

QUEBEC AND THE WAR

TORY newspapers of Ontario and Conservative politicians who have for months past been seeking to make political capital by traducing the people of the province of Quebec and misrepresenting the part they have taken and are taking in connection with the War, were answered in their own province by Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, former Postmaster General, when he spoke at Toronto, November 27th, under the auspices of the Women's Liberal Association. In the course of his able speech, Hon. Mr. Lemieux entirely combatted the unfair statements and showed by statistics that the French-Canadians of Quebec are doing their full share and taking their full part of the responsibility cast upon the people of Canada by the struggle in Europe, adding that it was necessary only to look at the lists of Canadian killed and wounded to discover how many Canadians of French descent were enrolled. As to the activities of the general public in patriotic work, he declared that there was not a hamlet in the whole of Quebec that was not doing its share for the Red Cross, the Patriotic Fund, the Belgian Relief Fund, etc. Herewith are quotations from the address of Hon. Mr. Lemieux:

Canadians All.

"I speak as a French-Canadian—no, let us not put it that way—I speak as a Canadian of French descent. Is not that better? We are all Canadians together; men and women of different national and racial descent it is true, but Canadians all, eager, all of us, to do our full and privileged share in this time of stress for the Empire of which we are all a proud part."

Where Is Laurier?

Tracing the circumstances which created the state of mind that exists among some of the Quebec habitants, Hon. Mr. Lemieux related an incident which took place in Montreal on the eve of the emergency War Session in August, 1914. A good friend of his, who had left the ranks of the Liberal party in 1911 on the ground that reciprocity meant annexation and the Canadian Navy meant separation from the Empire, rushed excitedly into his office. "Where is Sir Wilfrid Laurier?" cried the friend. "Laurier should be here exhorting the French-Canadians to enlist. The English-speaking people of Canada expect him to live up to his great reputation." Mr. Lemieux replied "Sir Wilfrid stands to-day where he stood yesterday. What he says and what he does will be said and done not for one section of the country but for the whole of Canada. If it is necessary for him to tell his fellow-countrymen what their duty is in the present War, rest assured he will not hesitate."

And then Mr. Lemieux, amid great laughter and cheers proceeded "I was cruel enough to add: 'How comes it that Laurier the Annexationist, Laurier the Separatist, should be so urgently needed by you to preach the gospel of loyalty, after you saved the flag by defeating him?'"

The Real Trouble In Quebec.

The friend had forgotten, continued Mr. Lemieux, that the Conservative party with which he had allied

himself in 1911 had for party reasons made itself the ally and supporter of the Nationalists who campaigned the back concessions of Quebec with the declaration that Canada owed nothing to Britain. Twenty-seven out of sixty-five constituencies had listened to that appeal. Three of the men who made those appeals, Messrs. Pelletier, Nantel and Coderre, were then in the Borden cabinet and another, Mr. Blondin, was Deputy Speaker. **The task before patriots like Sir Wilfrid Laurier in Quebec was to undo the work, the only work, which landed these men in the cabinet.** One of the most embarrassing and discouraging things about the whole situation in Quebec was that, with the sole exception, the honorable and noble exception, of Hon. Mr. Casgrain, every member of the Dominion cabinet from Quebec since 1911 had been a follower of Henri Bourassa and an expounder of the latter's "damnable doctrines." Mr. Lemieux quoted from the speeches of Messrs. Pelletier, Nantel, Coderre, Blondin, Patenaudé and Sevigny to prove his point. "No German could say more than these men have done" was his scornful comment.

Tory Money to Mislead the Habitants.

Referring to the assistance and encouragement from high Conservative quarters which lent strength to the Bourassa campaign in 1911 and in the preceding by-elections, Mr. Lemieux quoted particularly that part of the Nationalist doctrine promulgated by Bourassa in his newspaper *Le Devoir*, "To spurn any attempt at recruiting for British troops." Said Mr. Lemieux; "Please mark the words 'to spurn any attempt at recruiting for British troops,' you who have been inclined to find fault with the showing of Quebec. **Remember that Mr. Bourassa himself stated that the money paid to *Le Devoir* for circulation among thousands of electors in rural Quebec was paid in by one of the most prominent members of the Conservative party. That prominent member was Sir Herbert Ames.**

"This is not romance. These are facts. Good loyal Imperial Tory money paid to educate the habitant of Quebec along such lines! That is what we have to undo."

"It ill becomes the *Toronto News*, which at one time spoke of Bourassa as 'one who spoke like a man inspired,' whose 'words and sentences glowed like coals of fire,' to now speak in disparaging terms of Quebec's contribution to the War, when we know it supported the political party which carried on that kind of campaign in Quebec."

It was true, said Mr. Lemieux, that as Sir George Foster maintained in Parliament, the Conservatives had dominated their Nationalist allies and had absorbed them into the party. "Who won?" Sir George had asked of the House, "Who won?"

"My answer to that is," added Mr. Lemieux, "duplicity won and Canada lost!"

In conclusion, Mr. Lemieux declared that it was sentiment created in this way and at that time which had alone caused uneasiness concerning Quebec, but the mass of public sentiment was sound and sane.