

lost a great opportunity and because Canada was placed in the position in which no patriotic Canadian could wish to see her placed. It was with feelings of the greatest regret that I read that statement which came from the right hon. Prime Minister, and I took the only means in my power to endeavour to remedy and improve that condition of things. I may say that in this communication to the *Globe*, in which my right hon. friend stated that he would do nothing, because the constitution of the country precluded his doing anything, he went on to say :

As to Canada furnishing a contingent, the government has not discussed the question, for the reasons which I have stated.

So that, down to that period, it appears, that, although this matter had been agitating the mind of nearly every person in Australasia and in the outlying and most remote portions of the empire, a question which had been stirring the mind of every patriotic British subject throughout the world, according to the statement of the right hon. Prime Minister, the government of which he was the head had not taken any action in that relation. Under these circumstances I ventured, after some little hesitation, I confess, to do what I felt to be an important and imperative duty as a Canadian, and I sent the following telegram to the right hon. gentleman :—

Yarmouth, N.S., Oct. 5.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Ottawa :

I hope you will send a contingent of Canadian volunteers to aid England in the Transvaal. I know it will be warmly welcomed by the British government, be of great service to Canada, and promote the unity of the empire. A friend of mine will insure the lives and limbs, at his expense, to a million dollars, and I will heartily support in parliament your action in this matter.

(Sgd.) CHARLES TUPPER.

The reason that I gave that information to my right hon. friend as to what this gentleman was prepared to do was because I knew that these matters are, to some extent, questions of cost and of expenditure, and I believed that by mentioning that provision would be made to the extent of one million dollars to meet the casualties that a contingent of a thousand volunteers might bring about would show my right hon. friend that there was no reason to suppose that any extraordinary expenditure would result. Therefore I mentioned that in my telegram. That telegram, unfortunately, after travelling some hundreds of miles—I do not remember the exact distance from Yarmouth to Halifax—was interrupted at Halifax. But my hon. friend afterwards said, not very graciously—he was aware of the telegram, although he had not received it until October 13 when he found, by referring to the office that a message had been sent and delayed at Halifax

Sir CHARLES TUPPER.

on the way—that I had taken the precaution of notifying the whole public of Canada of the telegram I had sent him. Why did I do that? I felt that the right hon. gentleman might say :—‘It is all very well for Sir Charles Tupper to say that he will give me this support in regard to this great question, but his followers in the House, the party which usually act with him, may see this from a very different standpoint.’ I thought that there was no means by which I could bring the solid Conservative party in Canada so entirely at the back and support of the right hon. gentleman as by stating, as I did, at the meeting which took place, in the address which I delivered at Yarmouth, that I had sent this message. And I believed that if the government would take action upon it they would find parliament at their back. It was with the view of strengthening the effect of the message that I made this statement to the public. I said on that occasion :—

My own opinion is that I believe the time has come when it is the duty of Canada to send to the assistance of Great Britain a corps of Canadian sharpshooters. I know that the Canadian volunteers in this respect cannot be surpassed by any in the world.

I believe the time has come when it is important that Canada should show her readiness to aid the mother country to whom she owes so much, and from whom she expects so much.

I am going to tell you a secret, that is except that it is known to the telegraph operator. I to-day took the responsibility, with full knowledge of what that responsibility means, of telegraphing to the Premier of Canada the hope that he would offer to send to South Africa a body of Canadian volunteers, and assuring him that such a project would not only have all my support, but I believed that of the people of all parts of Canada.

Hon. gentlemen opposite may think that they find something in this to indicate a desire to turn this grave and great question to party purposes. I believe that no person who dispassionately looks at this action of mine will come to the conclusion that I did anything else but my duty in making this appeal to the First Minister under the circumstances which existed. The telegram which I sent and which my right hon. friend was advised of, unfortunately did not produce the desired effect. The right hon. gentleman having delivered his ultimatum to the people of Canada through the *Globe* newspaper, that after a careful examination of the law, he found it would be unconstitutional for him to take any action without the authority of parliament, and that such being the case he did not propose to do anything; the right hon. gentleman having delivered this ultimatum, apparently felt that his duties were at an end, and he departed for the purpose of gracing a civic exhibition in the city of Chicago. The Minister of Railways (Mr. Blair) then told us that the Ministers were not asleep, but it would certainly appear