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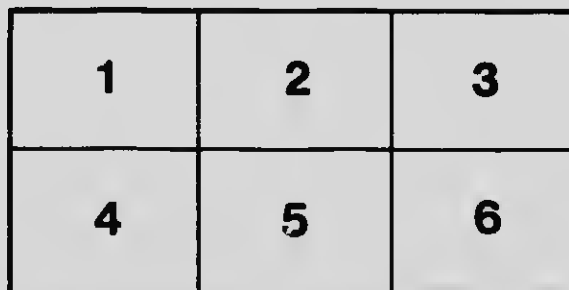
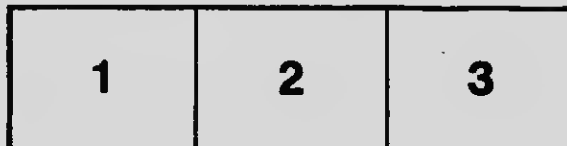
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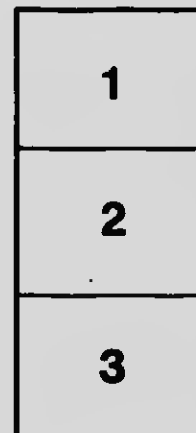
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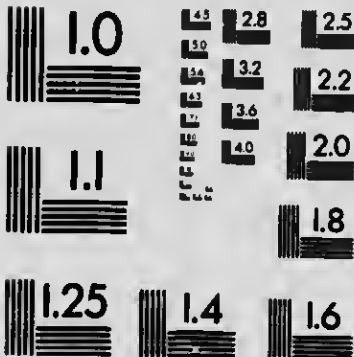
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# ENGLAND, CANADA AND THE GREAT WAR

BY

**Lieutenant-Colonel L.-G. DESJARDINS**

Ex-member of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Québec  
and of the House of Commons of Canada.

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**LETTER by the AUTHOR and  
PREFACE to the  
ENGLISH EDITION.**

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**QUEBEC**  
**AUGUST 30—1917.**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
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MAY 15 1964

PROFESSOR R. M. HARRIS  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
5800 S. UNIVERSITY AVENUE  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

DR. R. M. HARRIS  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
5800 S. UNIVERSITY AVENUE  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

Yours truly,  
R. M. HARRIS

Québec, August 30 1917.

Dear Sir,

I have just issued the second French Edition of my book : "*England, Canada and the Great War*".

Ever since the issue of the first edition, I have been repeatedly asked by several leading newspapers, by numerous letters, and personal demands, to publish an English Edition of this work. A delegate from Quebec to the recent National Unity -or Win-the-War- Convention in Montreal, I had the pleasure of meeting personally a great many of the delegates from Toronto and all over the Dominion. Many of them spoke to me about my book and insisted upon my publishing an English Edition.

Having written this book for the express purpose of refuting Mr. Bourassa's false and dangerous theories, I realize that those who are insisting for an English Edition to be widely circulated in all the Provinces, appreciate the good it could operate. But I cannot afford to run the risk of any financial loss in the matter.

Anxious to meet the views of my solicitors, I have come to the conclusion to submit to the consideration of the leading English speaking citizens of Quebec, Montreal and Ottawa, who so generously favored the circulation of the first edition of my french volume, the question of the issue of an English Edition and to ask their patriotic support of the projected enterprise solely for the public good.

I would undertake to translate the book and have the English Edition issued by the end of November, considering it important to circulate the volumes as soon as possible in order to promote good will and harmony between the two principal races of this great Dominion.

I would be thankful to you if you could spare a few minutes to read the enclosed Preface of the suggested English Edition. I would indeed be very much pleased to know that the views and sentiments therein expressed meet with your hearty and cordial approval.

Please believe me,

Yours very truly,

*L. G. Desjardins*

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Please address answer at :—

Apartment House,  
No. 144 Grande Allée,  
Québec.  
P. Q.



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## England, Canada and the Great War

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### PREFACE

Canada, our dear country, as one of the most important component parts of the British Empire is going through the crucial ordeal of the great crisis which will determine her destinies jointly with those of the whole world. Instantly put under the strain, three years ago, by the outrageous challenge of Germany to human civilization with the criminal purpose of universal domination, she was fully equal to her unbounded duty. Conscious of her sacred rights, she at once realized that the constitutional liberties which she enjoyed in the freest Empire of all times, could not be more patriotically exercised than for the defence of the sacred cause which united in a gigantic effort England, France and Russia, soon to receive the support of Italy. By an almost unanimous and enthusiastic decision she rallied to the flag around which all the Dependencies of the Empire gathered from the five continents. Never a more inspiring array of loyal subjects, owing allegiance to a Sovereignty, was witnessed in the wide world.

Through the trying days of three full years of the greatest war which ever saddened the life of the human race, Canada has nobly, gloriously, done her duty. Several hundred thousands of her devoted sons have rushed to the front to fight the battle of Liberty, of Right, of Civilization. Thousands of them have heroically given their lives for the triumph of the cause which, if finally triumphant, will brighten with freedom,

prosperity, human happiness and undying glory, the destinies of many generations.

The struggle is not over. The battle is not yet won. Victory is in sight but unfortunately still so far distant, that it is still calling forth the undaunted exertions of all those who have pledged their faith to rescue the world from the cruel thralldom of german militarism.

Last year, at the critical period which culminated in the undecided military operations which, though rendered illustrious by the glorious defence of Verdun, and made it plain to the Allies that success would only be the reward of a much more prolonged effort of untold sacrifices yet to be borne, I undertook to write the book entitled in french : "*L'Angleterre, le Canada et la Grande Guerre.*"

Several of the most influential and widely circulated News-papers of Montreal, Toronto and Quebec, have kindly published highly appreciative Reviews of the French Edition of my book, concluding with the request of the publication of an English Edition, which they affirmed would be conducive to the public good. I have received many letters and verbal demands to the same purpose.

I considered that it was my duty to answer to a call daily becoming more pressing.

I now offer to the English reading public a translated edition of my work, with the title "*England, Canada and the Great War.*"

A few words explaining the reasons that prompted me to write this book will, I am confident, be kindly appreciated by me readers. A close observer of the daily impressions which the events developed by the war were creating in Canada, I felt more and more deeply grieved at the persistent and unpatriotic efforts of the leaders of the Nationalist school of the Province of Quebec, and their henchmen, to sway my

French Canadian countrymen from the clear path of duty. I undertook earnestly to do my best to stem the threatening wave of disloyal sentiments and racial conflict which shameless and unscrupulous demagogues were stirring up throughout the land. "*England, Canada and the Great War*" was the result of the very careful study of the numerous questions therein considered and of the patriotic impulse which led me to publish it.

I dedicated the volume to my French Canadian countrymen by a letter from which I translate the following :

"It would surely be vain to conceal how serious was the situation imposed upon our country by the sudden outbreak, in August 1914, of the greatest war of all times. It was dominated by the supreme fact that Canada was a component part of one of the most powerful Empires, whose destinies were to be determined, for good or for evil, for many long years, by the terrible conflict suddenly opened, but, since a prolonged period, prepared by those who dreamt of conquering the world."

"Great Britain, our Sovereign Metropolis, had done her utmost to protect humanity against the misfortunes which endangered her future, for the maintenance of peace. She had failed in her noble efforts. At the very moment when, against all the most critical appearances, she was still hopeful, she had, all of a sudden, to face the terrible alternative, either to submit to national dishonour by complying with the violation of solemn treaties which bound her as much as Germany, or to unite with France and Russia to avenge Justice outrageously violated, sworn international Faith, Civilization perilously threatened.

"Could she hesitate for one single moment?"

"Our Mother Country has done that which her most imperious duty commanded her to do. She accepted the challenge of Germany with the patriotic determination inspired

by the most sacred cause. All the loyal subjects of the British Crown have applauded her decision to rush to the defence of invaded Belgium and France, to reclaim their national honour and her own, and to protect her Empire against the german armies."

"With the most inspiring unanimity and admirable courage, all the British Colonies have rallied around the flag of their Sovereign Metropolis to share the glory of the triumph of Right and Justice. At the very front rank, Canada has nobly done her duty. Her decision was most spontaneous and decisive. She was not deterred by fallacious subtilities, deduced from pretended conventions, out of age and opportunity, to hinder her laudable and patriotic course. Throughout the length and breadth of her vast territory, all minds shared the same view, all hearts were united and beating with the same powerful sentiment."

"The decision of Canada to participate in the present war was taken by the constitutional government of the country, sanctioned by Parliament, approved of by public opinion, glorified by the hundreds of thousand of brave volunteers who courageously answered the call of duty.

"Views with which I cannot concur have been expressed and given full publicity. They challenge discussion. It is my undoubted right to criticize them."

"Since the beginning of the present war, Mr. Henri Bourassa, in addition to the daily publicity of his journal "*Le Devoir*", has developed, in two principal pamphlets, the theories of his "*Nationalism*". They are respectively entitled : "*Que devons-nous à l'Angleterre?*" "*What do we owe England?*" and : "*Hier, Aujourd'hui, demain*" "*Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow*"

"In earnestly searching out the real causes of the war, the responsibilities of the belligerent nations, their respective aspirations, the duty imposed by the irresistible course of

events upon the British Empire and consequently upon Canada, I was incessantly called upon to consider the very strange propositions contained in those pamphlets."

"It was with great surprise that I read, for instance, as the heading of one of the chapters, the utterly false proposition that : "*The Autonomous colonies are Sovereign States.*"

"And these most extraordinary affirmations that the *King of England has not the right to declare the State of war for Canada, without the assent of the Canadian Cabinet; that Canada could have participated in the present war as a Nation.*

"It is my bounded duty to affirm that almost all the propositions contained in the two above mentioned pamphlets are wrong according to international law and to constitutional law, erroneous in their historical bearings, contrary to the true teachings of the past."

"Mr. Bourassa persistingly trying to convince his readers that the precedents of the Soudanese and the South-African wars have forced the British Colonies to participate in the present one, I considered it my duty to make, in two separate chapters, a special study of those military campaigns, which, in both cases, were so felicitously terminated for all parties concerned.

"I cannot close this letter without expressing my profound regret that Mr. Bourassa has thought proper to use most injurious language adding outrage to the falsity of his opinions. At page 121 of his pamphlet : "*Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow*", any one can read, no doubt with astonishment, that Mr. Bourassa charges our countrymen of the British races with being *ignorant, assuming, arrogant, dominating and rotten with mercantilism.*"

"Such ridiculous and insulting words to the address of our countrymen of the three British races are surely not calculated to increase canadian harmony."

"This book written for the express purpose of assisting you to form for yourselves a sound opinion about the terrible events so rapidly developing, was inspired by my loyalty to the Empire whose faithful subject I glory to be, by my devotion to Canada and to my countrymen, by the affectionate recollection of France I will cherish to my last day.

"During the last fifty years, either as a private or as an officer of the Canadian Militia—my service as such having lasted nearly forty years—as a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Quebec, and as a member of the House of Commons of Canada, I have often taken the oath of allegiance to the Sovereign of Great Britain. From my early youth, I had learned that under the ægis of the British Crown, the citizen of the Empire could be true to his oath, and enjoy the precious liberty of expressing his opinion. But I had also soon realized that during the lifetime of a Sovereign State, days of peril might occur. I had easily come to the conclusion that in those trying moments the loyal duty could be very happily reconciled with the most sincere love of political liberty.

"In defending with the most sincere conviction the sacred cause of the Allies, I am doing my duty as a free subject of the British Empire, as a citizen of Canada and of the Province of Quebec, as a son of France, as a devoted servant of Justice and Right. I am true to my oath."

I desire to call the special attention of my readers to the complete sense of the last paragraph just quoted. I most decidedly wish its meaning to be fully understood by all, as I intended to convey it to my French Canadian compatriots. I have never concurred in the subtle distinction so often made between the several notions entertained by many respecting their duty towards the Empire and Canada separately. Having witnessed, for the last fifty years, the admirable evolu-

tion and natural growth of the british constitutional system over a fifth of the globe, developing into the freest Empire that ever existed, my mind was more and more impressed with the conviction that loyalty to the Sovereignty presiding over such a magnificent national heritage could not be of two different kinds. A free british subject, whether living in the United Kingdom, or in anyone of the Dependencies of the Crown, cannot be at once loyal to the Empire at large and disloyal to any of its component parts ; or *vice versa*, loyal to the particular section of the State where he is living and at the same disloyal to the Empire. Such a false conception of the duties of loyalty, if it could be spread successfully throughout the Empire, would undoubtedly lead to its rapid dissolution and complete destruction. Genuine loyalty cannot agree with exclusive and rampant sectionalism, with local, racial or religious prejudices and fanaticism.

The few lines of the preceeding closing paragraph of my letter dedicating the French Edition of my book as aforesaid, express my own conception of the true loyalty of a faithful subject of the British Sovereignty, who has the clear vision of the meaning of his oath of allegiance. In consequence, first, I affirm my duty as a subject of the British Empire; second, as a citizen of Canada; third, as a citizen of my own Province of Quebec. And then, taking a wider range of the duty of any man towards his ancestors lineage, I declare that under the cruel circumstances of the case, I also consider it is my duty to defend France against her deadly ennemy. Further enlarging the vision of duty to its fullest extent, I say that I am bound to defend the cause of the Allies by proving that I am a loyal servant of Justice and Right.

Surely I could not emphasize in terms more pregnant my loyalty to the cause of the British Empire, of France, and their Allies, of Liberty and Civilization. I confidently hope they

will persuade my readers that this book was written with the most sincere and patriotic desire to help rallying my French Canadian compatriots to the defence of the British, French and Canadian Flags, which must together emerge triumphant from the gigantic fight against the most threatening wave of barbarism the world has ever had to contend with at the cost of so great and heroic sacrifices.

When the first French Edition of this book was issued, in January last, matters respecting the prosecution of the war had not yet required the serious consideration by Parliament and the country of the question of conscription to maintain to their proper efficiency the Canadian divisions on the firing line. Consequently, I was not then called upon to consider that most important subject. When I had to decide about publishing a second French Edition—the first being entirely exhausted—I at first thought of adding to my work a few chapters respecting the most notable events developed by the gigantic struggle shaking the world to its very basic foundation. Foremost amongst them were the Russian sudden Revolution, the solemn entrance of the United States into the great fight, the imperious necessity of the military effort of the Allies far beyond that which had been foreseen, in order to achieve the final victory which will be the only adequate reward of their undaunted determination not to sheathe the sword before Germany will agree to restore peace upon the only possible conditions which will efficiently protect humanity from any other attempt at brutal universal domination. The question of conscription in Canada was the natural outcome of the progress of the deadly combat between civilization and barbarism, constitutional freedom and despotism, democratic institutions and autocracy.

I soon realized that I could not properly do justice to so grave subjects in a few pages added to my first book. After



mature consideration, I considered it was my duty to undertake to write a second volume. I have so informed the public in the *Advertisement* which preface the second French Edition of the first. This second volume I will soon issue with the purpose of also publishing an English Edition if that of the first volume has met with the kind appreciation I hope of my English speaking countrymen.

However, pending the publication of the second volume, I think it is my duty to express now my views, in a summary way, on that much discussed question of obligatory military service. Let me preface by saying that they are not new, having originated in my mind more than thirty years ago. The military necessities of the present war have, of course, given them more precision and clearness.

Deeply conscious of the sacred duty of all truly loyal British subjects through all the present prolonged world crisis for the life or death of human Liberty, I had to consider conscription from the double stand point of a free citizen of Canada and of my military experience acquired in the course of a service of over forty years.

Most strongly and convincingly opposed to the militarism of the damned German type—the curse of Humanity—I have always believed—and do still more and more believe—imbued I hope with the true sense and principles of democratic institutions, that the greatest boon that could be granted the world would be that the admirable Christian law of peace and goodwill amongst men would prevail for all times, and save the nations from the cruel obligation of keeping themselves constantly fully armed at great cost of the best years of manhood and treasure. But unfortunately it has not yet been the good luck of man to reach the goal of this most noble ambition. Instead of a steady advance in the right direction, he has, for the last fifty years, experienced a most dangerous set

back by the predominating influence of german militarism, developed and mastered by the most autocratic power to the point of threatening the liberties of the whole world.

Need I say that, as a purely philosophical question of principle, I most sincerely deplore that the political state of the world has been and is such that national safety cannot be, in too many cases, properly assured without the law of the land calling upon the manhood of a country to make the sacrifice of part of the best years of enthusiastic youth, and requiring from the nation, as a collective body, the expenditure, to an untold amount, for the purposes of defence, of the accumulated savings of hard work and intelligent thrift.

Fortunately, the two continents of America, so abundantly blessed by Providence, had, until the present war, been able to pursue their prosperous and dignified course free from the entanglements of European Militarism.

Even England, in all the majesty of her imperial power, her flag gloriously waving over so many millions of free men, protected as she was by the waves which she ruled with grandeur and grace, had succeeded in avoiding the curse of continental conscriptionism.

Between permanent conscription, despotically imposed upon a nation under autocratic rule, and temporary military compulsion freely accepted by a noble people for the very purpose of saving humanity from military absolutism, there is, every one must admit, a wide difference. I have been, I am, and will be, to my last day, the uncompromising opponent of autocratic conscription, which I consider as a permanent crime against christian civilization, and the ready instrument of barbarous domination. To temporary compulsion I agree, as a matter of patriotic and national duty, if the circumstances of the case are such that without its timely use, my country which has the first and undoubted right to my most patrio-

tic devotion, at the cost of all I may own and even of my life, for her defence, would fall the prey to despotism which would bleed her to death to sway the world.

Such is the ordeal through which Canada, the British Empire, in fact much the greater part of the universe are passing with torrents of blood shed to rescue Mankind from the domination of german militarism.

If Germany could have her course free; if she could reach the goal of her criminal ambition, nearly the whole world would be, for many long years, in the throes of the most abominable conscriptionism.

If after the enthusiasm of voluntary military service has exhausted itself from the very successful result of its patriotic effort, is it not a duty for all loyal citizens to approved of temporary compulsion to save their country from the horrors of defeat at the hands of the most cruel ennemy which has ever shamed the light of the sun?

To the present generation of young men, strong, healthy brave, let us say : be worthy of the times you live in, be equal to the great task imposed upon you, accept with unflinching patriotism the sacrifices you are called upon to make, never forgetting that temporary compulsion for you means freedom from permanent conscription for your children and children's children in years to come.

It is from the very hight of such lofty considerations that I have made up my mind about this much vexed question which will, we must all earnestly hope, be more and more well understood and eventually settled to the everlasting good of the country once for all delivered from the exasperating menace of german despotism.

I must reserve for the second volume of this work, the fuller expression of my views of what should be the military system to be maintained in Canada, after the very wide expe-

rience we will have derived from the present great war. All I will add now is that ever since the early eighties of the last century, after many years of voluntary service in the Canadian Militia, I had fully realized that it is no more possible to make a real soldier by a few days yearly training, for three years, than you can make a competent lawyer of a young man studying law for a fortnight in the course of three consecutive years.

Since the federal Union of the Provinces we have spent much more than a hundred million of dollars for the training of our militia, with the appalling result that when came the day of getting ready for the fray, we had not two thousand men to send at once to the firing line. The first thirty thousand of the brave men who enthusiastically volunteered to go to the front had to be trained, at Valcartier and in England, several months before being sent to face an enemy whose waves of permanent divisions of armed men had overrun, like a torrent, Belgium and northern France. Of course, our boys fought and died like heroes, but nevertheless we at last learned, at our great cost, that soldiers no more than lawyers, doctors, bankers, etc., can be qualified in a day.

When the time shall come to consider what will be the requirements of our military organization after this terrible struggle is over, I hope none will forget that war is a great science, an awful and very difficult art, so that we shall not deceive ourselves any longer by the illusion that an army can be drawn from the earth in twenty four hours.

Our most efficient military commander cannot entertain the foolish delusion of Pompey, so crushingly beaten by Cæsar, at Pharsalia, that he can raise legions by striking the ground with his foot.

If our future national circumstances turn out to be such, after the restoration of peace, that we will not be called upon

to make heavy sacrifices for defence—let Providence so bless our dear country—it will then be much more rational to save our money than to squander it on a military system which cannot produce military efficiency.

The future can be trusted to settle favorably its own difficulties. For us of the present generation, we have to attend to the imperative and sacred duty of the hour. Let no one shirk his responsibilities, waver in the heavy task, falter before the sacrifices to be patriotically and heroically accepted. To deserve the everlasting gratitude of future generations, we must secure to them the blessings of permanent peace in a renovated world freed from the tyranny of autocratic despotism.

Surely, I will be permitted to say that undertaking to write *England, Canada and the Great War*, I fully realized my bounded duty to study all the questions raised by the terrible struggle, unreservedly, absolutely, outside of all party considerations, of all racial prejudices. A party man, in the only true and patriotic sense of the word, during the twenty five years of my active political life, as a journalist and a member of the Quebec Legislature and of the Parliament of Canada, it became my lot afterwards in the official position which insistently offered to me, I accepted and loyally filled, to all intents and purposes, for many years, to train my mind more and more to judge public questions solely from the point of view of the public good. I do not mean to say that partysm, well understood and patriotically practiced, is not productive of good to a country blessed with free institutions. But certainly in the course of a progressive, intelligent and eventful national life, ennobled by freedom happily enjoyed, times occur when it behooves every one to rise superior to all other considerations, however important they may be, to serve the only one worthy of all sacrifices : the salvation of the country. Never was this

principle so true, so imperative, than the day when the world was so audaciously challenged by Germany to the deadly conflict still raging with undiminished fury.

That most important question of military obligatory service, brought up by the pressure of the imperious necessities of military operations, lengthening and intensifying to unforeseen proportions, was for many weeks considered by Parliament. Surely, no one for a single moment entertained the idea that, however desirable and imperative it was for the representatives of the people to be of only one mind so far as the prosecution of Canada's share in the war was concerned, constant unanimity of opinion was possible respecting the various measures to be adopted to that end. Parliament sitting in the performance of its constitutional functions, with all its undoubted privileges, could not be expected not to exercise its right to debate all the matters constitutionally proposed for its concurrence and approval. I must certainly and wisely refrain from any comment whatsoever upon the lengthy discussion of the Military Service Act in both Houses in Ottawa. Having received the Royal Assent, the Bill is now the law of the land. All will patriotically rejoice to see that without waving their right to pronounce upon the responsibilities, the deeds and the views of those who will shortly solicit their constitutional confidence and their votes, the free citizens of Canada will cheerfully accept the new sacrifices imposed by the obligation of carrying the war to a successful issue, praying to God to bless their patriotic efforts, and even with the true Christian spirit, to forgive guilty Germany if she will only repent for her crimes and agree to repair a reasonable part of the immense damages she has wrought upon trodden and martyred nations.

I hope,—and most ardently wish—that all my readers will agree with me that next to the necessity of winning the

war—and may I say, even as of almost equal importance for the future grandeur of our beloved country—range that of promoting by all lawful means harmony and good will amongst all our countrymen, whatever may be their racial origin, their religious faith, their particular aspirations not conflicting with their devotion to Canada as a whole nor with their loyalty to the British Empire, whose grandeur and prestige they want to firmly help to uphold with the inspiring confidence that more and more they will be the unconquerable bulwark of Freedom, Justice, Civilization and Right.

After having so fully expressed my profound conviction of what I consider to be my sacred duty as a loyal British subject, I feel sure I will be allowed to ask my English speaking countrymen not to judge my French compatriots by the sayings and the deeds of irresponsible persons, too well gifted and too prone to injure their future and that of the whole country itself, but utterly disqualified and impotent to do them any good.

Need I affirm that my French Canadian compatriots are loyal at heart, a liberty loving and peaceful people, law-abiding citizens, fairly minded, intelligent, hard working, industrious. They have done, they are doing and will do their fair share for the progress and the future greatness of our wide and mighty Dominion. To all those who desire to appreciate their course in all fairness and Christian Justice, I will say : do not fail to take into account that like all other national groups they are liable, in overtrying circumstances, to be in a certain measure wrongly influenced by deficiencies of leadership, but depend that they cannot be, for any length of time, carried away by unscrupulous players on their feelings. The accumulated remembrance of their staunch loyalty and patriotism during more than a century and a half will do much to favor the harmonious relations of all Canadians of good

will who, I have no doubt, comprise the millions of well wishers of the glorious destiny of our country.

May I be allowed to conclude by saying that my most earnest desire is to do all in my power, in the rank and file of the great army of free men, to reach the goal which ought to be the most persevering and patriotic ambition of loyal Canadians of all origins and creeds.

And I repeat, wishing my words to be echoed throughout the length and breadth of the land I so heartily cherish:— I have always been, I am and will ever be, to my last breath, true to my oath of allegiance to my Sovereign and to my country.

L. G. DESJARDINS.



