

Sir Wilfrid's Ringing Speech In Debate on the Address

Liberal Chieftain Makes a Clarion Call to Canadians to do Their Duty in the Present Crisis--Must be Prepared to Make the Utmost Sacrifice in Order That Victory Shall Be Complete.

Ottawa, Jan. 18.—Having congratulated Dr. Thompson and Dr. Eugene Paquet, the mover and seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne in the House of Commons, on Monday, Sir Wilfrid Laurier passed at once to the situation confronting Canada at the present time. He expressed the gratitude of the Canadian people to a kindly Providence for the most bountiful harvest, atoning to some extent for man's inhumanity to man in denying the farmer a profitable market. Then he reverted to the war. "We still meet under its shadow," observed Sir Wilfrid, "seemingly more sombre. It was the duty of Britons

maintained—and let me say at once that we on this side of the House intend to continue to maintain—that it is the duty of Canada to put this one thing first, that it is the duty of Canada and the Canadian people to participate in this struggle, so long as it lasts, and until complete victory is won, to the fullest extent of all their resources." (Cheers.)

Sir Wilfrid would have liked to see Canada absolutely unanimous, absolutely and determinedly of one mind in this resolve. He regretted that "a small minority calling themselves Nationalists, in my native province," had demeaned themselves and their coun-

Voluntarily and Gladly.

"What we have done we have done deliberately, voluntarily, gladly," continued Sir Wilfrid amid cheers, "not from any sentiment of compulsion, but because we thought that as British subjects, as those who have been enjoying and still enjoy the benefits of British freedom, we owe it to ourselves to sacrifice of our treasure, of our blood, in order to maintain British institutions and freedom in the world." (Cheers.)

Scathingly Sir Wilfrid dealt with the agitation of the Nationalists. He recalled that there had been a line

Briton—in the war. OUR ACTION IS BASED UPON THE PRIMARY CONDITION THAT WE MUST BE FREE OR WE MUST LOOSE OUR FREEDOM. UPON THAT OUR CHOICE IS MADE."

The Bogy of Conscription.

Sir Wilfrid referred to the Premier's New Year announcement that Canada would undertake to raise 500,000 men. "I put aside today," said he, "the question as to whether this premature statement of my right honorable friend was exactly on the lines of constitutional government. I shall be prepared to discuss in the spirit in which all such propositions should be discussed, the proposition which the Government deems essential to carry on the struggle in which we are engaged."

Sir Wilfrid, however, urged the Premier to meet at once with an official pronouncement the stories being circulated by the Nationalist element, that the call was a preliminary step toward conscription.

For himself he had no fear. "The Laurier naval law has not yet been repealed," he commented with a smile, "AND IT HAS NOT YET LED TO CONSCRIPTION, AS WE WERE TOLD IT WOULD DO IN 1911."

He feared, however, the bogy of conscription would detrimentally affect immigration, and read on article from the New York American, which he characterized as "very much exaggerated," stating that scores of United States settlers in Canada were returning home, "fleeing from threatened conscription."

Urgent Need of Economy.

Sir Wilfrid had words of caution and counsel for the Finance Ministry. At the rate at which Canada was piling up debt, there must be the wisest and most rigid economy in every branch of the service. For himself he felt that between twenty and thirty millions of the estimates of last session were unnecessary at the present time. "I have been in office," commented Sir Wilfrid, "and I know something

of the importunities which confront the Government. In times of peace many of these luxury expenditures may be legitimately made, but I feel that it is the duty of the Government today to preach to the Canadian people economy in the public service and in private expenditures."

He regretted that the speech from the throne contained no such counsel and assurance.

A Serious Discrepancy.

Sir Wilfrid was also disappointed that there was no mention in the speech of the abnormal action of the Government in commandeering wheat in the elevators. In time of war the Government had the right to take unusual methods if they were taken on the ground of military necessity. The Government had issued an official statement that the action was taken at the request of the British authorities, but the following day the British government had issued a statement that it had made no such request.

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to be sincere and honest with themselves, and it was their privilege to go forward, notwithstanding, with firm confidence and unaltered determination to achieve complete and lasting victory. The only complete victory of the war to the present time on either side had been won by the British navy. By that victory, none the less emphatic because it had been won without a great engagement, the German fleet was isolated, impotent, a puny prisoner in its own waters." (Prolonged cheers.)

More Sacrifice Needed.

Canada's Parliament met again, Sir Wilfrid proceeded, under stress of the war situation. "We realized grimly but determinedly that more sacrifice will yet be needed," he commented. "On both sides of the House we have

try by the circulation of untruths to the effect that Canada's participation in the war at the behest of pressure from the Motherland. "I hold no brief for the Government," proceeded Sir Wilfrid, "but I was fifteen years in office, and I know what relations have existed and do exist between the Imperial and Canadian governments. I know the spirit that actuates both, and I say that there is no foundation for such an assertion—and I know whereof I speak."

Sir Robert Borden—"Hear, hear."

of cleavage between Premier Borden and himself as to the procedure Canada should adopt whenever Britain was called upon to fight. The Premier had held that such forces should be despatched upon the declaration of war. He had held that Parliament should determine action. This was a difference in viewpoint, and Sir Wilfrid recalled it only to mark "the inanity of the reproach of severity levelled at us by these men." He would remind them that there was the most dangerous kind of servility, the servility to passion and prejudice.

Hostility of Empty Minds.

"And if today," Sir Wilfrid exclaimed, "there is servility anywhere, it is not with those who have taken the attitude which we maintained and will maintain in this House, but it is with those who, blinded by passion and by prejudice, would deny us the liberty of being humane and generous, would deny us the liberty of following the instincts and promptings of our hearts and minds and consciences; would deny us the liberty of helping in the defence of France and Belgium. Not, sir, because they hate Belgium or France, but because we cannot in this way help France and Belgium without at the same time helping Britain."

"Away with such sophistry. It is nothing but an attempt to conceal the hostility of empty minds."

Interests of Civilization.

Sir Wilfrid scornfully repelled the Nationalist claim that Canada had no interest in the war. With Canada the interest was vital. "Not only that," exclaimed Sir Wilfrid, "I will go further. There is not today a civilized nation in the world that has not an interest in the war."

"Should Germany triumph," declared Sir Wilfrid amid an outburst of cheering, "there would be nations that would rue the day of their indifference and supineness."

Germany's purpose was not alone European domination. It was world domination.

"Germany cannot have complete victory," declared the Liberal leader. "As to that there cannot be any shadow of doubt. The only problem in my mind is as to the extent of our victory. If we have only half a victory, then Germany would be humiliated, but would still be defiant. She would continue her armaments; she would continue her dreams of dominion."

Canada must take her part in the sacrifice entailed by the determination to make the victory complete. "This is our interest—the interest of every

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