

SIR WILFRID LAURIER'S SPEECH

ST. JOSEPH BOULEVARD, MAISONNEUVE, QUEBEC

SEPTEMBER 27th, 1916

"I WANT TO FIGHT FOR ENGLAND AND ALSO FOR FRANCE. TO THOSE WHO DO NOT WANT TO FIGHT FOR EITHER ENGLAND OR FRANCE I WOULD SAY: WOULD YOU FIGHT FOR YOURSELVES?"

"AFTER THE WAR A NEW PAGE WILL BE OPEN TO OUR HISTORY AND WHAT WILL THAT PAGE BE?"

"WHAT I WAS IN THE PAST I STILL AM TO-DAY; I ALWAYS WAS ANTI-MILITARIST, AND I AM ANTI-MILITARIST TO-DAY. I AM ANTI-MILITARIST LIKE LLOYD-GEORGE, LIKE HENDERSON, LIKE THE RADICALS OF FRANCE, LIKE THE CLERICALS OF FRANCE WHO ENTERED THIS WAR TO SAVE THE LIFE OF FRANCE."

Sir Wilfrid's solutions of the economical problems were outlined under the following headings:—

Employment—Instead of the violence of strikes, the application of conciliation and arbitration.

Aid for the aged, the incapacitated, and suffering families, including insurance against accident, sickness, and a system of old age pensions;

Provision for returned soldiers;

Improvement in agriculture and technical education, immigration.

The question of rural credit for farmers; the question of finance.

The following extracts are quoted from the speech delivered by Sir Wilfrid.

Canada and the War.

"There are people who say we will not fight for England; will you then fight for France? Ah, gentlemen, remember that it is not on England that Germany throws her forces, it is on France and on Belgium. If England had refused to give her aid, those who say we should not fight for England would be the first to accuse England.

"I speak to you of French origin; if I were young like you and had the same health in my youth that I enjoy to-day, I would join those brave Canadians fighting to-day for the liberation of French territory. (Greet Cheering.) I would not have it said that the French-Canadians do less for the liberation of France than the citizens of British origin. I ask this, that for the honor of the French name, it may not be said that the Canadians of French origin have less courage than those of British origin.

"For my part, I want to fight for England and also for France. To those who do not want to fight either for England or for France, I say: Will you fight for yourselves? (Applause.)

"Canada is a free country; we have complete freedom, nothing obliges us to take part in Britain's war. Still there is no doubt that when Great Britain is at war we are at war.

"Because our country is subject to the attack of the enemy, and evidently when a country is attacked it is the duty of all citizens to defend it, not in virtue of the Constitution but in virtue of that primordial law, to fight aggression of one's country.

"If we were not obliged, was it wise to take part in the war? There are three theories advanced: First, there are those who wish without any question that Canada

should take part in all of Britain's wars; second, there are the Nationalists, also blind, who say without discussion or argument that Canada must not take part. The third theory, the one that I have always defended, is that Canada is a free country and it is for the Parliament, representing the people, to determine whether or not we shall take part in England's wars.

"I did not hesitate to say that we should take part in this war."

Militarism must not be permitted to invade Canada.

"There is another movement to draw Canada into this. It is not a new movement, it has existed for years, but it is more accentuated than ever. I always fought against this policy and I fight against it still. (Applause.) I have been accused of being unfaithful to my policy when I agreed to the participation of Canada in this war, but it is one thing to fight in defence of civilization and another thing to go into militarism.

"What I was in the past I still am to-day; I always was anti-militarist, and I am anti-militarist to-day. I am anti-militarist like Lloyd George, like Henderson, like the Radicals of France, like the Clericals of France who entered this war to save the life of France. (Applause.)

"After the war if there are men who wish to draw us into militarism, I shall not be one of them, and I shall fight them in the future as I fought them in the past. It is not to that that we Liberals wish to direct our forces."

Laws Are Unjust to Some.

"To-day the relations between the workingman and his employer have not attained that degree of perfection we hope for.

"Sometimes strikes are the last means left for the workingmen to get justice. To me strikes are always deplorable. If they are the last means of getting justice, they accuse the laws of the country, because there should be other means of getting justice."

His Best Title is Friend of the Poor.

"If in England and in France I received honors and titles, God is my witness that when I go down to the tomb I wish no better epitaph on my tombstone than, as Mr. Rodier said, the title of protector of the weak and poor, the old and the orphans.

New Problems to Meet.

"Gentlemen, we must now ask ourselves what will happen after the war, after the victory."

"A new page will open in our history, but what will that page be? Shall we go ahead, or shall we lose the fruit of four or five centuries of liberty? I don't know, but whatever direction we take there is bound to be a