

"MALIGNANT LIBEL AND SLANDER"

A Tory Election Lie—and some illuminating truth from Major-General Hughes.

A FAIR idea of the sort of campaign to be waged by the Nationalist-Conservative party under the leadership of Sir Robert Borden when it goes to the country in the hope that a "khaki" election may give it a fresh lease of power is afforded in the infamous Tory pamphlet reproduced on another page. It goes on record as the most scurrilous and most gratuitously offensive bit of partisan literature seen in Canada, and roundly earns Sir Wilfrid Laurier's personal denunciation in the Commons as a "falsehood and a malignant libel and slander."

Sir Wilfrid's Denunciation.

In the House, on April 8th, immediately the pamphlet had been brought to his notice, Sir Wilfrid said: "I rise to a question of privilege. A leaflet has been placed in my hands which purports on the face of it to be published by the Federal Press Agency, 47 Slater Street, Ottawa, Canada, the central publication and distribution office of the Conservative party of Canada.

"It is very seldom, Mr. Speaker, that I trouble the House with anything which concerns myself personally, with anything relating to opinions, speeches, actions, or omissions on my part, but the statement contained in this leaflet is so absolutely contrary to facts that I think I am justified in calling the attention of the House and of the country to it. The question is asked:

Did he call for French-Canadian recruits? Not a bit of it.

"As to my action in that regard, I have only to call to witness my hon. friend the Postmaster General (Mr. Casgrain). I attended a meeting in the city of Montreal with my hon. friend who was then a private citizen, but who, I understand, came, directed by the Government, just for the purpose of asking French-Canadians to recruit. I addressed other public meetings in Montreal on the same line, and on every occasion I gave evidence that my heart was very much in this fight in which England is now engaged. I have addressed meetings wherever there was occasion to do so and I would have done more if more had been needed; but I had the testimony of the Prime Minister himself and of the Minister of Militia that French Canadians had answered nobly to the appeal, and that they had done as much as any of their fellow countrymen, of English or of other origin. This morning I have a letter stating that French Canadians are crowding the recruiting offices and are being refused because, for some reason, no more are needed. In the face of this I characterize this leaflet as a falsehood and a malignant libel and slander."

Major-Gen. Hughes Tells Truth.

In the House of Commons, on March 24th, Mr. Edmond Proulx, M.P. for Prescott, put questions to Major General Hughes which resulted in the Minister of Militia making statements which should forever clear up any questions as to how French-Canadians have responded to the call of the Empire.

Mr. Proulx said he wished to ask the Minister of Militia if Dr. Mignault of Montreal and officers of the 65th Regiment had asked permission to organize a French-Canadian contingent, and if he had refused the request.

Major General Hughes replied: "I have great pleasure in correcting my hon. friend. There was an offer on behalf of a number of French-Canadian gentlemen for a hospital corps, which we transmitted to the War Office which has charge of all these matters. The War Office cheerfully granted that request, and the corps is now formed. I do not know who is at the head of it, but it is entrusted to the distinguished gentlemen of French-Canadian nationality, who are connected with the medical profession in Montreal. That hospital corps will soon be organized and ready for the front. As far as the French-Canadian regiment is concerned, Dr. Mignault was active in organizing it; but like an old war-horse, he fell back to his old profession and went into the medical service instead of the combatant service. He has done splendid work in organizing a hospital corps, giving of his time and of his money."

"Gave Splendid Service."

Answering further questions as to whether application had not been made by leading French-Canadians for permission to organize a brigade, Major General Hughes went on to say:

"Our French-Canadian fellow-countrymen gave splendid service in the first contingent. The Maritime Provinces Regiment, the Quebec corps, the Montreal corps, the Northwest corps and some of the Ontario corps have a number of our French-Canadian fellow-countrymen with them giving good service. Colonel Meighen speaks of them in high terms. Colonel Farquhar spoke in the highest terms of Lieut. Papineau. Those who have written home from the front all speak in the highest terms of the French-Canadian boys. We have the 22nd Regiment; we have another regiment organized under Colonel Archambault, who was given command some days ago. Colonel Gaudet is forming another one. It will be only a few days until it is formed. That will make **three regiments** composed solely of French-Canadians. I venture to predict that they will do splendid service at the front."

Mr. F. B. Carvell, M.P. for Carleton—"I am very glad to hear the Minister make that statement, because there has been a campaign carried on in certain portions of Canada for the last six months alleging that the French-Canadians have not done their duty in this War."

Major General Hughes—"And the English-Canadians too."

Mr. Carvell rejoined that he had heard it dozens of times, especially in newspapers in the Maritime Provinces friendly to the Government, and it had been the one unpleasant aspect of the discussion of this War in the public press of Canada. He hoped that when the War was over, no more would be heard in Canada about the French-Canadians not having done their duty.