

up the mania for conquest which has been the bane of so many strong nations, and which may yet prove the undoing of Germany. She has not been engaged in any aggressive war since the Seven-Years War, and while the great nations of the continent were devoting their strength, wealth and energy to armaments and military preparations, while they were taking the largest portion of the youth of the country as it came to manhood from productive labour and placing it in camps and barracks, England never forced a single one of her subjects into the army. She kept all her people busy producing and accumulating, with the result that when she was forced into war—forced, I say, and I say advisedly—though her armies were not numerous in comparison with continental armies their prowess in the field never caused her to regret that she had kept to the voluntary system. She was able, out of her wealth, to finance the whole of Europe in the most gigantic struggles, even in that against Napoleon himself, with the result that generally she came out victorious. There is reason to suppose that compulsion against communities will have the same result as compulsion against individuals, and there is further reason to hope that when the victory has been won—for we have no doubt as to the ultimate victory in the war—there will be a movement amongst all civilized peoples to put an end to armaments and to ensure a lasting era of peace. Let me repeat that it is a struggle between freedom and domination. Into this struggle our people have thrust themselves with all the energy at their command, and all subjects of the King in this country have done, as I believe, their share, and are prepared to do more if need be to attain the end.

The speech from the Throne is confined altogether to the question of the war. Nothing else is mentioned in it. The speech simply says that:

My advisers will submit for your consideration measures rendered necessary by the participation of this Dominion in the great task which our Empire has undertaken in this war.

Already there is on the Order Paper a motion by the Prime Minister to provide something like \$100,000,000 to that end. Let me say at once that we who sit on this side of the House and who represent His Majesty's Loyal Opposition took our course at the outset of hostilities when we declared that we would support the Government in their war policy. We conceived

that it was our duty to do nothing to embarrass the Government, but on the contrary, to do everything in our power to facilitate the task, the heavy task, which had been placed in the hands of those to whom, for the time being, the Canadian people had entrusted their fortunes. We have acted upon this principle all along, and again we are prepared to act accordingly. We meet the summons of His Royal Highness in the same spirit to-day, in the month of February, as we met it in the month of August last. We are prepared to give to the Government, to those who for the moment have the confidence of the Canadian people under our constitutional system, the support to which they are entitled for the attainment of the great end which we all have in mind.

But whilst we are prepared to do nothing more than, perhaps, we should do, at the same time we are entitled to have from the Government a full statement of the expenditures which they have made out of the \$50,000,000 which was placed at their disposal last August. The Canadian people have been generous with their money; they continue to be generous with it; but whilst we are prepared to believe, as indeed we do believe, that mistakes have been made in the manner in which the money has been expended, that errors of judgment have been committed, of those mistakes and of those errors of judgment we are not disposed to be critical.

It would be hardly possible to expect that in the case of the expenditure of some fifty million dollars no mistakes would arise; it is perhaps more than we can expect from human nature; but we cannot close our eyes to the fact that not only have mistakes been made, but frauds have been committed which have resulted in injury to the health of our troops, and impairment of their efficiency. These frauds have been regarded as so gross and so criminal that the Minister of Militia himself, not more than two or three weeks ago, stated, not once but three or four times at different places in the country, that if he knew the man who supplied the boots, which have been the cause of so much disease, and sickness, and suffering to our soldiers on the plains of Salisbury, that man would deserve to be shot. The honour of the minister is at stake, and so is the credit of the country. It is not impossible to discover the responsible parties. Up to the present the minister is responsible, and it is for him to take the necessary measures to vindi-

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier.]