

has been favoured with a good deal more public works of every kind than under all former administrations from Confederation up to the day when I was returned as the member for the county of Berthier.

I know that my frank determination may relax some friendships which I held dear, but when a principle was at stake I have never paused before breaking away from my party and silencing my heart so as to listen only to the voice of my conscience. How could it be held that I remain indifferent to so radical an innovation which will cause perturbation in the political annals of the country, seeing that in the past I have always been able to rise above partisanship.

Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to glance upon the past and to recall to the House that in 1912, when it was proposed to enlarge the territory of Manitoba by the annexation of Keewatin, the rights which the minority in the annexed part held under the constitution had to be safeguarded. In spite of the threats of a few narrow-minded politicians, I was not afraid to break away from my party and vote for the Mondou amendment. Allow me also to recall to your memory that during the session of 1916, when the rights of the minority had to be upheld in the province of Ontario, I voted again in favour of the Lapointe motion without caring for the hue and cry of my party.

It is not astonishing, Sir, to hear me say to-day that I am altogether against conscription. By referring to the Debates of the session of 1912-13, Vol. I, fol. 570, you will find that the hon. member from Yamaska (Mr. Mondou) submitted as an amendment to the speech from the Throne a motion which laid a principle totally different from that which says that "when England is at war, Canada is also at war." The motion of Mr. Mondou was in the following terms:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following amendment to the Address:

That this House is ready and willing to adopt, at any time, efficient measures for the defence of Canada, an autonomous colony under the British Crown; but that this House is nevertheless of opinion that the Canadian Parliament has no right to impose on the Canadian people responsibilities in regard to the general defence of the Empire, as long as under the present status of constitutional relations between Canada and the United Empire of Great Britain and Ireland, the Government of His Majesty, responsible to the people of the United Empire alone, will reserve for itself the exclusive management and control of Imperial and international questions.

While inviting the House to defeat the amendment moved by Mr. Mondou, the Prime Minister spoke as follows (See Hansard, 1912-13, Vol. I, fol. 579):

The other considerations which have been alluded to will be held in regard in the future. I would go further than my right hon. friend in one respect. My right hon. friend says that the amendment has been proposed at an inopportune time, and he is not prepared to say what his attitude in regard to this amendment would be if it had been proposed at the proper time. Whether it properly came up in debate or not, I would vote against it, for the reason that it would prevent Canada from lifting her finger in the defence of the Empire if war were declared to-morrow.

I am pleased to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Achim, Mr. Lamarche, Mr. Mondou and your servant were the only members of the House who voted for that amendment.

Later on, during the same session, when the \$35,000,000 Bill relating the construction of three Dreadnoughts in England was before the Canadian Parliament, I also voted against that measure because I wanted to fulfil the promises that had been made to the electors of my constituency at the time of the election in 1911. If my memory serves me right, during that campaign the Laurier navy scheme was decried everywhere and held as nefarious on every hustling, and it was said that our children ought not to be sent to be disemboweled on the seas of China and everywhere else. The Borden tribute which was to amount to \$20,000,000 was equally disapproved. In a fit of generosity the Prime Minister increased that tribute to \$35,000,000. Was that increase from \$20,000,000 to \$35,000,000 a legitimate reason to uphold a measure which I had condemned? At the same session the hon. member from Assiniboia (Mr. Turriff) submitted an amendment to the Bill and said that the measure should not be passed until it was put before the people at a general election.

I may remark, Sir, that I voted for the Turriff motion.

Having made all those statements, how could it be asserted that I did not oppose with all my might that unjust scheme of conscription.

Australians have had the opportunity of voicing their opinion by means of a referendum. Why should that privilege be denied to the people of Canada? Are we not entitled to that same liberty enjoyed by exclusively British colonies? I always believed that England was a democratic country and that wherever waved the British flag, there could democratic institutions find security and protection. To-day we claim our right to freedom, and I place as much trust in the patriotism of the French Canadians as in the loyalty of my English-speaking countrymen. I much