

his part; moreover, I do not know that it is quite respectful to the people for whom he undertook to speak. Nothing is more dangerous than for a man of one race to speak for the people of another, unless it be for a man of one race to undertake to instruct the people of another in regard to their duty. I should have made no reference at all to the race to which I belong if it had not been for the somewhat extraordinary undertaking of the hon. member for Montcalm. When I go back to my constituents to render an account of what I have said, what I have done, and what I purpose doing on this question, I shall go to meet them all as Canadians, of whatever race they may be, and I shall make my justification to them all. It would be a matter of great regret to me if these Canadians of my own race should disagree with me upon this question. But they will exercise their judgment, and they will credit me with the sincerity for which I give credit to them and to the men of any other race who may reach a conclusion different from my own. But I shall not ask the member for Montcalm to intervene or to mediate between me and my constituents, of whatever race they may be. I shall go forth with a good conscience; I shall meet all my friends in St. Anne's and whatever their view may be they will greet me as they have greeted me in the past, notwithstanding this judgment upon me by the hon. member for Montcalm. Down in St. Anne's we do have differences of opinion, differences of race, differences upon political questions. But I am proud to say that we live together as good friends, having confidence and trust in each other, and that we can maintain that condition of affairs without the kind attention of the hon. member for Montcalm.

I have said that we ought to get rid of all consideration of the fact that we are of different races or different creeds, or that we come from different provinces, because at this time one great question concerns our common country, Canada. I have said a word about my feeling for my own province of Quebec; I felt that I owed it that. But since we have had questions of race, may I add one word about the race that has been criticised in this House. I question no man's right to say what he believes to be pertinent and relevant; and I am in the judgment of every other member of the House whether what I say be proper or not. But in view of what has been said, I desire to dissociate myself—I go further

and say that I absolutely dissociate this Government—from any suggestion that anything in this measure is directed against any one part of the country, against the province of Quebec, against any one race in the country, or in particular against the French Canadian people. I have heard the criticism, and I have heard the defence. To me, there is one overpowering, all-answering defence, and that is that we proceeded to recruit under a voluntary system. What does recruiting under a voluntary system mean? It means that this Government and this Parliament and the Canadian public practically unanimously took the position that upon the question of recruiting each man was absolutely free to act according to his own judgment and his own conscience. Nobody took the responsibility of indicating that a man had any duty to discharge one way or the other. The principle of voluntary recruitment means that every man has the right to decide for himself; that his responsibility is to his own conscience. That being the case, I do not think that it is within the jurisdiction of any one to condemn a man because he exercised a recognized right. On the other hand, I have heard much that was said as against the criticisms made; and, frankly, a good deal of that I would be just as glad not to have heard. I do not undertake to determine whether these contentions were well founded. At any rate they did not seem to me to be quite necessary; sometimes one may be on the defensive, and still overlap a little into unnecessary offensive. I should like to get out of that atmosphere; I should like to approach this question purely and simply from the point of view of a Canadian.

What is the question? The question is: What is Canada's duty at this moment under conditions as they exist now? In August of 1914, Canada went to war. It is not very material now to discuss why she went to war. She went to war of her own volition, as was evidenced by the unanimous action of the membership of this House, enthusiastically endorsed by the voice of practically all the people of Canada. Since then she has been at war, and to-day in the first place the question is: Should she withdraw from that war? In my opinion that is the one question, because we must either go forward to enact this Bill or we should withdraw from the war. I know that other people whose opinions I respect do not look at the matter in that way, but that is the way it presents itself to my mind. Why do I say that? We have