

contracts, was accorded an extension of its period of power for one year. But it showed no signs of repentance, and when at the expiry of the year it again approached Sir Wilfrid Laurier for a further extension Sir Wilfrid, in the public interest, was compelled to refuse.

It is necessary to note at this point that the Government desired to put through a piece of legislation by which it was proposed to relieve Mackenzie and Mann of their debts, and to pay them in addition ten million dollars for the privilege of doing so. Special Privilege in the shape of the financial ring of Toronto was interested in this.

But the Government was faced with an election. On the economic issue Special Privilege was faced with isolation and disaster from a solid west, plus an almost solid Quebec. Something must be done to avert this disaster. It is a matter of opinion as to whether conscription was required in Canada, and on the principle men differed. It may be questioned, however, as to whether those who originated the idea of springing it on an unsuspecting country were actuated by purely patriotic motives.

**LAURIER SAVED THE SITUATION FROM DISASTER WHICH THE  
MANITOBA FREE PRESS, IN JUNE 1917, SAID BORDEN  
WAS PLANNING TO PRODUCE.**

On June 12th, 1917, the Manitoba Free Press voiced this view in no uncertain language as follows:—

**Manitoba Free Press, (June 12, 1917).**

"It is impossible to regard the situation as it affects Sir Wilfrid Laurier without mixed feelings of indignation and regret. It is less than five months ago since R. B. Bennett, who presumably spoke with knowledge, told a meeting of Winnipeg citizens that conscription meant bloodshed in Quebec and was not politically practicable. In the face of so serious a situation, the obligation surely rested upon the Government to proceed with some degree of caution and circumspection. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's co-operation in inducing the people of his province to accept compulsion was plainly highly desirable. But Sir Robert Borden went about the business in a manner which made it difficult to secure his co-operation and rendered it all but worthless if he did secure it. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as a member of the Government, going to his