

the way of recruiting in the province of Quebec.

Mr. BOYCE: Does my hon. friend not know of the opposite case where, for instance, Ontario regiments have had their officers taken away from them and have been put under French-Canadian officers? If he does not, I can give him some instances.

Mr. LEMIEUX: That is not the point at all. I am speaking of the recruiting work, of the appeals made to the laymen to join the ranks. Those appeals were made in the English language; the recruits were merged into English-speaking units. The moment a French-Canadian officer speaks the English language, if he retains his rank and receives no favour, I see no objection to him taking command of an English-speaking regiment. In Quebec and Montreal, there have been and there are cases where the chief officers are English-speaking, and no objection is taken, far from it.

Mr. BOYCE: French-speaking officers have been appointed in preference to English-speaking officers, and that has been done without objection in instances which I can quote to my hon. friend.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Certainly. There is no objection when there is no preferment, when it is only a matter of course. I do not object to an English officer having precedence over a French-Canadian officer if his rank will command that precedence. What I am pointing out is this: In the district of Montreal, the chief recruiting officer, a personal friend of mine, a charming, enlightened and great speaker for those who understand him, was a pastor of the Methodist church. The Minister of Militia and Defence might have done better if he had appointed a gentleman whose language and whose ambient air would have been more congenial to the men to whom he was appealing.

I have only a few words to add and it is on this question of a referendum. I will then conclude. This is of all measures the most vital that has ever been introduced into this Parliament; it is a departure from all our traditions; it means the alienation of human liberty; Parliament, *functus officio*, unrepresentative, moribund, with more than 20 seats vacant, with a West under-represented, cannot and dare not attempt to legislate for the people of Canada under such circumstances. There is only one solution and that is a referendum. The referendum, it is true, is more familiar

[Mr. Lemieux.]

to Latin than to British countries, but it has been accepted in Switzerland for many years; it has been accepted in some of the states of the neighbouring Republic with a measure of success; it has been accepted by some of the western provinces; it is the law of the land in Australia and New Zealand, and we ourselves, sometimes refer matters of municipal government to the people before enacting them. The other day we received as our honored guest one of the foremost statesmen of the world. I refer to the right hon. Arthur James Balfour, who represents, I believe, in the Empire and in the world, the most enlightened conservatism that I know of. His noble language, the other day, establishes that fact. He, a Conservative, asserted his belief, his faith in democracy and in democratic rule. On the question of tariff reform which, a few years ago, agitated public opinion in Great Britain, the position taken by Mr. Balfour, which is well worth the consideration of my hon. friend from South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) was as follows:

The advantage of the referendum is this—that the issue is quite clear and quite precise. . . . The referendum has an enormous advantage. It does not involve a general election; it does not involve all the personal bitterness inevitably involved in the contest between the two competitors for a seat; it does not carry with it a change of government; and it does get a clear verdict from the people. . . . Nevertheless, I frankly say that without question tariff reform is a great change. I admit that this election, or any election perhaps—certainly this election—cannot be described as taken upon tariff reform simply; but I have not the least objection to submit the principles of tariff reform to referendum.

If Mr. Balfour was willing to break away from the traditions of England and take a referendum on such a purely theoretical question as tariff reform, surely we in Canada, can afford to take a referendum on the conscription of the yeomanry of this country. But Mr. Balfour is not alone of that view. Professor Dicey one of the highest authorities on constitutional government, has declared himself favourably on the principle of referendum in British affairs. Lecky, who is also one of the foremost authorities on the British Government and constitution, in "Democracy and Liberty" volume I, p. 287 and following presents a most elaborate argument in favour of the referendum. I have prepared a short synopsis of it. The referendum would prevent the placing of the essential elements of the constitution at the mercy of a simple majority