

Hon. Mr. DAVID: No, he has not answered my question, and he will not answer it.

Hon. Mr. SAUVÉ: The testimony of people who have lacked foresight in their own country should have no value in Canada.

One does not have to look long, honourable senators, to notice the anomalies, the bluff on paper, the camouflage, the dangerous inefficiency, the various forms of exploitation, the glaring injustice, and the scandalous abuses with regard to the ten per cent. I do not hold the Ministers altogether responsible, for I know that they are quite busy; they must go through reports from the heads of their departments, who in turn receive reports from their subordinates. But, honourable senators, let me add that even there noteworthy exceptions are to be found. Besides, I shall discuss that matter again during this session.

We are told that the enemy is at our gates. Where are our defenders? What is their strength? What is their efficiency? That is what we ought to know definitely. The danger which threatens us can be appraised through the unfortunate examples given us by England, France, the United States and hapless Australia.

Hon. Mr. DAVID: I do not wish to interrupt the honourable senator needlessly, but in 1911, when the creation of a Canadian navy was proposed, was he in favour of a Canadian navy?

Hon. Mr. SAUVE: I hope that during this session it will be in order for the honourable senator to deliver a formal speech on the political affairs of that period, for I shall then be able to have a better recollection of what passed on both sides.

Hon. Mr. DAVID: At this time, that is past history.

Hon. Mr. SAUVE: At this time, the honourable senator is not more willing than I am to discuss a matter which is now out of order.

Hon. Mr. DAVID: I beg your pardon; I am quite willing to do so right now.

Hon. Mr. SAUVE: Well, that will be all for to-day. The danger which threatens us can be appraised through the unfortunate examples given us by the countries I have mentioned. We should not wait until disaster has overtaken us to hold an inquiry that should have been held long ago. Such an inquiry should be conducted not by partisans or creatures of the Government, but by free and competent men, able to set aside party considerations or personal interest, by men able to tell the truth to those who ought to know it, not to one party only, but to the representatives of the nation, in the Parliament of the nation.

Hon. Mr. SAUVÉ.

I realize how difficult it will be to obtain such an inquiry so long as we have a strictly party Government, determined to select their members solely among their own followers, instead of a truly national government, a government composed of men who are not politicians, a government truly representing the nation, to ensure national unity in a logical way.

Is it not proper that we should realize this if we wish to avoid the grave political crisis, the signs of which are more apparent every day? If we demand a national government, it should not be in order to sacrifice our own country by a rash or excessively impulsive overseas contribution, but rather to better protect our Dominion and our allies, to better utilize our resources for war and post-war purposes. If a national government is necessary to undertake this essential study without delay, let us do our duty without hesitation; let us not wait until it is too late. Conscription should not be an issue until after a study of that nature has been competently conducted.

When conscription is proposed, I wish to be free to set out the loyal, honest and logical stand of the province of Quebec. We are being logical in opposing conscription for overseas; we are only following the political teaching and guidance of both political parties, whose leaders were and still are English-speaking. We are convinced that, in the present conflict, the Canadian war effort, to be the most efficient for our allies, must be accomplished within our borders. We want to know whether this is right. We would submit to the findings of an inquiring body composed of competent Canadians. It is not through hatred, prejudice or egotism that we oppose conscription for overseas; we are becoming more and more opposed to this measure because the efficiency of our own territorial defence becomes more doubtful every day, because the peril ever increases, as our best authorized military men have acknowledged. In perusing their statements we should not forget their implied meaning nor the limitations imposed by the high position of these officers.

My opposition to this Bill is based on no other reasons. I am opposed to it in the best possible spirit and my past conduct stands witness to this fact, although that is, it would seem, of such little importance that certain men who consider themselves as very outstanding appear to have forgotten all about it.

Right Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Would the honourable senator allow me to ask a question?

Hon. Mr. SAUVE: Certainly.