

BOURASSA MAKE HOT REPLY TO CAPT. TALBOT PAPINEAU

Demes That He Is Qualified to Speak for French-Canadians—
Development of Controversy Sketched by Nationalist Leader
—Specious Arguments—Bilingualism and Recruiting.

A few days ago The Star printed an open letter written to Henri Bourassa by his cousin Capt. Talbot Papineau. Herewith is Bourassa's reply to his cousin addressed through Mr. A. R. McMaster, K.C., of whose legal firm Capt. Papineau is a member.

Montreal August 2nd, 1915.
Andrew R. McMaster, Esq., K.C.,
189 St. James St.,
City.

Dear Sir.—On my return from an absence of several weeks, I found your letter of the 18th ult., and the copy of a letter apparently written to me by your partner, Capt. Talbot Papineau, on the 21st of March.

Capt. Papineau's letter, I am informed, appeared simultaneously Friday last in a number of papers in Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, and elsewhere. You have thus turned it into a kind of political manifesto and constituted yourself its publisher. Allow me therefore to send you my reply, requesting you to have it transmitted to Capt. Papineau, granting that he is the real author of that document. I can hardly believe it. A brave and active officer as he is has seldom the time to prepare and write such long pieces of political eloquence. Then, why should Capt. Papineau, who writes and speaks French elegantly, who claims so highly his French origin and professes with such ardor his love of France, have written in English to his "dear cousin Henri?" How is it that a letter, written on the 21st of March, has reached me but four months later, through your medium? For what purpose did you keep it so long in portfolio, and why do you send me a copy, instead of the letter itself?

It is, you say, an "open letter." It was, nevertheless, meant to reach me. It opens and ends with forms of language bearing the touch of intimate relationship—more so even than could be expected from the rare intercourse which, in spite of our blood connection, had so far existed between your partner and myself. The whole thing has the appearance of a political manoeuvre executed under the name of a young and gallant officer, who has the advantage or inconvenience of being my cousin. That Capt. Papineau has put his signature at the foot of that document, it is possible; but he would certainly not have written it in cool thought, after due reflection. It not only expresses opinions radically opposed to those I heard from him before the war; it also contains inaccuracies of fact of which I believe him honorably incapable.

Their Past Discussions.

He mentions "some discussions in the past," "differences of opinion," which have left "uninjured" a "pleasant friendship," dating, he says, "from the time of his birth." From his childhood to his return from Oxford, I do not think we had ever met and certainly never to exchange the slightest glimpse of thought or opinion. Of matters of national concern we talked but once in all my life. From that one conversation I gathered the impression that he was still more opposed than myself to any kind of imperial solidarity. He even seemed much disposed to hasten the day of Independence of Canada. Since, I met him on two or three occasions. We talked of matters indifferent, totally foreign to the numerous questions treated with such eloquent profuseness and so little reasoning in his letter of the 21st of March.

How can he charge me with having expressed "unhappy views" "at the outbreak of the war," in August, 1914, and held them stubbornly "unchanged" till this day? In August, 1914, I was abroad. My first pronouncement on the intervention of Canada in the war is dated September 8th, 1914. In that editorial, while repelling the principles of Imperial solidarity and their consequences, and maintaining the nationalist doctrine in which Capt. Papineau—and you as well—pretends to be still a believer, I pronounced myself in favor of the intervention of Canada, as a nation, for the defence of the superior interests uniting Canada with France and Britain. My "unhappy views" were thus analogous to those of your partner. It is but later, long after Capt. Papineau was gone, that my attitude was changed and brought me to condemn the participation of Canada in the war,—or rather the political inspiration of that participation and the many abuses which have resulted therefrom. The reasons of that change are well known to those who have read or heard with attention and good faith all my statements on the matter. To sum them up is now sufficient.

The free and independent participation of Canada—free for the nation and free for the individuals—I had accepted, provided it remained within reasonable bounds, in conformity with the conditions of the country. For the Government, the whole of Parliament, the press and politicians of both parties all applied themselves systematically to obliterate the free character of Canada's intervention. Their enlistment is now carried on by means of blackmailing, intimidation and threats of all sorts. Advantage has been taken of the emotion caused by the war to assert, with the utmost intensity and intolerance, the doctrine of Imperial solidarity triumphantly opposed in the past by our Statesmen and the whole Canadian people, up to the days of the infamous South African War, conceived by Chamberlain, Rhodes, and the British Imperialists with the clear object of drawing the self-governing colonies into "the vortex of European militarism." That phrase of your political leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, is undoubtedly fresh in your mind. After having given way to the Imperialist current of 1899, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal party had come back to the Nationalist doctrine. The naval scare of 1909 threw them again under the yoke of Imperialism: the war has achieved their enslavement; they united with the Tory-Jingo-Imperialists of all shades to make of the participation

of Canada in the war an immense political manoeuvre, and thus assure the triumph of British Imperialism. You and your partner, as many others, have followed your party through its various evolutions. I have remained firmly attached to the principles I laid down at the time of the South African War, and maintained unwaveringly ever since.

Foresaw the Conflict.

As early as the month of March, 1900, I pointed out the possibility of a conflict between Great Britain and Germany, and the danger of laying down in South Africa a precedent, the fatal consequence of which would be to draw Canada in all the wars undertaken by the United Kingdom. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal leaders laughed at my apprehensions; against my warnings they quoted the childish safeguard of the "no precedent clause" inserted in the Order-in-Council of the 14th of October, 1899. For many years after, till 1912 and 1913, they kept singing the praises of the Kaiser and extolling the peaceful virtues of Germany. They now try to regain time by denouncing vociferously the "barbarity" of the "Huns." To-day, as in 1900, in 1911, and always, I believe that all the nations of Europe are the victims of their own mistakes, of the complacent servility with which they submitted to the dominance of all Imperialists and traders in human flesh, who, in England as in Germany, in France as in Russia, have brought the peoples to slaughter in order to increase their reaping of cursed gold. German Imperialism and British Imperialism, French Militarism and Russian Tsarism, I hate with equal detestation; and I believe as firmly to-day as in 1899, that Canada, a nation of America, has a nobler mission to fulfil than to bind herself to the fate of the nations of Europe or to any spoiling Empire—whether it be the spoilers of Belgium, Alsace or Poland, or those of Ireland or the Transvaal, of Greece or the Balkans.

Politicians of both parties, your Liberal friends as well as their Conservative opponents, feign to be much scandalized at my "treasonable disloyalty." I could well afford to look upon them as a pack of knaves and hypocrites. In 1896, your Liberal leaders and friends stumped the whole Province of Quebec with the cry, "WHY SHOULD WE FIGHT FOR ENGLAND?" From 1902 to 1911, Sir Wilfrid Laurier was acclaimed by them as the indomitable champion of Canada's autonomy against British Imperialism. His resisting attitude at the Imperial Conferences of 1902 and 1907 was praised to the skies. His famous phrase on the "vortex of European militarism," and his determination from keeping Canada far from it, became the party's bye-word—always in the Province of Quebec, of course. His Canadian navy scheme was presented as step towards the independence of Canada.

Blondin and Union Jack.

Then came the turn of the Conservatives to tread in the footsteps of the Nationalists; they soon outstripped us. A future member of the Conservative Cabinet, Mr. Blondin, brought back to life an old saying of Sir Adolphe Chapleau, and suggested to pierce the Union Jack with bullets in order to let pass the breeze of liberty. The Tory leaders, Sir Robert Borden, Sir George Foster, the virtuous Bob Rogers, and even our national super-Kitchener, Sir Sam Hughes, while trumpeting the purity of their Imperialism, greeted with undisguised joy the anti-Imperialist victory of Drummond-Arthabaska, and used it for all it was worth to win the general elections of 1911.

By what right should those people hold me as a "traitor," because I remain constant with the principles that I have never ceased to uphold and which both parties have exploited alternately, as long as it suited their purpose and kept them in power or brought them to office?

Let it not be pretended that those principles are out of place, pending the war. To prevent Canada from participating in the war, then foreseen and predicted, was their very object and raison d'être. To throw them aside and deny them when the time of test came, would have required a lack of courage and sincerity, of which I feel totally incapable. If this is what they mean by "British loyalty" and superior "civilization," they had better hang me at once. I will never obey such dictates and will ever hold in deepest contempt the acrobats who lend themselves to all currents of blind popular passion in order to serve their personal or political ends.

This, let it be well understood, does not apply to your partner. His deeds have shown the sincerity of his political turn. Without agreeing with his new opinions, I admired his silent courage in running to the front at the first call. His verbose political manifesto—supposing he is really responsible for it—adds nothing to his merits. Still less does it enhance the dignity and moral worth of the politicians and pressmen of all kinds, who, after having denounced war and Imperialism, and while taking great care not to risk their precious body, have become the apostles of war and the upholders of Imperialism.

Why They Don't Enlist.

I will not undertake to answer every point of the dithyrambic plea of my gallant cousin. When he says that I am too far away from the trenches to judge of the real meaning of this war, he may be right. On the other hand, his long and diffuse piece of eloquence proves that the excitement of warfare and the distance from home have obliterated in his mind the fundamental realities of his native country. I content myself with touching upon one point, on which he unhappily lends credit to the most mischievous of the many anti-national opinions circulated by the jingo press. He takes the French-Canadians to task and challenges their patriotism, because they enlist in lesser number than the other elements of the population of Canada. Much could be said upon that. It is sufficient to signalize one patent fact: the number of recruits for the European war, in the various provinces of Canada and from each component element of the population, is in inverse

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE



A new picture of Canada's coming Governor-General, who is a skilled fisherman.

ratio of the enroachment in the soil and the traditional patriotism arising therefrom. The newcomers from the British Isles have enlisted in much larger proportion than English-speaking Canadians born in this country, while these have enlisted more than the French-Canadians. The Western Provinces have given more recruits than Ontario, and more than Quebec. In each Province, the floating population of the cities, the students, the laborers and clerks, either unemployed or threatened with dismissal, have supplied more soldiers than the farmers. Does it mean that the city-dwellers are more patriotic than the country people? or that the newcomers from England are better Canadians than their fellow-citizens of British origin, born in Canada? No; it simply means that in Canada, as in every other country, at all times, the citizens of the oldest origin are the least disposed to be stamped into distant ventures of no direct concern to their native land. It proves also that military service is more repugnant to the rural than to the urban populations.

There is among the French-Canadians a larger proportion of farmers, fathers of large families, than among any other ethnical element in Canada. Above all, the French-Canadians are the only group exclusively Canadian, in its whole and by each of the individuals of which it is composed. They look upon the perturbations of Europe, even those of England or France, as foreign events. Their sympathies naturally go to France against Germany; but they do not think they have an obligation to fight for France no more than the French of Europe would hold themselves bound to fight for Canada against the United States or Japan, or even against Germany, in case Germany should attack Canada without threatening France.

Who Have Enlisted.

English Canada, not counting the blokes, contains a considerable proportion of people still in the first period of national incubation. Under the sway of imperialism, a fair number have not yet decided whether their allegiance is to Canada or to Empire, whether the United Kingdom or the Canadian Confederacy is their country.

As to the newcomers from the United Kingdom, they are not Canadian in any sense. England or Scotland is their sole fatherland. They have enlisted for the European war as naturally as Canadians, either French or English, would take arms to defend Canada against an aggression on the American continent.

Thus it is rigorously correct to say that recruiting has gone in inverse ratio of the development of Canadian patriotism. If English-speaking Canadians have a right to blame the French-Canadians for the small number of their recruits, the newcomers from the United Kingdom, who have supplied a much larger proportion of recruits than any other element of the population, would be equally justified in branding the Anglo-Canadians with disloyalty and treason. Enlistment for the European war is supposed to be absolutely free and voluntary. This has been stated right and left from beginning to end. If that statement is honest and sincere, all provocations from one part of the population against the other, and exclusive attacks against the French-Canadians, should cease. Instead of reviling unjustly one-third of the Canadian people—a population so remarkably characterized by its constant loyalty to national institutions and its respect for public order—those men who claim a right to enlighten and lead public opinion should have enough good faith and intelligence to see facts as they are and to respect the motives of those who persist in their determination to remain more Canadian than English or French.

In short, English-speaking Canadians enlist in much smaller number than the newcomers from England, because they are more Canadian; French-Canadians enlist less than English-Canadians because they are totally and exclusively Canadian. To claim that their abstention is due to the "baneful" influence of the Nationalists is a pure nonsense. Should I give way to the suggestion of my gallant cousin, I would be just as powerless as Sir Wilfrid Laurier to induce the French-Canadians to enlist. This is implicitly acknowledged in Capt. Papineau's letter: on the one hand, he asserts that my views on the participation of Canada in the war are denied by my own friends; on the other he charges the mass of the French-Canadian population with a refusal to answer the call of duty. The simple truth is, that the abstention of the French-Canadians is no more the result of the present attitude of the Nationalists than the consequence of the liberal campaign of 1896, or of the Conservative appeals of 1911. It relates to deeper causes: hereditary instincts, social and economic conditions, a national tradition of three centuries. It is equally true, however, that those deep and far distant causes have been strengthened by the constant teaching of all our political and social leaders, from Lafontaine, Cartier, Macdonald, Mackenzie, to Laurier inclusively. The only virtue, or crime, of the Nationalists is to persist in believing and practising what they were taught by the men of the past, and even those of to-day. This is precisely what infuriates the politicians, either blue or red. To please the Imperialists, they have renounced all their traditions, and undertaken to bring the French-Canadians under imperial command. Unable to succeed, they try to conceal their fruitless apostasy by denouncing to the hatred of the jingos the obtrusive witnesses of their past professions of faith.

Bilingualism and Recruiting.

The jingo press and politicians have also undertaken to persuade their gullible followers that the Nationalists hinder the work of recruiters

because of the persecution meted out to the French minorities in Ontario and Manitoba. This is but another nonsense. My excellent cousin, I am sorry to say—or his inspirers—has picked it up.

The two questions are essentially distinct, this we have never ceased to assert. One is purely internal; the other affects the international status of Canada and her relations with Great Britain. To the problem of the teaching of languages we ask for a solution in conformity with the spirit of the Federal agreement, the best interests of Confederation, and the principles of pedagogy as applied in civilized countries. Our attitude on the participation of Canada in the war is inspired exclusively by the constant tradition of the country and the agreements concluded half a century ago between Canada and Great Britain. Even if the irritating bilingual question was non-existent, our views on the war would be what it is. The most that can be said is that the backward and essentially Prussian policy of the rulers of Ontario and Manitoba gives us an additional argument against the intervention of Canada in the European conflict. To speak of fighting for the preservation of French civilization in Europe while endeavoring to destroy it in America, appears to us as an absurd piece of inconsistency. To preach holy war for the liberties of the peoples overseas, and to oppress the national minorities in Canada, is, in our opinion, nothing but odious hypocrisy.

Is it necessary to add that, in spite of his name, Capt. Papineau is utterly unqualified to judge of the feelings of the French-Canadians? for most part American, he has inherited, with a few drops of French blood, the most denationalized instincts of his French origin. From those he calls his compatriots he is separated by his religious belief and his maternal language. Of their traditions, he knows but what he has read in a few books. He was brought up far away from all contact with French-Canadians. His higher studies he pursued in England. His elements of French culture he acquired in France. The complexity of his origin and the diversity of his training would be sufficient to explain his mental hesitations and the contradictions which appear in his letter. Under the sway of his American origin, he glories in the Revolution of 1776; he calls it a war "for the principle of national existence." In good logic, he should approve highly of the tentative rebellion of the Sinn Feiners, and suggest that Canada should raise in arms to break the yoke of Great Britain. His American forefathers, whom he admires so much, fought against England, and called upon France and Spain to help them against their mother country, for lighter motives than those of the Dublin rebels. The Imperial burden they refused to bear was infinitely less ponderous than that which weighs to-day upon the people of Canada.

With the threat contained in the conclusion of his letter, I need not be concerned. Supposing always that he is truly responsible for that document, I make broad allowance for the excitement and perturbation resulting from his strenuous life. He and many of his comrades will have enough to do in order to help Canada to counteract the disastrous consequences of the war venture in which she has thrown herself headlong. To propagate systematically national discord by quarreling with all Canadians, either French or English, who hold different views as to the theory and practice of their national duty, would be a misuse of time. Moreover, it would be a singular denial of their professions of faith in favor of liberty and civilization.

As to the scoundrels and blood-suckers "who have grown fat with the wealth dishonestly gained" in war contracts, I give them up quite willingly to their just indignation. But those worthies are not to be found in Nationalist ranks; they are all recruited among the noisiest preachers of the holy war waged for "civilization" against "barbarity," for the "protection of small nations," for the "honor" of England and the "salvation" of France.

Yours truly,

HENRI BOURASSA.

P. S.—I hope this will reach you before you leave for the front; no doubt, you have been the first to respond to the pressing call of your partner.

H. B.

Ruthenian Loyalty.

Saskatoon, Sask., Aug. 8.—A Ruthenian convention here of 500 delegates sent a message to the Duke of Connaught declaring the loyalty of the Ruthenians in Canada.