

HON. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX AT TORONTO

A ringing message from the people of "old Quebec", to the people of Ontario and all the other provinces of the Dominion was delivered at Massey Hall, Toronto, by Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux on November 3rd, the occasion being the patriotic demonstration given in the interests of the Canadian Red Cross Society, under the auspices of the Empire Club.

In a short speech following the lecture of Mr. H. B. Ames, M.P. of Montreal on "The Royal Navy", Mr. Lemieux said, in part:

A Lesson for Canada.

"The struggle raging beyond the Atlantic carries with it a lesson, which cannot fail to be fruitful to us all Canadians. Great Britain, our mother country, is deeply engaged in that war. Canada, being part of the Empire, is also engaged in it. If the enemy ever believed that England's difficulties would be Canada's opportunities, it was indeed sadly mistaken. The world knows now — indeed Germany knows — that the trials of Great Britain are our trials, just as her victory shall be our victory.

"When on the 4th of August, war was declared, even before a call to arms had been made, Parliament—our free Parliament — decreed unanimously the equipping and sending of a Canadian contingent to share with the Allies the honour and the risks of Armageddon. Thirty-three thousand of our fellowmen are actually assembled at Salisbury Plains—Twenty thousand will soon follow and join their comrades, thus strengthening the firing lines now under the combined command of King Albert Sir John French and General Joffre.

Not a Dissenting Voice.

"I have just referred to the action of Parliament. This institution, national in character, but human in its composition, is as you well know made of men and not of angels. I am proud to say that in the grave crisis which from its inception confronted the Empire, each and all of the Canadian representatives forgot their party ties to remember only that they were patriots. There was not a dissenting voice in Parliament when the war appropriations were brought down by the Minister of Finance. It unanimously rose above party bias and political passion to the higher and loftier ideals of unflinching duty and unswerving loyalty.

"A party truce has been declared. A tacit understanding is binding upon us all. Our duty, our foremost duty, is to help the mother country to crush the enemy. May I express the hope that the noble example set during our session in August last, by the two great leaders of public opinion in Canada, Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier shall be strictly followed throughout the Dominion.

The British Empire is not in quest of votes. What the British Empire needs at this momentous hour is men, more men, who, in the language of Mr. Asquith "as joint and equal custodians of our common interest and fortune" are willing to fight "under the flag which is a symbol to all of a unity that the world in arms can not dissever or dissolve."

A Closer Bond of Unity.

"This great war — the issue of which cannot be doubtful if we are true to ourselves — will have far-reaching consequences. In Canada it will bring nearer together the various elements which make our Confederation. The East and the West will feel a closer bond of unity. Out of common dangers will emerge common ideals and common aspirations to both English and French speaking Canadians.

"It is with pardonable pride that I say to you fellowmen of Ontario, that the Quebec yeomanry has nobly answered the call to serve King and country. With the first and with the second contingent as well, there will be a fair proportion of French-Canadian volunteers ready and anxious to face the foe on the battlefields of France, Belgium — and soon I hope — of Germany.

"My fellow countrymen realize that the British institutions under which their forbears have lived and prospered are at stake in this gigantic struggle. They are fully conscious that they are not only duty bound — but impelled by their sense of honour—to stand by the mother country in this, her hour of trial.

"Sir, the spirit which pervades the whole of the British fabric can be defined in one cryptic sentence: To be a British subject means to be a free man enjoying full religious and civil liberty and equality before law.

"We, who live under the aegis of the British Crown are apt to believe that this is the happy lot of other men living under a foreign rule. Unfortunately such is not the case. Let there be no delusion about this. The present war reveals to us the cruel evidence that there, beyond the Atlantic, where a much vaunted "Kultur" is held up as the acme of civilization, millions of men are still living in abject bondage.

"In Great Britain, and in Greater Britain as well, we at least can claim that freedom, justice and equality before the law are within the reach, nay, are the birthright of every law-abiding citizen.

"This is a just war, the issue of which will mean the maintenance or the destruction of the liberties of the world.

"It is gratifying — more so perhaps for us of French origin — to realize that the two great liberty-loving nations, England and France, are closely allied in that supreme contest.