

A FRENCH-CANADIAN REGIMENT.

IF the loyalty of the French-Canadians has ever been called in question, and it is undeniable that it has been questioned by persons whose motives would bear some searching, an answer that should silence such critics forever has come to the people of Canada.

The movement to contribute a French-Canadian regiment to the Imperial forces at the front in Europe, is so far under way that the Dominion Government has accepted the formal offer made by a delegation of leading French-Canadians and preliminaries toward the enlistment of French-Canadians have proceeded so far and with such enthusiasm that it now appears that what was at first intended to be but one regiment of 1,000 men and officers, will quickly become, at least, a brigade of four regiments, fully officered.

At Ottawa, September 28, Sir Robert Borden, Col. the Hon. Sam Hughes and Hon. Mr. Coderre received a delegation headed by Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, L. T. Marechal, K. C., Senator Belcourt, Mr. J. M. Tellier, Leader of the Opposition in the Quebec House and Dr. Arthur Mignault, who as announced by Mr. Marechal, has offered a personal subscription of \$50,000 toward the raising of a French-Canadian corps.

Dr. Mignault, the first speaker, declared that it would be an easy matter to raise a large French-Canadian regiment for service at the front. The Sixty-Fifth Regiment, he said, had already sent 365 volunteers, and a great many more were anxious to go. The movement, he said, was backed by the military and civilians alike.

Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, former Postmaster-General, read a letter from Sir Wilfrid Laurier in which the Liberal Leader gave the proposal his warmest endorsement. Everyone, said Mr. Lemieux, regretted and deplored the war, but public opinion was a unit in desiring that it be finished decisively. While there were over two thousand French-Canadians in the force then being despatched from Valcartier, the men were from all parts of Canada and scattered through the different regiments. It was felt, Mr. Lemieux said, that French-Canadians might do better if they were organized into a force by themselves and commanded by French-Canadian officers, of whom he believed there was a large number well qualified in Canada. It was not desired in any way to disturb the force which had been raised, but to supplement it with the proposed force composed entirely of French-Canadians.

Sir Wilfrid's Letter.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier's letter, read by Hon. Mr. Lemieux as the Liberal Leader was unable to be present, was as follows:

DEAR SIR ROBERT BORDEN,—

There is every probability that the war will be of long duration, and I understand that the Government is already contemplating the organization of a second contingent.

May I suggest that as our population is composed of various ethnical elements, it might be well to

recognize the fact and to allow the formation of units out of these several elements.

The War Office at all times has taken advantage of the force of race sentiment in the formation of the army. At all times it has counted purely Scotch regiments as well as purely Irish regiments, and we understand that Lord Kitchener has just authorized the recruiting of an exclusively Welsh force.

The aim I have in view is in reference to the formation of a French-Canadian regiment. You are probably aware that a movement is on foot in Montreal and Quebec for the purpose of raising such a regiment.

There is every reason to believe that if the formation of a French-Canadian unit were authorized, there would be a generous response.

I offer these observations with the sole object of helping in the cause which we have all so much at heart. If you think well of my suggestion, I will be happy to assist in any way that may be deemed advisable, and I will hold myself ready to meet you at your convenience for a mutual exchange of views, both as to the object itself and the best means of attainment.

Yours Very Sincerely,

WILFRID LAURIER.

Mr. Marechal explained that while it was the keen desire of the best element of the Province of Quebec to obtain permission for the raising of a regiment, they wanted no special favours, no distinctive uniform and no special privileges. All they wanted was the opportunity to be enlisted and be sent forward as soon as possible to fight for King and Country. Senator Belcourt added that he was sure that any force which was raised for service today would uphold the tradition of French valor in America.

Colonel, the Hon. Sam Hughes, (as quoted by the Montreal Star), "spoke in very appreciative terms of the 2,400 French-speaking Canadians in the corps at Valcartier." In whatever shape it might take, the movement for a French-Canadian brigade merited the fullest approval. Joseph Rainville, M. P., and Mr. J. M. Tellier also spoke in endorsement of the movement and in reply to Hon. Mr. Coderre, Mr. Marechal said the troops would be happy to go as reinforcements if there was no second contingent.

Sir Robert Borden heartily approved of the scheme proposed and of the spirit which prompted it. He said there would be opportunity for the raising of an additional force as it was estimated that in the first year of the war the Canadian force which had been sent forward would have to be supplemented with some fifteen thousand to sixteen thousand additional troops. "The Government is not only happy, but proud to co-operate in every way possible in the movement" he said in promising to bring the request of the delegation before the Government, with the recommendation that it should be approved.

Col. F. M. Gaudet in Command.

Since then, matters connected with the recruiting of the force have proceeded rapidly. While letters patent authorizing the formation of the regiment had not been actually received at the time of this