

assault upon the province of Quebec? Why, forsooth? Because the people of that province believed in voluntary enlistment as against conscription. The troubles and difficulties which we have had in the past have gone on increasing daily and are to-day in the condition which I have described. Was it disloyalty, was it pro-Germanism, on the part of the people of Australia to have voted against conscription as they did on two occasions? Why should the people of the province of Quebec and the French Canadians living elsewhere in Canada who are opposed to conscription be called traitors and pro-Germans because they had a preference for voluntary enlistment as against conscription? Unfortunately, the honourable gentlemen who were members of the former Government and those who are members of the present Government thought it necessary that these savage onslaughts should be made upon the province of Quebec in order to set up race against race and thus, as they thought, secure the adoption of their measure throughout the rest of Canada. I am sure that any of them who will look over the matter calmly to-day will consider that not only was it a shameless thing to do, but it was an absolutely useless thing to do. It was, to use a famous word, more than a crime: it was an awful blunder. Conscription would have carried without these brutal assaults upon Quebec. You would have had the same results, accomplished the same purpose. The Union Government would have been returned, and you would not have had to-day this intensified bitter feeling which is so detrimental, as my honourable friend has said, to the interests of Canada.

It is far from certain, even to-day, that voluntary enlistment would not have produced as good results as your measure of conscription. I am inclined to think that voluntary enlistment, purely and simply for the purpose of securing man-power, would have been more successful than the measure which is now being enforced; and, of course, there would be to-day far less expense, far less trouble, and far less irritation in the country. It was not conscription, so much, as the manner with which it was advocated and passed, that deepened the irritation and created the lamentable situation which now confronts us.

I said a moment ago that Canada's participation in the war was agreed to unanimously. We all decided voluntarily from the very beginning that we should take the largest share possible in the war, and I appeal to honourable gentlemen in this House to say if it is not

absolute truth that the Liberal party at no time have shown any sort of inclination to withdraw from that attitude. They have done everything that lay in their power. I have expressed before upon the floor of this House my sincere regret that the Government of the day, for reasons which I need not repeat here, did not think it necessary to enlist the cooperation of the Liberal party from the start. It was only when they found that the condition of affairs had become very difficult and perplexing, not long ago, that the Government of the day endeavoured to utilize the support and cooperation of the Liberal party. The Liberal party did all it could notwithstanding continued Government ostracism. There is not a single man in the Liberal party who did not at every opportunity express openly and publicly his sincere desire that Canada should participate to the utmost limit in achieving victory in this war. We differed as to the means; we differed as to conscription; and as I said a moment ago, there was good reason for differing, and time will prove that the reason was a paramount reason. We are most deeply interested in this war, and I agree with my honourable friend (Hon. Sir James Lougheed) that even if Canada did not form part of the Empire we should still have a compelling interest and a duty in the war. I have said here before, and have repeated elsewhere, that this is a war against war, and I still believe that. I believe that if there did not exist the strong and intimate bonds which unite us with Great Britain and France, we should still, at some time or other, have taken part in this war, because it is a war against war—it is the supreme struggle of democracy. For Germany to win and impose her hegemony upon the world would mean the end of democracy and the reign of absolute autocracy throughout the world, and there is no people on the face of the earth more interested, more concerned in preserving democracy, than we Canadians are. For that reason I say that we were bound to enter this war, not so much because of the Union Jack, not so much because of the Tricolor, not so much because of these two combined, but because of our own immediate interests and the interests and demands of world solidarity. If we wish to be considered a nation we have to assume the burdens and obligations of nationhood, which impose upon us the necessity of taking part in this war. We have, besides, an interest—an immediate, urgent, material interest—in this war.