to persuade his French-speaking constituents to support the movement by moving for a referendum, and thus avoiding a situation regarding conscription like that in Ireland. If he had favored the immediate enactment of a conscription law, his leadership might have passed to M. Bourassa, the Nationalist leader, and the disaffection in the Province of Quebec would in consequence have become solidified and increased the difficulties of the Government. That disaffection has become solidified enough. Correctly assuming the passage by the upper house of the Conscription Bill, the French-Canadians have appealed to their provincial Premier to petition the British Government for redress against Parliament's action. Though the cry of "race and religion" has been a feature of every Dominion election, English-speaking Canadians did not suppose that the opposition to conscription would be so strong.

Quebec has sent but a very slender proportion of the total Canadian forces, and, with only one exception, no French-Canadian unit has ever been brought to full strength without drafts from other units. The rest of Canada resents this, and refuses to accept M. Bourassa's contention that any further weakening of the country's man power would handicap agricultural production and other essential industries, that this would not alone threaten the nation's economic life but would also threaten its political life by promoting racial conflict, and that it would thus weaken the cause of Great Britain and her allies. Yet "LaCroix," a paper published in the city of Quebec, declares that, as for half a century the Confederation has been fatal to French-Canadians, the time has now come when Lower Canada should separate from Upper Canada, and, while still subject to the British Crown, be administered by the French-Canadian majority. The editor of the Montreal "L'Idéal Catholique," as reported, even urges Quebec to secede from the Confederation, form a French republic on the banks