

ed many startling instances. The misdeeds and blunders of the Government have been a permanent obstacle in the way of voluntary enlistment. In addition to that, it has been the misfortune of this country to have in the Cabinet during the war as representatives of the province of Quebec, men who do not command the support or even the respect of public opinion in that province.

This is a very serious debate, and it is my desire to avoid as much as possible anything which would have the slightest appearance of political partisanship, but the question of recruiting in the province of Quebec cannot properly be discussed without referring to the matter with which I am now going to deal. This Government is a combination of men who were elected on absolutely opposite platforms. It has properly been called a hybrid alliance. No union is possible amongst its members without the most flagrant violation of some of their pledges and promises. I believe history will hold the Prime Minister responsible for having set a premium on what was in point of fact public immorality. What authority could be exercised in the province of Quebec for recruiting purposes by those former Nationalists whom the Prime Minister called to his Cabinet? Most assuredly they can have no authority with the majority of the electors whom they could not lead astray in 1911, and they have still less influence with the other portion of the electorate whom they carried with them on their policy of no participation by Canada under any circumstances in the wars of the Empire. These gentlemen could not open their mouths at a recruiting meeting without contradicting themselves and swallowing their former doctrines. To blow and swallow at the same time is a pretty difficult feat, and these gentlemen were very unsuccessful in their attempts to accomplish it. Enlistment in Quebec has been carried on in spite of the Government, and it is rather a matter for wonder the degree of success that has been attained. If the leader of the Opposition is the dominant factor in the province of Quebec, as has been contended by the Government, and as was stated only a few minutes ago by my hon. friend from North Grey (Mr. Middlebro), why did not the Prime Minister take his advice and call him to the Council in 1914? All the other belligerent countries have brought their best men together in order to attain the highest degree of national efficiency. President Wilson at the present time has entrusted the most

[Mr. E. Lapointe.]

delicate and important missions to distinguished and eminent political opponents. Why did not the Prime Minister of this country do the big thing and the right thing in the same direction? Do you not think, Mr. Speaker, that it would have been better for the unity and national welfare of this country if the Prime Minister had asked the leader of the Opposition to co-operate with him at the recent War Conference in London, even at the cost of dispensing for a few weeks with the company of the Minister of Public Works.

One great obstacle to recruiting in the province of Quebec has been the unfair, irritating, and in certain respects, the slanderous campaign carried on by one influential section of the Ontario press against the people of our province. They have charged that we are unwilling to co-operate in this great work. We do not pay much attention to the foolish and unreasonable statements of irresponsible men; there are fools in all parts of the world; no nation or race can claim a monopoly of them. But when the most influential section of the press of a province adopts as its permanent policy calumny and abuse of a sister province we have a pernicious state of affairs and one fraught with great danger to the present and future welfare of the country.

Only a few days ago two great Toronto newspapers were engaged in an acrimonious controversy as to which of the two had written the more violent, bitter articles against Quebec and her inhabitants. And I must confess that each seemed to be right in its contentions; it would be very hard to give a decision on the point. French Canadians have been slandered before the world; and from Ontario articles have been sent to, and reproduced in, the press of the United States, of France, of England, misrepresenting the people of Quebec in the most dishonest way. Was that all done in order to produce good? Was it a step towards a united and combined national effort? Again I say, it is a wonder that enlistment has been so large in spite of what seems to have been a deliberate effort to stop it. And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I do not believe in the accuracy of the figures which have been given by the Minister of Militia as to the number of recruits of French descent. I believe that a much larger number have enlisted than has been shown. Why, you cannot take up the casualty list from day to day—and I stand by that supreme test—without seeing the names of French Canadians in much greater