

of misunderstandings, contentions and miseries?"

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Referring to the small number of French Canadians who have enlisted so far, I desire to quote from a very illuminative article on this subject published in the Montreal Star on Saturday last, comparing the quota of the British born with the English Canadians and the French Canadians in this war. The article reads as follows:

The British-born with their instantly-acting instinct of patriotism, enlisted at once. They constituted something like eighty-five per cent of the first contingent. This was not because they were more loyal than the rest of us when we all had time to think it out—it was merely because their patriotism was more instinctive and automatic. It took the Canadian-born a little longer to emerge from the miasmic fogs of pacifism; but they were presently marching into the gap bravely.

French Canada—with much the same mental attitude to begin with—was much slower in taking fire. Why? Largely because their instinctive patriotism had become wholly local. They were loyal to Canada alone. They were long divorced from France—first, by the conquest when they were deserted; next (let us remember in fairness) by the British demand that they cease to look to France which was then our enemy; next, by the Revolution and its subsequent war upon their cherished religion.

Mr. Speaker, you have in these well poised sentences the explanation of a peculiar psychology. There it is pointed out how it happens that, instinctively, the British-born were first to respond to the call; then the English Canadians and then the French Canadians.

I have said on many other occasions, and I repeat this evening, that recruiting is largely, if not wholly, carried on successfully in urban centres. The province of Ontario is dotted with industrial centres. In the province of Quebec, outside of Sherbrooke, Three Rivers, Sorel, Montreal and Quebec, we have few or little industrial centres. Quebec is a mostly rural province, and bear in mind that she gets no influx of immigration from the old country.

Mr. Speaker, I will with your leave complete the statement I have made to the House this evening in all frankness and sincerity. Sir, no effort worthy of the name has been made to intelligently recruit in the province of Quebec since the beginning of the war.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Hon. gentlemen know that from the session of Parliament in 1914

I urged the Government to appoint General Lessard as recruiting agent. He is the best and most qualified officer, and a man in whose judgment and ability our people have all confidence. Yet, General Lessard was only appointed on the 29th March, 1917, and my hon. friends will be honest enough to grant that all that delay was due to some bickerings and quarrels which happened at the time of the Boer war between General Lessard and the Minister of Militia and Defence. Is that a motive which should have deferred the early appointment of General Lessard to promote recruiting in Quebec? Sir, we had another excellent officer, a veteran from South Africa, Colonel Pelletier, of Quebec, son of the late Lieutenant Governor, Sir Alphonse Pelletier. At the beginning of the war he was ignored and finally he was given his pension. There was in Montreal Colonel Roy, who was the district commanding officer. He knew our people, was trusted, and spoke the language of the majority. He was sent to British Columbia, and later on was pensioned and replaced by General Wilson of Montreal, who is a personal friend of mine, a gentleman, but who hardly speaks a word of French. I was chairman of the civilian committee of the Asselin regiment, and I must say, in all justice to my friend the ex-Minister of Militia and Defence, that he gave us, the French Canadians of Montreal, a most loyal support in the recruiting of that regiment. I thank him publicly to-day, as I thanked him publicly on many, many occasions previously. With the help received from his department, in less than two months, Major Asselin, who was very popular, who was exceedingly brilliant, succeeded in raising a regiment, but what happened? We founded great hopes on that regiment. We expected that it would be the nucleus of many similar regiments in the province of Quebec. It was even hinted that my hon. friend the Minister of Inland Revenue (Mr. Sevigny) would take a course at Kingston, in order to do as Major Asselin had done. What happened? Major Asselin's regiment was sent to Bermuda for several months. I do not blame the Government for that. There were military reasons, I suppose, for that action. Several other regiments have gone there. But what I and the people of Quebec resent is this: the regiment was transferred to a camp in Great Britain, I forget which camp, and, as soon as it reached Great Britain, the first order received by Major Asselin was that of the dislocation of his unit. It was divided