

The Budget—Mr. Dufresne

he will appreciate that personal charges of, not exactly insincerity, but improper motives, are not permitted in the House of Commons, in respect of any member of the house. Perhaps I might express the hope that the hon. member, in his criticism of the Prime Minister—and he has the right of course to criticize the Prime Minister's policies—has not imputed improper motives; and I would be glad, as I am sure would hon. members, to have his assurance on this point.

(Translation):

Mr. Dufresne: If the rules of the house do not allow me to use expressions like the ones I have just used, I am prepared to withdraw them, and do so generously. Let me simply say, instead, that when a French-speaking Canadian becomes prime minister of Canada, he must needs make concessions like those which the present Prime Minister has made to the majority which surrounds him.

The first responsibility entrusted to the then new minister of justice, who had been dubbed leader of the French Canadians of the province of Quebec, since he was assuming this position as successor to the late Right Hon. Ernest Lapointe, was to secure willingly acceptance of temporary mobilization, permanent mobilization and then conscription.

In spite of a quarter of a century of Liberal propaganda against that measure, in spite of all Liberal solemn promises and unparalleled violent outbursts against those who were then being referred to as "those damned Tories", causing my fellow countrymen to forget that, even though the Conservative government of 1917 was headed by the late Sir Robert Borden as prime minister, his coalition cabinet was nonetheless made up of a Liberal majority; in spite of the most sacred promises made to Quebec electors, particularly in view of the fact that 90 per cent of them had refused to relieve Mr. Mackenzie King of his promises, a whole past was repudiated, and people whose only fault had been to believe in the sacred word of the Liberals, who had so often misled them, were being pitilessly harried and violently pursued by objectionable means.

Although that campaign, which had been skilfully launched and led by the present Prime Minister, met with such poor success in Quebec, he nonetheless reaped his reward.

On the other hand, those who stood their ground and respected their sacred commitments were compelled to withdraw from the ranks of the Liberal party for insubordination and lack of party discipline. Two of them suffered; one Mr. P. J. A. Cardin died

of grief, a victim of the treachery of those he had served so well for a lifetime; the other, the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Power), to whom I pay tribute for his dignity, had to leave the cabinet and, ever since, has had to sit as a private member of the house.

In view of the way the province of Quebec was betrayed, my French-speaking countrymen openly and strongly asserted their resentment for those who had so odiously misled them and they were determined to take sweet revenge at the first opportunity.

However, still thirsty for power, the Liberals thought that they would have to find a way of appeasing those people who were obviously dissatisfied. To what trickery should they resort to make them forget their repudiations and their treachery? They had it in their bag. Although all provinces, and especially the province of Quebec, had been promised that the revenues they had agreed to surrender to the federal government were for the duration of the war only, the time had come to abuse their good faith and to refuse to hand them back the essential sources of revenue needed to meet their obligations and ensure their survival.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that they had found a way to go about it. Although a person who borrows money and refuses to give it back to the lender would be accused of theft and condemned as a criminal, the Liberal party, scoffing at the law, and thereby setting a shameful example, decided not to give back the money collected from the provinces, I would even say under false pretences, and decided to keep it, in order to appease the people with social legislation, for which they now take all the credit, and which would enable the party to win future elections.

And here let me state at once, as a warning to those who might be tempted to do so because I know that some people are careless with the truth, not to construe my remarks as meaning in any way that the member for Quebec West is opposed to social legislation. My record proves the contrary. All the social legislation enacted by the Quebec government has been brought about since the death of the Liberal party in our province and I have been one of those who, modestly but sincerely, requested that legislation, having taken part in all electoral campaigns against Liberals in my province for the past 25 years.

Mr. Lesage: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Dufresne: Mr. Speaker, I should like to proceed undisturbed with my speech and if—