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BLAIR, ANDREW GEORGE,

HONORE MERCIER,

—AVOCAT—

1502 NOTRE-DAME,

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THE CANADIAN CONTINGENT.

**An Extract from a Speech by the Hon. Minister of Railways,
at Campbellton, N. B., on 21st Nov., 1899.**

"Before sitting down I wish to say a few words upon one matter with which Mr. Lemieux has, however, already dealt. I refer to what I may characterize as the hysterical agitation which has been raised by the opposition on the subject of our sending a contingent to the Transvaal. My honorable friend is a representative of one of the leading constituencies of the province of Quebec, and is a resident of Montreal. He has not been saying to you tonight what he would not say at home. In fact, he has only repeated a speech already published in the press. He has given you his honest convictions on the subject, and knows whereof he speaks. I regret that circumstances have arisen which make it necessary for me tonight, and which made it necessary for my friend, to bring up a subject of this character. I regret it, because I think the fact it has become necessary is not a favorable omen, or a sign of hope, as respects the future of Canada. (Applause.) I charge against the Conservative party that the whole of this agitation is the outgrowth of political design. My explanation of it is that the Conservative leaders, realizing that before many months there must be an appeal to the electors of Canada; and seeing that they would be confronted by a party which had a strong hold upon the confidence and good will of the people; that the result of the appeal would be the return of the Liberal party to power with probably an increased majority; felt they must make a showing upon some other ground and raise some other cry than any they had yet succeeded in raising. Well, what occurred? Let us trace the history of this matter. Sir Charles Tupper had barely landed in Canada from England during the present fall before he took occasion to declare, in a speech at Halifax,

that it was the duty of the government at once to raise a contingent and send it to the Transvaal to fight in the impending struggle. War had not at that time been declared. There was no doubt a fear among many that the negotiations which were then going on between the home government and the republic in South Africa might eventuate in trouble. But before the prospect of peace was entirely abandoned Sir Charles Tupper began shouting out his demand upon the government to raise a contingent for the war. We have had the statement of the British premier and and the colonial secretary that neither of them felt that the prospect of peace was hopeless. On the contrary, they had very great confidence that there would not be a recourse to arms; but Sir Charles apparently would have the contingent go whether there was to be a war or not.

"I charge against Sir Charles Tupper and his party friends that they were then flying a political kite. It was not with the leader of the opposition a question as to how he could, as leader of his party, best contribute to bring about united and sympathetic action in aid of British interests on the part of the whole people of Canada. It is apparent, it seems to me, that such was not his chief desire. If it had been, I maintain he would have acted differently. He would have communicated to the premier of the government, instead of any platform announcement such as he did make, an ardent assurance that he was prepared, as leader of the opposition, to render any assistance in his power to the government, if they concluded upon a policy looking to the giving of aid to the imperial authorities should the emergency arise. (Hear, hear and applause.) That is what he would have done if patriotic considerations had been uppermost in his mind.