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CANADA

House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT

SPEECH

BY

HON. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX, M.P.

Member for Rouville

ON

COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE

In the House of Commons, Ottawa, on Tuesday, June 19, 1917.

Hon. RODOLPHE LEMIEUX (Rouville): Mr. Speaker, first of all may I be allowed to congratulate my hon. friend from South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) upon the very eloquent address which he has just delivered. It is the glorious privilege of Liberalism not merely to differ from Conservatism, but to be at times individualistic to the point of differing with its own friends. Although I admire the general form and tenor of my hon. friend's remarks, with many of his statements I am bound to take issue.

In discussing this question I intend to be moderate as usual, but to be firm also, because I believe this is the most complex problem that has ever been approached by the Canadian House of Commons since Confederation. Although it is distasteful in debates where there is such a sharp cleavage of opinion to have to produce a loyalty passport, I wish to say once for all that in taking the stand I intend to take on this Bill, I yield to no one in my loyalty to His Majesty the King. The hon. member for South Wellington spoke a moment ago of the oath of allegiance which the members of this House have taken, and of the danger to unity if this measure were brought direct before the people in the shape of a referendum. Let me remind my hon. friend that there is at the antipodes another British dominion called Australia, which is just as loyal and law-abiding as is Canada. In Australia a referendum was taken on this very question, and I think a greater service was rendered to the Empire in that way than if Mr. Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia, had forced his conscription measure on an unwilling electorate. Need I say that all

of us, whether we are of the Conservative or of the Liberal party, whether we belong to the great province of Ontario or to the old province of Quebec, whether we are from the East or from the West, are united on the question of winning the war. We all are anxious to win the war, and win it as speedily as possible. In the year 1914 a pledge was given on behalf of Great Britain, by that great British statesman, the Hon. Herbert Asquith, then Prime Minister, in which, defining the issues before the British people, he used the following language:

If I am asked what we are fighting for I can reply in two sentences. In the first place to fulfill a solemn international obligation,—an obligation which if it had been entered into between private persons in the ordinary concerns of life would have been regarded as an obligation not only of law but of honour which no self-respecting man could possibly have repudiated. I say secondly, we are fighting to vindicate the principle which in these days when material force sometimes seems to be the dominating influence and factor in the development of mankind, that small nationalities are not to be crushed in defiance of international good-faith by the arbitrary will of a strong and overmastering power.

The reasons Mr. Asquith gave at the beginning of the war why Great Britain came into this stupendous struggle hold good to-day, and the Canadian people, whether they belong to the French-speaking or English-speaking nationalities, stand and abide by those lofty principles. Canada sided cheerfully with Great Britain and the Allies, and I maintain that all the war measures that have been presented by the Government since August, 1914, have received practically the unanimous consent of the House. It was furthermore stated over and over again that in all these matters we

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would act constitutionally, that our aid to Great Britain and the Empire would and should be voluntary; and our aid has been voluntary.

Let me tell my hon. friend from South Wellington that I personally have as much at stake in this war as he has. I am one of those who have given up an only son to fight the battle of liberty. At the age of 18 he left the University classroom to fight for his King and country, but he went with unflinching steps to fight as a volunteer, not as conscript; the two things are quite different. Perhaps it is because I have French blood in my veins, but I make quite a distinction between voluntarily offering to fight and fighting under compulsion. That is the essential difference between my hon. friend and myself, and it is quite a difference, I am free to admit. If the cause is great and noble, let us concede at once like men and patriots that Canada has done wonderfully well since the beginning of the war. She has done as nobly as any country of her size and population could have done under similar circumstances. A few comparisons, actual and historical as well, may be useful. The effort of Canada in this war is not to be compared with that of Great Britain or France as regards numbers, because you cannot apply the law of averages as between a country with a population of 7,000,000 and countries with a population running from 35,000,000 to 50,000,000. We have heard about compulsory service being adopted by the United States of America, and of the armies which that country is going to levy in this war. Have you ever thought, Mr. Speaker, of applying the law of averages as between the effort of Canada and the effort which the United States of America are going to make? I do not think our population at the present time amounts to 8,000,000, but placing it at that figure, and the population of the United States at 112,000,000, which are the latest figures I have seen in the American press, I find that Canadian troops are equivalent to American troops in the following proportions, according to population:

Canadian troops.	Equal to	American troops.
80,000	}	1,120,000
160,000		2,240,000
320,000		4,480,000
400,000		5,600,000

Sir, I am not afraid to compare the potential effort of the United States and that of Canada. Let me give the evidence of a gentleman whom we know well, the ex-President of the United States, Mr. Taft, who

spends his summers at Murray Bay, in the province of Quebec, and he is none the worse for that. Mr. Taft, speaking the other day at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections on the subject of "International Adjustment After the War," declared that:—

The United States would have to put billions of money and millions of men into the struggle.

Mr. Taft paid a splendid tribute to the patriotism of the British colonies.

Canada alone has sent about 400,000 to Europe out of a population of not more than 7,000,000. If we are to do our part in the same proportion we must send not less than 6,000,000 to the front.

That is the true test as between what has been done by Canada and what should be done by the United States of America.

But let me pass from actual to historical comparisons. If I had time I could, by quoting history, memoirs and statistics, establish that Napoleon Bonaparte, in France, during the First Republic, during the First Empire, and until after Waterloo, never used, under the power of conscription, more than four per cent of the available population of France, while we in Canada, with less than 8,000,000 people, have raised through the voluntary system more than five per cent of the total population. With reference to the conscription system under Napoleon, let me remind you that in 1800 the population of the French Republic was 33,111,000. During the Consulate 210,000 men only were raised in France from 1800 to 1803. During the most successful years of the First Empire, under Napoleon Bonaparte, from 1804 to 1809, there were 746,000 men raised by conscription out of a population of nearly 35,000,000. During that period we know that, unfortunately, the most sanguinary battles were fought—Montebello, Marengo, Hohenlinden, Elchingen, Austerlitz, Saalfeld, Jena, Auerstadi, Eylau, Friedland, Abensberg, Eckmühl, Essling, and Wagram. And these campaigns: Marengo, Ulm, Jena, Peninsula, and Wagram.

From 1808 to 1812, during the decline of the Empire, through conscription, 517,000 soldiers were levied in France. In

9 p.m. 1812 the population of France was 45,700,000, making the percentage of the population serving under conscription one and one-quarter per cent during the three-year period. Under those circumstances, and in view of the comparisons I have given, may I not say that the effort of Canada has been noble, generous, ample, and that before adding through conscription

to the numbers she has already sent to the front, it is only just and fair that we should at least pause and consult the people.

I listened with great attention to the very eloquent speech delivered by my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir George Foster) yesterday and also to the speech of my hon. friend from South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) this afternoon on the interpretation to be given to these words contained in section 69 of the Militia Act "beyond Canada" and "for the defence thereof." Let me read the section, because I believe my hon. friend from South Wellington was in error when he argued that the principal change at the time of the revision of the Militia Act in 1904 was made in section 71. There were three chief modifications of the Militia Act as brought down by the late Sir Frederick Borden in 1904. The first was one concerning the commanding officer of the Canadian militia. Until the year 1904 the command of the militia had to be given to a British officer, whilst since 1904 the command can be given to a Canadian military officer. The other change has regard to the raising of the militia of Canada in times of emergency to be sent without the country. The change made in that clause consists in the addition of the words "for the defence thereof." Let me read that section:

The Governor in Council may place the militia, or any part thereof, on active service anywhere in Canada, and also beyond Canada, for the defence thereof—

These words were added. They were not in the old statute. They were added for a reason which I shall explain in a moment,—for the defence thereof, at any time when it appears advisable so to do by reason of emergency.

The third modification was made by section 71, and it has reference to the calling of Parliament. It reads as follows:

Whenever the Governor in Council places the militia, or any part thereof, on active service, if Parliament is then separated by such adjournment or prorogation as will not expire within ten days, a proclamation shall be issued for the meeting of Parliament within fifteen days, and Parliament shall accordingly meet and sit upon the day appointed by such proclamation, and shall continue to sit and act in like manner as if it had stood adjourned or prorogued to the same day.

Nobody takes exception to that very wise clause having been inserted in the Militia Act. It is not in question, at all events. The only point at issue is whether or not we should give to section 69 of the Militia Act the interpretation which was given yesterday by the Minister of Trade and Commerce and the hon. member for South Welling-

ton. Before the enactment of section 69, there was nothing in the Canadian statute which indicated clearly whether Canada, or the Parliament of Canada, had the right to send troops abroad for the defence of Canada or for the defence of the Empire, if you please. The question was debated at considerable length during the session of 1904.

I am rather surprised that the right hon. the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir George Foster) and my friend for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) should not have read over again the debate which took place on that occasion. They might have found enlightenment; they might have discovered that the words "for the defence thereof" were embalmed in that section in order to clear a situation which heretofore had been obscure. Let me refer to the father of the law itself, let me refer to the ipsissima verba of Sir Frederick Borden when explaining the clause which was numbered 77, I think, as the Bill was introduced. I quote from the debate:

Mr. W. A. Maclean: Am I to understand that clause 77, (now clause 69) limits the Canadian militia in their service outside of Canada to the defence of Canada?

Sir Frederick Borden: Yes.

Mr. Maclean: Not for the defence of the Empire?

Sir Frederick Borden: No.

Mr. Maclean: Then the active militia of Canada under this proposed Act could not be sent outside this country by the Government to take part in the defence of the Empire except under a special contract as in the case of the troops sent to South Africa?

Sir Frederick Borden: Yes.

Mr. Speaker, I could proceed and quote column after column of Hansard on the same subject.

Mr. MIDDLEBRO: My hon. friend appears to have read that debate. Does he not know that Sir Frederick Borden said over and over again that the change he proposed to make made no difference in the law as it then stood?

Mr. LEMTEUX: On the contrary, he said that he had consulted the Imperial authorities, that he had scanned the legislation of all the various provinces before Confederation, but that he found that in none of the statute-books was there a constitutional obligation for those provinces to send their soldiers outside of their own territory.

Mr. MIDDLEBRO: At the same time he also said that it made no change whatever in the law as it stood prior to that amendment.

Mr. E. LAPOINTE: That is correct, he said that.

Mr. LEMIEUX: And what he said was true, as there was nothing in the statute before this amendment providing for the sending of our troops outside of our territory except for the defence of that very territory.

Mr. MIDDLEBRO: Why does my hon. friend base any argument on the change made in 1904?

Mr. LEMIEUX: He made the statute clearer. There were many people, as the debate will show, for instance my hon. friend's leader, the ex-Minister of Militia and Defence (Sir Sam Hughes), the hon. member for South York (Mr. Maclean), and the late Mr. Gourley, who contended with very great vigour that of course we could send our troops to any part of the world the moment the Empire was at war. Sir Frederick Borden said: No, you cannot do that under our law, but because there is an impression that that may be done, I shall make the law clear. I have consulted the authorities in London and they have agreed to that modification.

Mr. MIDDLEBRO: The Minister of Justice said, yes, they could.

Mr. HAZEN: What did Sir Charles Fitzpatrick say on the subject?

Mr. LEMIEUX: I have not his words here, but Sir Charles Fitzpatrick would not have said otherwise than did the statute, which is very clear. Besides, Sir Frederick Borden was very emphatic. Here are his words in answer to the late Mr. Barker who was playing the part of my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Hazen), out-Heroding Herod:

The hon. gentleman has asked with an affectation of much anxiety, what the world will think, and what the rest of the British Empire will think of Canada—though I have told him over and over again that upon the Statute-book of every colony of the British Empire is to be found precisely the same provision as he is now criticising. And, Sir, upon the Statute-book of the Mother Country herself, the hon. gentleman will find this section 12, part 3 (presumably of the Army Act) "any part of the militia shall be liable to serve in any part of the United Kingdom; but no part of the militia shall be carried or ordered to go out of the United Kingdom."

So that in every British colony, in every province before Confederation, even in the Mother Country, militia troops could not be dispatched outside of the territory except for the defence of the territory itself. That case is made abundantly clear. And, Mr. Speaker, why should we be discussing this point? Has not the Prime Minister himself, as was made so evident yesterday by the dispatch read by the right

hon. leader of the Opposition, admitted the force of the view taken by Sir Frederick Borden as he introduced that legislation in 1904? He said through the Governor General to the home Government that Canada contemplated aiding the Mother Country in that great struggle, but that, unfortunately, they were handicapped as to their right to dispatch troops outside of our own territory. As a result, Sir, an Order in Council was passed at the request of this Government by the Imperial authorities incorporating our troops into the Imperial army. This fact is unchallenged, and I do not see the object of discussing whether or not constitutionally we have a right to send our men outside of Canada except for the defence of our own country. I do not say that Canada will not, I do not say that Canada may not, but that Canada must, makes in my opinion, all the difference in the world.

Sir, on this grave issue I stand upon the bedrock of our constitution, and I claim that England has accepted the Canadian contention that there is no constitutional obligation upon us to take part in wars outside of Canada, except for the defence of our territory. I am proud to say that we have taken part in this stupendous struggle for liberty, but it is on the principle of the voluntary system, and it is on that principle that I, as a Canadian, desire that Canada shall continue to the end to be with the Allies. I may say at once to the father confessor of the Tory party, my good friend, the Solicitor General, that I am opposed to compulsory service, and I do not understand his anxiety in asking every member on this side of the House to state whether he will support conscription or be against it, if a referendum be submitted. I say to him that conscription for Canada is the Milner system—the autocratic system.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Every man in this free British country has a right to his own opinions, and has as much right to be against the compulsory system as has the Quaker, the Mennonite, aye, as much right to his opinion as Sir John Simon, Mr. John Morley. No one either will question my hon. friend (Mr. Meighen) the right to his opinion in favour of the compulsory system.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I am opposed to compulsory service, and why? We have entered this war on the principle of voluntary service, and the pledge of the Government

to that effect is positive, direct and binding. The honour of Canada, the honour of the Government are at stake. The Prime Minister and his colleagues, from the highest to the humblest, have repeated, from one end of the country to the other, the statement that there would be no conscription in Canada.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: They have repeated it in public meetings, on every platform; they have repeated it here time and again before the assembled Parliament. I need not quote the pledges of the Prime Minister, as he will not deny them. Shall I say, Sir, that when the National Service cards were issued, the Prime Minister authorized some of his colleagues to declare that the people might sign those cards as they did not mean compulsory service. I say to him that he has authorized some of his colleagues to make that declaration to the Archbishop of Montreal, who issued a letter, inviting the faithful of Montreal to sign the National Service cards, because, he had the assurance that they did not mean compulsory service. He distinctly accepted the pledge and the word of honour of the Government that there would be no compulsory service. In what position to-day is that dignity of the Church?

Mr. MURPHY: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: My hon. friend, the Minister of Inland Revenue (Mr. Sévigny) stated in the county of Dorchester, to his electors a few weeks ago, that there would be no conscription. The members of Parliament who took part in that contest heard his statement. He was elected on the strength of that pledge, and the paper which speaks for the Conservative party in Quebec, *L'Événement*, the organ of my hon. friend (Mr. Sévigny) stated most positively that there would be no conscription. Let me translate one of the last articles published by that paper before polling day. I forget the date, but the words are as follows:

The heading of the article is:

"Un tiens vaut mieux que deux tu l'auras."

The only translation I can make of that old adage is: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." The article proceeds:

The electors of Dorchester are now well notified. They know that they will never have conscription from the Conservative party. They do not know what they will have from a Liberal government, the party of conscription.

And, Sir, on the 26th January, 1917, whilst that election was raging, the following article appeared in that same paper:

If the Borden Government had been in favour of conscription, conscription would have been decreed, but the Government have declared that they will not have conscription, that they do not desire to have it, as they can organize up the defence of Canada without having recourse to conscription. If the electors of Dorchester were to elect a Liberal member, and that conscription would come afterwards, they then could not complain, they would have been notified. They know what they will have from a Conservative government. They do not know what they will have from a Liberal government. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. That is the wisdom of the nation which thus speaketh.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: So that, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, his colleagues and the latest addition in the Cabinet, my hon. friend the Minister of Inland Revenue and his organ in Quebec, all pledged the honour of the Government that there would be no conscription through the Tory party, but on the contrary they announced that conscription would come through the Liberal party. Mr. Speaker, that is not all. I could read many other speeches which have been delivered by members of that party. This is however too serious a question to revel in personalities. What I want to convey to the House is this: since the war has commenced I have addressed meeting after meeting in the province of Quebec, in the district of Montreal, and in the province of Ontario. I have addressed at least a dozen meetings with the right hon. the leader of the Opposition, appealing to our fellow countrymen in the great cause for which we are fighting at the present time, and I am surprised to hear the very ungenerous reflection which has been cast on the attitude of the right hon. gentleman since the beginning of the war.

Mr. MURPHY: Surprised?

Mr. LEMIEUX: I appeal to my hon. friend the Minister of Justice, because at least I should expect justice from him. Is it not a fact that the right hon. gentleman has, from the very inception of the war, on many, many occasions addressed his fellow countrymen in the province of Quebec, in order to stimulate their zeal in the great cause that we are fighting for to-day? I know that my hon. friend cannot deny this assertion. I, personally, addressed meeting after meeting in my riding of Rouville, in the district of Montreal, in the province of Quebec generally, in Ontario and also in

the Eastern Townships. On every occasion, basing my statements on the pledges given by the Government, I told my electors and my fellow-countrymen that the aid which Canada was giving to the Mother Country was purely voluntary; that the people of Canada would never be required to serve the Mother Country under compulsion. Sir, if to-day I were to support a measure of compulsory service I should be a deceiver of my fellow-men. I and my friends around me are not afraid to swim against the current. We are quite ready to take an unpopular stand for the sake of a principled stand for the sake of a principle. We did this in 1909, in 1910 and in 1911.

Mr. SEVIGNY: Does my hon. friend say that the course which he is now taking is unpopular in the province of Quebec?

Mr. LEMIEUX: I do not say that, but I do say that public opinion in the province of Quebec is a respectable and above all a constitutional opinion. Since my hon. friend interrupts me, let me quote for his benefit what the Manchester Guardian said on this very question a few days ago. My hon. friend knows that the Manchester Guardian is the leading organ of radical opinion in Great Britain; in my humble judgment, it is the most honest and most respectable of all the papers published in Great Britain. I can safely say this, as Lord Northcliffe has not yet reached Ottawa. The Manchester Guardian said:

A year ago conscription for Canada was agreed to be impossible. Various things have combined to remove some of the difficulties, but grave obstacles still stand in the way. When the National Service scheme was first launched, its director said conscription might lead to civil war.

A well informed paper!

That so soon afterwards it should be in fact proposed shows the striking effect on Canadian opinion of the entry of the United States into the war. Two courses are open to Sir Robert Borden—either to utilize the Militia Act to secure a large extension of the home forces—thus releasing other men for the front—or to put the issue of compulsion direct before the people. The latter method was adopted by Australia and though that Government failed of their aim, it is so clearly the more honest procedure that the Canadian Government is not likely to incur the odium of foregoing it.

May I not say to the Minister of Inland Revenue that after all the province of Quebec is not in such bad company when in the old country it finds such a supporter as the editor of the Manchester Guardian? It is true, Sir, that the larger proportion of the people of Quebec province are against compulsory service. But how does that happen? The leader of the Opposition gave a little bit

of history yesterday; let me also refresh the memory of my hon. friend. He evidently forgets how that public opinion was nurtured in his native province, how it was hammered at meeting after meeting, through resolution after resolution, on platform after platform, by the very men who surround him, and of whom he was one of the leaders. My hon. friend has had the courage to confess that he was wrong. He was wrong, he says, because he was young—he was only thirty. I accept my hon. friend's admission that he was young at thirty and that he was wrong because he was so young! But what can we expect from him when, at fifty, he will have the illusion of being young, and will still be making mistakes? In 1911 we had to swim against the current. My hon. friend will admit that; we stood like men by our guns.

Mr. SEVIGNY: You did it in a very clever way.

Mr. LEMIEUX: My hon. friend's cleverness is, of course, greater than mine, but I shall always prefer my own which, at least, is honest and logical, as compared with his. My hon. friend in 1911 paraded from one end of the province to the other, holding in his youthful hands the banner of the Nationalist party, on which were emblazoned the principles of that party. What were those principles? I call the attention especially of the member for St. Antoine (Sir Herbert Ames) to the principles which he, above all others propagated in the Eastern Townships, in the counties of Northern Ontario and of Western Canada wherever there was a sprinkling of French Canadian electors to be seduced. These were the principles: First, no participation by Canada in Imperial wars outside her territory. Second, to spurn any attempt at recruiting for British troops. Third, to oppose the establishment in Canada of a naval school with the help and for the benefit of Imperial authorities. Fourth, control over our militia and our military colleges in time of war as in time of peace and for the defence of our territory exclusively. Fifth, refusal to grant leave of absence to any military officer in order that he may take part in any Imperial wars.

Mr. MURPHY: What was that second one, again?

Mr. LEMIEUX: To spurn—the word is so euphonic and does convey so much—any attempt at recruiting for British troops. My hon. friend propounded that principle in the province of Quebec, and the member for St.

Antoine did more, he financed the Nationalist party to propagate it at that time. In 1911 I pledged my word of honour—and the right hon. leader of the Opposition and other Liberal members also pledged their word of honour—when bitterly and eloquently assailed by the hon. gentleman and his friends, that under our naval policy there would be no conscription. About half the province of Quebec followed the lead of the Nationalist orators, and half—perhaps a little more—followed the lead of my right hon. friend. Events have proved since that the right hon. gentleman was right, and that the other gentlemen were neither right nor honest.

Sir, I repeat that, if to-day I were to support a measure of conscription, I would be a deceiver. I would rather relinquish my privileges as a member of this House, in which I have sat for now nearly 21 years, than be a deceiver of my electors, of my province and of the people of Canada.

I am opposed to this military Service Bill because, before conscription of man-power, the least the Government should do is to enact a Bill for conscription of the accumulated wealth in this country. There are shocking inequalities in the various taxation measures which have been voted by this House since the beginning of the war, and can we ignore the circumstance that the cost of living in this country is abnormally high to-day? The June report of the Department of Labour reveals the fact that the cost of living is still increasing. In retail prices of food, the cost of the weekly food budget, including some 30 staple foods, of the average workingman's family, rose from \$10.37 to \$11.82 during the month of May. Of this increase of \$1.45, one-third occurred in meats, one-third in bread and flour, and one-quarter in potatoes. Rice, beans and sugar also showed some increases; cheese was a little higher, but milk and butter declined, although only slightly, whereas the increase is usually substantial. And no relief is in sight for the consumer. The present Bill is all risks for the poor and all immunities for the wealthy. It is said, and rightly so, that equality of protection carries with it equality of obligation of service. This is a fair principle. When the other day this measure was introduced by the Prime Minister, he said that he realized that the future of civilization and humanity was at stake and he added:

All citizens are entitled to equal protection of the laws, and upon them is imposed an equal obligation. There can be no national unity unless this principle is accepted. I cannot bring myself to believe that any class or

community will expect to assert for itself the right or the power to defy the law, and to set up for itself different standards from those which are applied to the people as a whole.

This is a fine doctrine, preached by the Prime Minister, but does it apply merely to man-power? Cannot accumulated wealth be called into the service of the nation? There is as much obligation on the well-to-do people of this country to give service to the Crown and to the country in this emergency as there is obligation of service on the part of the man on the street. By this Conscription Bill you confiscate the liberty of the subject, and yet by ignoring the accumulated wealth of the country, you release that wealth from the obligation it owes to the country in which it has been made. Not only does the Government, in this drastic measure, ignore in a friendly way the accumulated wealth of the country, but the Government, in the course of this session and of the preceding session, have practically created in Canada, on account of the war, what I will call a bonded aristocracy. The Minister of Finance, an able man—I agree with my hon. friend from South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie)—yes, he is an able man to tax the poor, but a very unable man to tax the wealthy to their due proportion. He was forced to borrow money from the United States, the country with which a few years ago he would not truck nor trade. Finding, however, the financial market of the United States a little stiff, he came back to Canada and borrowed millions and hundreds of millions of dollars from the Canadian people. I am told that the great financial institutions, the large investors, the millionaires, have exchanged their securities for Canadian bonds, and for what reason? Because under the legislation passed by this Government, through this eminently able Minister of Finance, those bonds are exempt from all taxation, and thus of the remaining wealth little will be left to develop the resources of this country after the war. The Minister of Finance will have to come yet to an income tax, but the clippings will be very few on the coupons of the wealthy, as they will have been exchanged for war bonds of the Canadian Government. Again, I say that before enacting a law for the conscription of man-power, it is the duty of the Government to first enact a law for the conscription of accumulated wealth in Canada. If Brown, or Jones, or Smith must be conscripted as regards his blood, the least we can expect is that the plutocrats and the war profiteers should be conscripted as regards their

accumulated wealth. I may be told by my hon. friends opposite that this is the language of a demagogue. I am no demagogue. My hon. friend (Sir Herbert Ames) nods his head as much as to say that I am a demagogue. I will give him the opinion of a Toronto paper, edited by a good Tory editor, a financial authority from Toronto, but with a conscience. This is from the Financial Post:—

Not only are the taxless Government bonds likely to create a new aristocracy who will take their revenue from the nation and pay no share of it themselves, but, if other bonds and stocks are subject to heavy taxation, there will be direct discouragement to the upbuilding of that productive capacity so necessary to create the required national wealth. To-day there is a movement on the part of the millionaires—

The Ames, Holden and others.

—to take their funds out of investments where they have a productive capacity and put them into Government issues where, for their lifetime they will be free from taxation.

Their action may be due to patriotism; but if so they should be willing to subscribe and still pay their share of future tax burdens which it may be necessary for the country to impose. To prevent the sinking away in this manner of immense blocks of wealth upon which the country may have no future call, provision should be made now that tax immunity apply only to holders of reasonable amounts of Government bonds, say up to \$100,000.

The editor of the Financial Post is very modest; he is going to give them some leeway to the extent of \$100,000. I thought there were no demagogues in the good sanetimonious Tory jingo party in Toronto. Sir, if it is the act of a demagogue to preach equality of taxation I confess I am in good company, with Adam Smith and Mr. Thiers, the greatest statesman, indeed the liberator of France after the Franco-Prussian war. Has the Government done anything to equalize taxation in this country since the war began. They started by adding 7 per cent to the general tariff, and by cutting away the British preference; that is what this party of super-loyalists did. Since then they have taxed a little here and a little there, but have never come whole-heartedly to the rescue of the poor consumer. I repeat that the issue to-day is not conscription of blood, and I call the attention of my hon. friend from St Antoine particularly to this—

Sir HERBERT AMES: Do you want to know what I think? I think that instead of wasting our time here we should send men to the front. Now call on me again.

Mr. LEMIEUX: My hon. friend is very anxious to send other men to the front. Will he finance them as he financed the Nationalist party in 1911? Notwithstanding

the assumed superiority of my hon. friend, I repeat that the issue before Canada to-day is not conscription of blood but the control of foodstuffs. Let us see what other countries, have done as compared with Canada. It was only this afternoon that we heard of the appointment of a food controller in this country. The United States on the very first day of entering the war appointed Mr. Hoover as food controller. Great Britain in the very first year of the war established one fixed maximum price for foodstuffs, decided what unnecessary imports should be debarréed to make room for essentials, established the eight hour day, a minimum wage, and equal pay for women workers; took control of all railroads on the basis of 1914 profits, also mines and other industries, prohibited landlords from raising rents, increased wages in proportion to the increased cost of living, confiscated exorbitant profits, established meatless days, forbade the making of fancy bread and pastry, jailed war profiteers and grafters. France established a moratorium for rents and mortgages, fixed a maximum price for foodstuffs, established a minimum wage and an eight-hour work day, bought flour abroad and sold it to bakers at cost price, encouraged production by all possible means, took control of all industries, mines and railways, requisitioned all necessary war material and supplies, paying for them in Government bonds, established meatless days, forbade the making of fancy bread and pastry, confiscated exorbitant profits, jailed war profiteers and grafters.

The United States are following the same course. It was only to-day, think of it, after three years of war, that Canada appointed a food controller and only yesterday a fuel controller. In Canada, the great wheat-producing country of the world, we are paying 12 cents a pound for bread; France is paying 4 cents and England 5 cents a pound for bread made of wheat imported from Canada. That is where Canada stands after three years of war as compared with France, Great Britain and the United States. Yes, the duty, the pressing duty of the hour, is not the conscription of blood but the relief of the consumer, the control of food and the fixing of maximum prices.

Mr. NICKLE: Do I understand the hon. gentleman to say that he considers that regulation of food prices should take priority over sending reinforcements to the thin lines of the Canadians in Flanders?

Mr. LEMIEUX: I put the case clearly—something which the Minister of Labour never does. I repeat to my hon. friend that the pressing duty of Canada at the present day and hour is not the conscription of blood for election purposes, but the control of food.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Shame.

Mr. LEMIEUX: So far from being ashamed I repeat that at the present moment, when 400,000 men have been recruited under the voluntary system, when farms are being depleted—the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario stated only the other day that there was not one man available to every 100 acres of arable land in that province—when the cost of living is going sky high, the duty of Canada is not to conscript blood but to conscript wealth and to protect the consumer of this country.

Sir HERBERT AMES: What do you propose to do for the men at the front?

Mr. LEMIEUX: To keep the men on the farms of Canada so as to produce wheat and send them food, for one thing, and to equip them with munitions. That is what the Government themselves proposed to do not so very long ago. Only a few days before Judge Galt's report was published, the following notice was published in the newspapers of the United States.

Farm Hands Wanted,
Western Canada Farmers Require 50,000
American Farm Labourers at Once.

Urgent demand sent out for farm help by the Government of Canada. Good wages Steady employment. Low railway fares Pleasant surroundings. Comfortable homes. No compulsory military service. Farm hands from the United States are absolutely guaranteed against conscription. This advertisement is to secure farm help to replace Canadian farmers who have enlisted for the war.

A splendid opportunity for the young man to investigate Western Canada's agricultural offerings, and to do so at no expense. Only those accustomed to farming need apply.

For particulars as to railway rates and districts where labour is required or other information regarding Western Canada, apply to C. J. Broughton, 112 W. Adams St., Chicago, Ill., Authorized Canadian Government Agent. Raise High Priced Wheat on Fertile Canadian Soil.

Canada extends to you a hearty invitation to settle on her FREE Homestead lands of 160 acres each or secure some of the low priced lands in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. This year wheat is higher but Canadian land just as cheap, so the opportunity is more attractive than ever. Canada wants you to help feed the world by tilling some of her fertile soil land similar to that which during many years has averaged 20 to 45 bushels of wheat to the acre. Think of the money you can make with wheat around \$2 a bushel and land so easy to get. Wonderful

yields also of oats, barley and flax. Mixed farming in Western Canada is as profitable an industry as grain growing.

The Government this year is asking farmers to put increased acreage into grain. Military service is not compulsory in Canada, but there is a great demand for farm labour to replace the many young men who have volunteered for service. The climate is healthful and agreeable, railway facilities excellent, good schools and churches convenient. Write for literature as to reduced railway rates to Supt. of Immigration, Ottawa, Can., or to O. C. Rutledge, 301 East Genesee St., Syracuse, N.Y.; F. A. Harrison, 210 North Third St., Harrisburg, Pa.

You have my answer in that advertisement, published under the authority of the Government.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I hear the Tories jeering and laughing. They are jeering and laughing not at me but at the Minister of the Interior, at their own Government and they may well afford to jeer and to laugh for have you ever heard of anything so ridiculous, so nonsensical? A few weeks ago that advertisement came out in hundreds of newspapers in the United States calling for 50,000 farm hands to replace the young Canadians who have gone to the front.

Mr. MURPHY: And they will not be conscripted?

Mr. LEMIEUX: The farm hands from the United States are assured that they will not be conscripted. And yet, a few days afterwards—I do not say for what motive but hon. gentlemen know it full well—they suddenly bring in a conscription measure. My hon. friend from South Wellington, speaking before dinner, thought that he detected something like a mobilization of the economic forces of the country in some of the sections of the Bill. But no, Mr. Speaker, it is an exclusive conscription of the blood of Canada whilst on the other hand 50,000 young men from the United States are invited to take the place of our kith and kin and against whom there will be no conscription measure applied.

Sir HERBERT AMES: May I—

Mr. LEMIEUX: Wait a moment. My hon. friend, I hope, will speak. Surely, he will not sleep as he did during the naval debate. My hon. friend, I know, takes exception to my language. Of course, I have no right to express my views; the Milnerized type of politician will not allow another man to honestly express his convictions. But I intend to boldly speak the language which I believe to be right.

Sir HERBERT AMES: May I ask the hon. gentleman a question?

Mr. LEMIEUX: My opposition of this Bill and the opposition of the province which my hon. friend (Sir Herbert Ames) represents just as much as I do—

Sir HERBERT AMES: I do.

Mr. LEMIEUX:—is based on old and respectable traditions. Quebec belongs to the minority and all minorities in the world are jealous of their constitutional rights. It is said that Quebec is always beside the mark, is not with the rest of Confederation on this or that issue. But let me, Sir, take an example from the United Kingdom. The Isle of Man, with a handful of population, has kept for centuries its constitutional rights. It has a Parliament and laws of its own. Wales has kept its schools, its language, and Mr. Lloyd George, the great rebel of the Boer War, has exacted that the Welsh Fusiliers shall be sent to the front wearing a distinct national uniform. The Scotch have maintained their customs and their kilts, their language and their schools. So, for one who reads and observes, it becomes a truism that after all diversity is one of the elements of beauty. We in Quebec have our own laws, our own language, our own customs and we have for the constitution the jealous regard which is due to that enactment. The view taken by the sober people of Quebec, is that, according to the constitution of Canada, there is to be no conscription of blood for service abroad. For the defence of the territory, certainly, and that they have proven again and again from the time of the cession until now. The province of Quebec, while asking for a referendum on this question, is willing to loyally abide by the result.

The province of Quebec is not alone, Sir, in opposition to this drastic measure. Let us be frank and sincere with ourselves. The first rumblings against conscription came from the city of Winnipeg represented by the hon. Minister of Public Works (Mr. Rogers), then from Calgary, then from Vancouver, from Hamilton, from Toronto and from Ottawa. This afternoon my hon. friend from South Wellington cited the very severe language used by the Federation of Labour of British Columbia. I do not approve of that severity. The Federation of Labour of British Columbia ask that due consideration be given to their opposition and conclude by stating that

It is the intention to use all the forces at our command to resist conscription in any form.

The French Canadian race, to which I have the honour to belong, is a law-abiding

race, and although it is practically a unit against conscription, yet it pleads for a referendum and it is ready to abide by the verdict of the majority, whilst the people of British Columbia, of English blood, mark my words, are ready to use all the force at their command to resist conscription in any form.

Let us now take the attitude of organized labour people in Canada:

We are positively of the opinion that this situation has not arrived.

That is to say a situation calling for conscription.

The necessities for the effective conduct of the war are: Food, munitions, shipping and military man power, and Canada is geographically well situated to supply the first named three essentials and can do much to assist in winning the war by developing her production of these essentials to her fullest extent.

We are strongly of the opinion that this is the best service that Canada, with her small population, can render. We declare ourselves as most emphatically opposed to the proposed conscription measure, and we urge the workers of Canada to oppose by every means in their power enactment of such legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the French-Canadians in their meetings have protested against this measure of conscription being imposed by a rump, by a moribund, by an unrepresentative Parliament; but never in any of the meetings held by them protesting against this measure, has it been threatened that when the people shall have pronounced by a majority in favour of conscription, they favour conscription, they will resist it. On the contrary, the French-Canadians pledge their respect to the law.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I stated a moment ago that at the present moment the pressing question was not the conscription of blood but the mobilization of labour, the taxation of wealth, and the controlling of all food. Am I stating something extraordinary? Has it not been stated over and over again within my hearing by the hon. Minister of Finance? From one end of the country to the other his slogan has been: "Production, production, and production." And there are some goodly people from the wild and woolly West who claim that there was a slip of the tongue when he first uttered that slogan, that he did not say production, production, production, but that he said protection, protection, protection.

I am surprised to find in some papers published in Ontario, and generally in English-speaking Canada, reflections upon the loyalty of the French-Canadians because

of this question of enlistment. It is said that up to the 30th of April there were in round figures 125,000 Anglo-Canadian born, 155,000 British born and only 14,100 French-Canadians who had enlisted. Mr. Speaker, I said last year at the Canadian Club here in Ottawa, basing my statements on the figures which had been given me by my friend the present Minister of Militia (Sir Edward Kemp), that there were 17,000 French-Canadians enlisted in the various contingents that had gone overseas or were about to go. I see nothing in the incomplete information tabled in this House that would tend to alter my calculations in this regard. I say that since the beginning of the war several members have tried in vain to obtain from the Department of Militia and Defence a complete and detailed statement of the number of French-Canadians who had enlisted, not only in the province of Quebec, but in the various units of the different provinces. I claim that we have enlisted 20,000 to 22,000 French-Canadians who are at the front or about to leave for the front. That is the information I have. I have some relatives at the front; I have lost one at the front; at Ypres I lost a nephew last year—and I happen to possess some information. Our regiments have been merged into larger units from other provinces; I will ask my hon. friends from the northern sections of Ontario, from western Canada which is represented by my friend from Edmonton (Mr. Oliver), and from the Maritime Provinces if it is not a fact that in every unit coming from these sections there is a large, yes, a generous sprinkling of French-Canadians within the ranks. So far we have been unable to get from the Minister of Militia and Defence the exact figures, but I assert, and I think my hon. friend the Minister of Inland Revenue (Mr. Sevigny) will not deny it, that there are at the front, or about to leave for the front, at least 20,000 to 22,000 French-Canadians.

Mr. MORPHY: Does the hon. gentleman not think that those brave French-Canadians who have gone to the front should have the support of their compatriots in overwhelming numbers without waiting for any talk about referendums?

Mr. LEMIEUX: My hon. friend speaks the language of the Orange Sentinel. There is a sting in his question. I feel there is a sting in his question. Who has ever told my hon. friend that the French-Canadians were recreant to support the boys at the front?

Mr. MORPHY: It does not look like it.

Mr. LEMIEUX: If the hon. gentleman thinks that there can be a wave of enthusiasm in the province of Quebec in favour of recruiting with the methods that have been employed, he is sadly mistaken. I will explain to my hon. friend at once. A few days ago my hon. friend from Dufferin (Mr. Best) rose from his seat in this House and read a statement which had been published by the Orange Sentinel to the effect that the soldiers passing through the province of Quebec had been insulted, and that some of them had even been stoned at Rivière du Loup. Immediately the right hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), understanding the sinister meaning of that dastardly campaign, challenged the accusation and asked for an investigation, and this was immediately granted by my hon. friend the Minister of Militia and Defence (Sir Edward Kemp). That story has circulated from one end of the country to the other; it has gone from one paper to the other; it has inflamed passions from one end of the country to the other, and my province has been branded by those papers as a province of shirkers, of slackers, of cowards! Is that not a fact?

Mr. MORPHY: Will the hon. gentleman permit another question?

Mr. LEMIEUX: And now an investigation has taken place presided over by a commission appointed by this Government. I have the report before me; it was laid on the table of the House the other day. It is a public document, and I challenge—no I will not challenge my hon. friend because he is fair—but I will challenge the editor of the Orange Sentinel to publish as prominently as he published the charge, the findings of the report. Mr. Speaker, is it possible to create enthusiasm when a whole province is vilified by proceedings of that character? Sir, we must trust each other, we must respect each other, respect not only our qualities—every race has its own qualities—but respect even our prejudices and our failings. That is how I have in my public career endeavoured to understand the British character. I have found failings, I have found shortcomings with that race, but on the whole I admire and respect the race. I believe as Clémenteau so well said last year when the British parliamentary delegation went from London to Paris, I believe that we ought to know each other, that we ought to understand each other, and thus by knowing and by

understanding each other we would come to love each other.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Clemenceau added with some humour: "I expected you Englishmen from across the channel, yes, I awaited you, since endless centuries, since the days of Hastings and since the Black Prince." To my fellowmen of British extraction, may I not say: "We are awaiting you since the Plains of Abraham and since the battle of St. Foye. Why do you not trust us, as your fellowmen, as your partners, just as the British overseas have trusted the Boers, as they have trusted the Scotch and the Welsh, as they are about to trust the Irish, after so many years 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 hint-

ed that my hon. friend the Minister of Inland Revenue (Mr. Seigny) 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 into several drafts and distributed amongst many regiments. The same fate happened to Colonel Piuze who raised a regiment in the district represented by my hon. friend the member for Kamouraska (Mr. Lapointe). I know there are reasons for that and I do not blame the Government. But there is some pride in our people; they would have been glad to read of the Asselin regiment at the front as the Asselin regiment, just as they were proud to hear of the 22nd battalion at the front as the 22nd battalion. True it is that there may have been military reasons for disbanding the battalion, but it is to say the least most unfortunate that the Government did not see its way clear to do for the Asselin battalion what was done for the Irish Brigade that was raised in Montreal. Although that brigade had not the required numbers, its identity was maintained and it was given a tour in Ireland to arouse the people in that country as well as the Irish people in Canada to the necessities of the hour. That was wise policy on the part of the Government.

Mr. MURPHY: What has been done since with that brigade?

Mr. LEMIEUX: I do not know.

Mr. MURPHY: Neither do I.

Mr. H. B. MORPHY: Does the hon. member not know that the matter of which he complains was one of serious complaint also throughout western Ontario, because of units from the various counties there being broken up by reason of militia regulations and orders of the British War Office?

Mr. LEMIEUX: I quite understand that; I know it is a fact. But there is a distinction.

Mr. MORPHY: None whatever.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Yes, there is, and my hon. friend is too fair not to admit it. The battalions from Ontario which were scattered amongst other units in Great Britain were composed of men speaking the English language. They could be understood by the Welsh and Irish Fusiliers, the Durhams and the Yorks, that were so jauntily mentioned this afternoon by the ex-Minister of Militia. But the men recruited by Major Asselin were young French-Canadians, mostly speaking only the French language. The battalion was sent to England, and there dislocated, the men being spread amongst various units where they did not understand the language; where they did not speak the language of their commanding officers. I will give my hon. friend another instance—and I hope that the member for Kingston will listen to me for a moment. This will give the House an idea of how something unfair may sometimes be done unwittingly. Last winter I was travelling from Quebec to Montreal. It was a bitterly cold evening. I was in a pullman car—although I am not a minister of the Crown. I sometimes travel in a pullman car. I noticed a young man, rather short and stocky, dressed in kilties. As I looked at him I said to myself: surely this is not a Highlander—yet he has the kilties, and a Scotch cap. As I looked at him he also looked at me, and then addressing him in French. I said: "Are you not a Scotchman?" He said: "No, I am Albert Martel, from Quebec." I said: "Under what guise are you travelling?" "Oh, well," he said, "I was in Ottawa; our regiment, which was being recruited by Colonel de Salaberry, was disbanded for certain reasons, and I offered my services to the Kingston Queen's Highlanders, which left a few weeks ago." What was the strength of that unit?

Mr. NICKLE: About 700.

Mr. LEMIEUX: As Martel was passing from the pullman to the first class coaches, I said: "Where are you going?" He answered: "To see my men." "Your men?" "Yes," he said, "I am recruiting in Quebec for the Queen's Highlanders; I will introduce you to 17 Highlanders from Sir Wilfrid Laurier's constituency. I am going to Ottawa—it is not the shortest way to Kingston—but I am going there with my men because Ottawa is dry and I want to spend a Sunday in that place." They came to Ottawa, and I saw alighting from the train the 18 kilties, fine, bright fellows, not one of them

speaking a word of English. That is the first chapter of my little story.

A few days ago the bell was rung at my residence. A gentleman in kilts was ushered in. "Bonjour, monsieur; I am Lieutenant Martel." "Oh," I said, "the gentleman I met this winter. Are you still recruiting for the Queen's Highlanders?" "I have recruited," he answered, "101 men; they left a few weeks ago with a battalion made up of about 700 Scotchmen." "Did you not follow your men?" I asked. He answered: "No." Now there comes a blank in my story, but if the member for Kingston will come to me after the sitting I will tell him why Lieutenant Martel did not follow his men, though he promised the fathers and mothers of those French-Canadian Highlanders that he would follow them to England. Bear in mind that they were confided to his care, because he spoke their language, because he understood them, because they and their families had confidence in him. At the last moment, for reasons which I will give my hon. friend—and which I gave to the Minister of Justice the other day, who told me since that I had a very good case indeed—Martel did not go. The men who left with the Highlanders will never be accounted as French-Canadians from Quebec. Lieutenant Martel, who is in Ottawa, can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that 35 of his recruits do not speak a word of English; yet they are distributed among an English-speaking unit. I have faith in the Scotch. I love the Irish and I love the English, but I confess that I have a failing for the Scotch. These French-Canadians are in good company; I do not fear for them. But, Sir, do you not think that, in all fairness and in all justice, Lieutenant Albert Martel, who promised the fathers and mothers and relatives of these men that he would follow them to the last ditch, should have accompanied them when they marched off? I will not say why he did not accompany them.

Mr. ERNEST LAPOINTE: Why do you not?

Mr. LEMIEUX: I will not; I will tell the member for Kingston. The reason is stated in the letters that I sent the other day to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. MORPHY: Does the hon. gentleman agree with the reasons given?

Mr. LEMIEUX: No.

Mr. MORPHY: You dissent from the reasons?

Mr. LEMIEUX: Certainly, and I will appeal to the fairness of my hon. friend when I tell him the facts.

Mr. NICKLE: Unless my hon. friend thinks that on grounds of public policy those reasons should be kept secret, it might be just as well to remove this air of mystery. Perhaps I may be able to give him some information and enlightenment.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I will tell my hon. friend. I will now unbosom myself to the House in all sincerity and in all honesty of purpose. I do not see in the Chamber any hon. gentleman representing a Toronto constituency.

If one of them were here, I would say this: What would he think if I, being Minister of Militia, or better still, if the Minister of Inland Revenue being promoted to be Minister of Militia, were to appoint as chief recruiting agent for the city of Toronto the Superior of the Jesuit Order? With all due respect for the Jesuits and for my hon. friends from Toronto, would the Superior of the Jesuit Order have any success in the cause of recruiting in Toronto or say in Guelph, Kingston or St. Thomas? The answer is only too obvious. What has happened in Montreal? As I stated the other day to Maréchal Joffre, the district and suburbs of Montreal are, outside of Paris and possibly Lyons in France, the largest French district in the world. The chief recruiting agent in Montreal, appointed by my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Militia and Defence (Sir Sam Hughes), is a personal friend of mine, but he is the pastor of St. James Methodist church. He is a Liberal in principle; he is a home-ruler also. I have spoken with him in his own church, and I was taunted by some of my Catholic friends that I had turned Methodist, but as I was preaching for recruiting purposes, I was easily absolved. But, in all fairness and common sense, is it reasonable to expect that a Superior of the Jesuits would meet with any success in recruiting in the city of Toronto, and is it to be expected that one of the ministers of the Methodist church would have any success in recruiting in a French and Catholic district like the district of Montreal? To put the question is to suggest the answer at once. That appointment was made, not for the purpose, I grant, of putting obstacles in the way of recruiting, but it was made all the same and there it is. I do not wish to impute motives to the ex-Minister of Militia.

Mr. ROGERS: Does he not get any English recruits in Montreal?

Mr. LEMIEUX: Yes, he has some English recruits, but does my hon. friend think it was conducive to bringing in French recruits which he and his friends say they expected from the province of Quebec, to so appoint a Methodist minister in that large French and Catholic district? It is useless to play upon words. My hon. friend must be credited with common sense. He might have appointed a Jesuit as recruiting officer in St. Boniface, but he would not have appointed a Jesuit in the city of Winnipeg. The matter is too self evident; it seems, Sir, as if every obstacle were put in the way of recruiting in the province of Quebec.

Mr. BOYCE: Does my hon. friend not know of the opposite case where, for instance, Ontario regiments have had their officers taken away from them and have been put under French-Canadian officers? If he does not, I can give him some instances.

Mr. LEMIEUX: That is not the point at all. I am speaking of the recruiting work, of the appeals made to the laymen to join the ranks. Those appeals were made in the English language; the recruits were merged into English-speaking units. The moment a French-Canadian officer speaks the English language, if he retains his rank and receives no favour, I see no objection to him taking command of an English-speaking regiment. In Quebec and Montreal, there have been and there are cases where the chief officers are English-speaking, and no objection is taken, far from it.

Mr. BOYCE: French-speaking officers have been appointed in preference to English-speaking officers, and that has been done without objection in instances which I can quote to my hon. friend.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Certainly. There is no objection when there is no preferment, when it is only a matter of course. I do not object to an English officer having precedence over a French-Canadian officer if his rank will command that precedence. What I am pointing out is this: In the district of Montreal, the chief recruiting officer, a personal friend of mine, a charming, enlightened and great speaker for those who understand him, was a pastor of the Methodist church. The Minister of Militia and Defence might have done better if he had appointed a gentleman whose language and whose ambient air would have been more congenial to the men to whom he was appealing.

I have only a few words to add and it is on this question of a referendum. I will then conclude. This is of all measures the most vital that has ever been introduced into this Parliament; it is a departure from all our traditions; it means the alienation of human liberty; Parliament, *functus officio*, unrepresentative, moribund, with more than 20 seats vacant, with a West under-represented, cannot and dare not attempt to legislate for the people of Canada under such circumstances. There is only one solution and that is a referendum. The referendum, it is true, is more familiar to Latin than to British countries, but it has been accepted in Switzerland for many years; it has been accepted in some of the states of the neighbouring Republic with a measure of success; it has been accepted by some of the western provinces; it is the law of the land in Australia and New Zealand, and we ourselves, sometimes refer matters of municipal government to the people before enacting them. The other day we received as our honored guest one of the foremost statesmen of the world. I refer to the right hon. Arthur James Balfour, who represents, I believe, in the Empire and in the world, the most enlightened conservatism that I know of. His noble language, the other day, establishes that fact. He, a Conservative, asserted his belief, his faith in democracy and in democratic rule. On the question of tariff reform which, a few years ago, agitated public opinion in Great Britain, the position taken by Mr. Balfour, which is well worth the consideration of my hon. friend from South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) was as follows:

The advantage of the referendum is this—that the issue is quite clear and quite precise. . . . The referendum has an enormous advantage. It does not involve a general election; it does not involve all the personal bitterness inevitably involved in the contest between the two competitors for a seat; it does not carry with it a change of government; and it does get a clear verdict from the people. . . . Nevertheless, I frankly say that without question tariff reform is a great change. I admit that this election, or any election perhaps—certainly this election—cannot be described as taken upon tariff reform simply; but I have not the least objection to submit the principles of tariff reform to referendum.

If Mr. Balfour was willing to break away from the traditions of England and take a referendum on such a purely theoretical question as tariff reform, surely we in Canada, can afford to take a referendum on the conscription of the yeomanry of this country. But Mr. Balfour is not alone of that view. Professor Dicey,

one of the highest authorities on constitutional government, has declared himself favourably on the principle of referendum in British affairs. Lecky, who is also one of the foremost authorities on the British Government and constitution, in "Democracy and Liberty" volume I, p. 287 and following presents a most elaborate argument in favour of the referendum. I have prepared a short synopsis of it. The referendum would prevent the placing of the essential elements of the constitution at the mercy of a simple majority in a single Parliament—a majority perhaps composed of heterogeneous and discordant factions combined for a party purpose without the direct and deliberate assent of the people. It seems as those words of his were uttered on this very question and under the circumstances of to-day. The referendum would have the immense advantage of disentangling issues, separating the one great question from the many minor questions with which it may be mixed. Confused or blended issues are among the gravest political dangers of our time. Revolutionary and predatory measures are less likely to be carried on their merits because their purposes have obtained a majority by joining with them a sufficient number of other measures appealing to different sections of the electorate. It would be a great gain to English politics if a capital question could be decided by the electorate on its own merits, on a direct and simple issue. If the nation is moving towards revolution it should at least do so with its eyes open and with a clear and deliberate intention. Such a vote would prove to be the most powerful bulwark against violent and dishonest change. It would bring into action the opinion of the great silent masses of the community and reduce to their true proportion many movements to which party combinations or noisy agitations had given a wholly fictitious prominence. It would lift above the dominion of party a capital measure, and thus greatly increase the probability of its representing the genuine wishes of the electorate. It would enable the nation to re-

ject a measure which it dislikes without destroying a ministry of which it approves. Democracy has been crowned king. The voice of the multitude is the ultimate court of appeal. It would be an appeal from a party majority, probably made up of discordant groups, to the genuine opinion of the country.

Besides Professor Dicey, Mr. Lecky and Mr. Balfour, we have another opinion, that of the right hon. leader of the Government on this question. The late Mr. Monk once moved for a referendum on the naval question, to which a sub-amendment was moved by the present Prime Minister; this being lost, the right hon. the Prime Minister was given the privilege of voting for Mr. Monk's amendment for a referendum. Yes, he and all his followers, with the exception of the Minister of Trade and Commerce, voted for the referendum.

If it was necessary to submit the naval policy of the Laurier Government to a referendum—a policy which did not involve conscription, a policy which had been dealt with by the Imperial Conferences of 1902 and 1909—surely, Sir, it is much more logical and much more urgent to submit to a referendum such a momentous question as that of the conscription of the blood of the young men of this country, enacted by a moribund and unrepresentative Parliament.

I have trespassed too long on the time of the House, but I will say this in conclusion, and I say it with all the firmness and all the good faith that I can attach to solemn statement: knowing the people of my province to be above all things a law-abiding people, if a referendum is taken, whether it goes for or against conscription, the French-Canadians, who are the descendants of those who defended Canada in 1775, in 1812, will abide by the verdict of the majority. If conscription comes they will not have to be bullied or dragooned into the ranks, but will obey the law and fight the battles of Canada as valiantly as their fellow-men of a different race and a different creed.