

the country compulsory service as is meant by the Bill now before us.

We are told that the object is to get from 10,000 to 12,000 men a month as long as the war lasts. Will the Government be able to get them? I do not think so, especially if Lord Northcliffe is to be believed when he says that the war is just beginning. The very thought drives one to despair and to fancy that the hour has probably come when the breakdown of conscription, foreseen by those who opposed it in 1867, must take place. What did our public men say at the time in reply to the advocates of Confederation? Let me quote some of their objections:

1. Confederation is the realization of the schemes generated, hatched, during a whole century, to subject Lower Canada to the domination and influence of an English majority.

5. Ambition, the quest of honours and of high positions will induce talented men to make sacrifices and concessions to pander to the English majority, in order to enjoy the advantages and the boon of power.

6. The French language, swamped in a parliament, composed of members three-fourths of whom will not understand it, must finally disappear.

7. The members from the English provinces, divided upon questions of interest, will unite every time a national or religious issue will arise.

8. Lower Canada, after having made Upper Canada's fortune, under the Union, will now largely contribute to the prosperity of three or four other provinces, whose influence will later become fatal to it, while it will lack the necessary resources to maintain its population and clear its lands.

10. In time of war, Lower Canada will be at the mercy of the Federal Government, who may force it to take up arms against its own will and affections.

Have not the events of the past fifty years given more than one reason to the opponents of Confederation?

Let us ponder over, one by one, those objections and who will say that the present period is not one of the darkest of our history; the very one foreseen by those who opposed the new regime?

I now quote from a newspaper which, commenting upon the present situation, entitles its editorial as follows:

What Will Follow From All That?

Where is the Canadian who, at present, does not ask himself what future has in store for our country? The sky is becoming darker and darker; the storm is on the point of bursting; from all parts are to be heard the roarings of a terrible thunder; but nothing seems to move our public men.

The Orange press wants to banish us from confederation; it would even drive us out of this land which is so much our own, since our fathers and our missionaries have carried upon all its borders, with their genius, the stamp of our race.

What will befall, do we ask? It is well to examine it; thus, perhaps, those whom the care of our national future still concerns may become interested in that survey, and, if they have the power, may do their best to save the grand work of our nationality.

Let the Government, if they have at heart the maintenance of order and harmony, in a united confederation, accept the amendment of my honourable leader, asking for a referendum to the people and, whatever the majority decide, the minority must submit to it in silence and will submit to it, I have no doubt. But, if the Government persist in their scheme, without considering the numerous and urgent appeals of the people that this question be submitted to them before its final adoption; they shall have, Mr. Speaker, to bear alone the responsibility of their act and of its consequences. Do they mean to save confederation? If we are Canadians, loyal subject of His Majesty having at heart the interests of our country first, and of the Empire next, the thought of the country will of itself be sufficient to save confederation. Thus recently spoke a newspaper, of which I want to quote the following extract:

If we really mean to save confederation, there is only one way to do it: keep intact Canadian autonomy.

And to safeguard autonomy, the Government must do its duty.

The measure now before Parliament is one of those which most endanger our nationality, because it amounts to a bold denial of national autonomy. Why then should not the Government and Parliament, who only exist in consequence of an Imperial mandate, appeal to the people who are, after all, the dispensers of power?

And when the people shall have decided this question, when it will have chosen new men, then should be taught what is really meant by the word "country"; thus only can confederation be saved.

The idea of country is defined by Bossuet in one of his finest works:

"Human society demands we should love the land wherein we live together; we consider it as a common mother and nurse; we cling to her, and that unites. It is what the Latins called *charitas patri soli*, the love of the native country; and they consider it as a bond among men. Men, indeed, feel bound by something strong, when they know that the same land that has produced and fed them, while living, will take them in its bosom, after death."

That is what high-minded men have thought. Why should not the Canadians, while remaining loyal subjects to His Majesty the King, George V, have also, their own national ideal; the love of their country, of Canada, above all others? For this country, celebrated in song as the richest, the greatest and the most beautiful of all the countries, for the preservation of its greatness, of its wealth and of its