

have the promise of the best men in the province of Quebec that the people of that province will cheerfully abide by the verdict of the people, no matter how Quebec province itself may vote.

As a humble member of this House I submit that the best course to take is the peaceful course. It may be a little slower, but it will keep this country united from the Atlantic to the Pacific for the one great purpose of winning the war. I submit that we should not attempt to force upon the people of this country a law which, although it may mean temporary glory and success for the Conservative party, will in its ultimate results be disastrous not merely to the Conservative party, but to the country as a whole.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir George Foster) told us that we should give light and leading, that we should blaze a trail for the people in this matter. It is not our right to blaze a trail for anybody in a matter of this kind. It is for the fathers and mothers of boys to say whether they are in favour of passing this law; it is not for me as a member of this House, after the term of office for which I was elected has expired, and when I am here by the grace of my own vote,—it is not for me to say to fathers and mothers that their boys shall be rent from their hearts and sent to the trenches, with all the disastrous results that may follow. I wish to relieve myself from any such position by letting the people themselves pronounce judgment in this matter. Let that be done, and then, whether I am a member of this House or not, or in whatever position in life I may be, I shall do everything I can to carry out the law; I will give it all the support that a humble loyal subject of His Majesty can give in a great crisis such as this. For the present, I have no hesitation in taking the ground that this Bill should not pass until the people of Canada have an opportunity to declare their will regarding it, thus maintaining the unity of this country.

I am prepared, as a Scotchman and a Presbyterian, to stand behind my leader. He has led his party, whose membership covers the country from ocean to ocean, for the last thirty years; and we have no more reason to doubt his leadership now than we have had at any time in all the years gone by. I receive letters from Scotchmen, from Irishmen, from all classes and all denominations in my county. They do not ask me for any reasons about the course of the leader; they say, "Sir Wilfrid will steer

the ship right." They have ample and absolute confidence in him. It is no small matter to break up a party. The party system is one of our institutions, and the Liberal party is a great and noble part of our party system. I belong to the Liberal party, and I deem it my duty, as it is my right, to seek to make it successful by using every effort from within the party to better it and advance its interests, and not to go outside its lines or to throw obstacles in its way. I have confidence in my leader; and I believe that I shall better serve the cause of the Liberal party, the cause of our country, and the best interests of the boys at the front by standing with my leader than by anything else that I can do at this juncture. We were told yesterday by the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) that the Presbyterian church had passed certain resolutions. I am not going to speak for any other church, but this I do say—that if there is one institution in this country more than any other that is a free institution, one that consults the will of the people, that institution is the Presbyterian church. That church had to deal with the question of the union of the churches. Its General Assembly might well have said: We are sent as representatives of the people; we are a Parliament and can pass this measure. But let me tell the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) that they resorted to a plebiscite; they sent the question down to every humble individual, every boy and every girl, every old man and old woman who belonged to that church was called upon for his or her opinion on that question. That is the course that was taken by the Presbyterian church in the case of a departure such as this is, and if the hon. member for Wellington wants to get any precedent or solace from the conduct of the Presbyterian church in matters of this kind he will find that they are believers in the will of the people, believers in consulting the people throughout before they take any new departure or break away from old conditions.

An hon. MEMBER: Did they not say they were in favour of conscription?

Mr. MCKENZIE: All they said was that they were in favour of conscription provided there was conscription of wealth and material and all the rest as well. But that is not this Bill, and the resolution is not divisible; you cannot approbate and reprobate, as the old saying was; you cannot take