

It is incumbent on the Government to at once take rigorous measures and punish all guilty parties, whoever they be. The people who will be called upon to make enormous sacrifices for the defence of the country should not be made to suffer ruthlessly for the sole benefit of some unfeeling individuals.

A few words, Mr. Speaker, and I shall be through. I promised at the outset to be brief, and I do not wish to impose for too long a time on the good nature of the House. Fully aware as I was of my inability to properly address this House in reference to these momentous events of recent date, I had decided at the outset to decline accepting the honour which was tendered me. However, I thought I owed it to the county I represent, as well as to the great mass of my fellow people, farmers and artisans, whose labours, efforts, sorrows and joys I have shared in my youth, to express in the common but sincere language of the people, what I think and do not fear to speak aloud.

A member hailing from another province than my own enquired from me last week what Quebec was going to do in the present crisis. 'It's duty,' I answered. And I hastened to add: 'Tell me, at what time in the history of the country did the French-speaking Canadian turn a deaf ear when called upon to defend his country, his religion, his tongue and his rights?' In this war all that is dear to the French-speaking Canadian is at stake. The defeat of England, the dismemberment of the Empire, would signify for him the loss shortly of all that makes up his strength, ensures his prosperity and happiness of his home life. The noble stand of the Nationalist leader, John Redmond, to whom I referred a moment ago, has had its counterpart in previous history: that was the stand taken by the Catholic clergy of Lower Canada, about one hundred and forty years ago, at the time of the War of Independence. And since then French-Canadians have not receded from that stand; on the contrary, they have adhered to it with increasing firmness consequent on the respect shown by Great Britain for our privileges and laws, and the wider autonomy granted to us by the mother country.

It is not now, Mr. Speaker, when both our mother countries, France and England, are fighting hand in hand for civilization and liberty, that the French-Canadian will adopt a policy different from that which was laid down for him by his loyal

[Mr. L'Espérance.]

and devoted clergy on the day following the conquest.

The sons of those gallant Frenchmen who settled Canada, a cross covering their breasts, with one hand clenching their musket, while the other held the plough, fear neither battle nor bullets when it comes to defend, as in this case, the integrity of the vast Empire, which ensures to them the greatest measure of freedom and happiness which ever people was allowed to enjoy.

I have the honour to second, Mr. Speaker, the motion for the Address.

Right Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER: The observations which I shall have to offer to the House are few and brief. In fact, apart from the usual compliments and congratulations to the mover and the seconder of the Address, which, I am glad to say, I have more than usual pleasure in extending to them, I have but one declaration to make.

The gravity of the occasion which has called us together makes it incumbent upon us even to disregard the formalities and conventionalities which in ordinary times the rules of the House, written and unwritten, enjoin as a wise safeguard against precipitate action, but which, on such an occasion as this, might impede us in dealing with the momentous question before us. This session has been called for the purpose of giving the authority of Parliament and the sanction of law to such measures as have already been taken by the Government, and any further measures that may be needed, to insure the defence of Canada and to give what aid may be in our power to the mother country in the stupendous struggle which now confronts her. Speaking for those who sit around me, speaking for the wide constituencies which we represent in this House, I hasten to say that to all these measures we are prepared to give immediate assent. If in what has been done or in what remains to be done there may be anything which in our judgment should not be done or should be differently done, we raise no question, we take no exception, we offer no criticism, and we shall offer no criticism so long as there is danger at the front. It is our duty, more pressing upon us than all other duties, at once, on this first day of this extraordinary session of the Canadian Parliament, to let Great Britain know, and to let the friends and foes of Great Britain know, that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart, and that all Canadians stand behind the