

within the ranks of the Government itself. Before my Maker I solemnly declare that I could not understand—and for some days the question bothered me—how a member of any party or any fragment of a party could object to the defence proposal of the Government. I said to myself that there must be a reason. And, honourable members, there is a reason: they are afraid of being drawn into the maw of the war machine, the cylinder of which is continuous in its revolutions and crushes and grinds down the citizenship, the common people of a country. I am always proud to state that I come of the common people. There may be some who think they sit here by divine right, that they are the chosen of the Lord's anointed. If there are any such, I would say to them: "Please dispel any such thought from your mind. Please remember that, after all, you are only common clay, common mud, and some of the mud is none too fertile at that." I stand here as a supporter of the man whose name I will remember longer than that of anyone else, and to whose memory I will pay tribute. But it would be impossible for me to express so great a eulogy of Sir Wilfrid Laurier as was expressed just a few days ago by the leader of the Conservative party. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's chief object was to do everything he could for the land he loved, and that explains why he introduced, supported and had Parliament pass the naval policy of this country.

There is in Canada to-day what I will describe as a Jingo element. It has always been here, and perhaps it always will be. Jingoism, or some of them, will say to you—or, if they do not say it, they will think it—that Laurier is dead. I reply to them that the name and the spirit of Laurier are still powerful, and that one hundred years from now his star will be more radiant and more resplendent than it was on the 17th of December, 1917, when his combined enemies succeeded in defeating the greatest character that I have ever known in the public life of this country.

Now, before I close I want to give a word of warning to my honourable friend from Edmonton (Hon. Mr. Griesbach). He told us, in words that to me were impressive, that if we were living in other lands we could not take the course that we are taking. He said that if we were in France we should be conscripted, taxed and made to do whatever the Government of France ordered. In answer to that, let me say to him that we are not in France and that we never will be under the flag of France so long as the sun shines and one Canadian is left alive. My honourable friend says that in that country there is liberty. I say to you, honourable members, that in any country where conscription is the

law there is no liberty. And, should it ever become necessary, I will devote the remaining days of my life, whether they be many or few, to trying to insure that conscription never again shall be the law in this country. We had one bitter experience with that law.

My honourable friend from Edmonton also said that if we tried to make effective a policy of neutrality in time of war, the result would be a civil war in this country. That is a strong statement, but I accept it. And I can tell my honourable friend of two things which would be much more expeditious than neutrality in producing a civil war in Canada: they are another War-time Elections Act and conscription, as introduced, supported and made law by a party that my honourable friend supported. If you want a civil war in this country—God forbid that there should be one!—another Act like that, and conscription, would be the shortest road to it. If it ever does happen, Canada will not want to experience another civil war for at least a hundred years. The War-time Elections Act—I know what I am talking about—prevented the mother of a man who is an ornament to the House of Commons, an ornament to the Government to which he belongs and an ornament to public life, from voting for her own son. Twenty years have gone by, and there is a new element in Canada to-day, an element which has informed itself upon what took place in 1917. Conscription is to me an ugly, a hideous, a bloody, a repugnant word. The blood within me flows a little faster when, in a country like this, where I believe we all are free men and women, I am told that we may again be subject to conscription—a thing which caused a wound so wide that the sutures of a generation have not been long enough or strong enough to bring together the opposite parts. Conscription would draw us into the war machine, whose revolving cylinders would grind and crush our freedom. Conscription would lead the flower of this country's manhood to the shambles and their mothers to the madhouse, just to make a holiday for the barbarians of Europe.

I say to my trusted and honourable leader on this side of the House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) that all my life I have been a docile, faithful and loyal follower and supporter of the party to which we belong, and I would ask that if he speaks in this debate—as I think it is his duty to do—he will tell the young men and the fathers and mothers of this country whether, in the event of war, we shall have to endure again anything like what occurred in this country in 1917.