

"As to Armand Lavergne," Sir Wilfrid added, "he is a candidate in Montmagny County in opposition to the Liberal. I have made no alliance with either Bourassa or Lavergne. I have made no alliance with anyone. I stand on the record of my convictions."

Sir Wilfrid declared that the Government had taken away the vote from the women in Ontario. "The ladies of Ontario," he said in reference to those present, "can take an interest in politics, but that is all they can take. They have no vote. For that they have to thank Sir Robert Borden and his Government."

Women Especially Concerned

Public affairs, Sir Wilfrid went on, concerned women especially. The present war was brought about by foreign powers which had harbored the evil thought of dominating the world. When Germany broke her pledge, England, true to her faith, came forward to the defence of Belgium, Sir Wilfrid related how on the declaration of war he had given his support to the Government.

"I say," he declared, "that not a day has passed since that I have not been behind the Government in support of all reasonable measures for the prosecution of the war." (Applause.)

Sir Wilfrid did not regard conscription as the supreme issue in the country. But if the Government wanted to make it the supreme issue he was willing to meet them on their own ground. The Opposition leader reviewed in some detail statements made by the prime minister prior to last June that conscription was not contemplated by the Government.

"He changed his mind," Sir Wilfrid commented. "I did not change mine."

The Unholy Alliance

The example of Australia, he continued, went to show that conscription was not a racial question. If volunteers did not come from Quebec as they came from other provinces, it was the fault of members of Sir Robert Borden's cabinet who in 1911 had made an alliance with the Nationalists in Quebec and the program of the Nationalists was that under no consideration should Canada fight for the British Empire outside of Canadian territory.

Sir Wilfrid added that he made no sectional appeal. "I stand here," he said, "a Canadian. My platform is Canada. If I cannot win on that platform, I don't win at all."

He continued that on the word of Mr. Bourassa himself, there was an alliance with the Nationalists in 1911. It had been shown that copies of *Le Devoir* (Bourassa's paper) were circulated at the expense of Conservative funds.

"They created a public opinion then in the province of Quebec," Sir Wilfrid added. "Now they want to use force and violence to eradicate the doctrine they taught themselves."

"I want us to do our duty in the war, but coercion is not the way. I am certain I can do it by appealing to the soul of my fellow-countrymen."

The plea of the Government, Sir Wilfrid proceeded, was that conscription was necessary because voluntary recruiting had broken down. Quoting statistics, Sir Wilfrid claimed there was no justification for such a claim. According to the minister of militia, there were 116,000 men in England and 35,000 in Canada. If voluntary recruiting was abandoned, Sir Wilfrid said, and conscription forced on the people, it could not be for the reason given by Sir Robert Borden.

Referring to the charges that he had made an alliance with Bourassa, Sir Wilfrid said:

"How happy, how proud the Tories would be—they who made an alliance with Bourassa in 1911—to see Laurier make an alliance with Bourassa in 1917. They can say it; they cannot prove it. There is no truth in it. I am not in alliance with Bourassa; I am not in alliance with Lavergne. Mr. Bourassa and I are upon variance upon many questions, as he has set forth in his paper, *Le Devoir*."