

read a communique from the British Admiralty. In doing so he said:

I feel it my duty to bring this glorious episode to the immediate notice of the house. As a result of a determined and highly successful attack which reflects the greatest honour on the fleet air arm, only three of the Italian battleships now remain effective.

This result, while affecting decisively the balance of naval power in the Mediterranean, also carries with it reactions upon the naval situation in every quarter of the globe.

The following is the Admiralty's statement. It is now appearing in the evening papers:

The Royal Navy has struck a crippling blow at the Italian fleet, the main units of which were lying snuggling behind their shore defences in their main base at Taranto.

On the night of November 11-12, aircraft of the fleet air arm carried out an attack, the results of which have now been established by photographic reconnaissance.

It is now known that one battleship of the *Littorio* (35,000 ton) class is badly down by the bows, that her forecastle is under water, and that she has a heavy list to starboard. (The *Littorio* and *Vittorio Veneto*, only recently commissioned, are among the most powerful battleships in the world.)

One battleship of the *Cavour* (*Conte de Cavour*, 23,622 ton) class has been beached and, from her stern up and including the after turret, is under water. The ship is listing heavily to starboard.

It has not been possible to establish the fact with certainty but it appears probable that a second battleship of the *Cavour* class also has been severely damaged. (Italy has four battleships of the *Cavour* class.)

In the inner harbour two cruisers are listed to starboard and are surrounded by oil fuel. Two fleet auxiliaries are lying with their sterns under water.

The total strength of the Italian battle fleet was six battleships, two of the *Littorio* class, which have just been put into service, and four of the recently reconstructed *Cavour* class.

As a result of this determined and highly successful attack probably only three Italian battleships now remain effective.

It will be recalled that the Italian communique issued on the 12th of November admitted that one warship had been badly damaged. The Italian communique also claimed that six of our aircraft were shot down and three more probably shot down. In fact only two of our aircraft are missing, and it is noted that the enemy claim that part of the crew have been taken prisoner.

On the night of November 9-10 a successful bombardment was carried out on Sidi Barrani. The fire was returned by shore batteries, but our ships sustained no damage and no casualties.

The Mediterranean fleet have also continued to harass the Italian army communications in Libya.

It is also reported that one of our submarines has recently attacked a convoy of two supply ships escorted by a destroyer. As a result, one heavily-laden ship of 3,000 tons was sunk and a second ship certainly was damaged, and probably was sunk.

After reading that communique Mr. Churchill concluded with these words:

The spirit of the Royal Navy, shown in this daring attack, is also exemplified in the forlorn and heroic action fought by the captain, officers and ship's company of His Majesty's ship *Servis Bay* in giving battle against overwhelming odds in order to protect the merchant convoy which they were escorting and thus secure the escape of by far the greater part of the convoy.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Brooke Claxton for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Hanson (York-Sunbury), and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Blackmore.

Mr. J. T. THORSON (Selkirk): I am sure that every hon. member will be greatly heartened by the splendid news which the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) has just announced, the great victory of the Royal Navy, and I am equally sure that every hon. member rejoices in the fact that we meet in this session under much more favourable circumstances than those that faced us at the beginning of the last session. At that time the nazis had just overrun the low countries, Denmark had surrendered without a struggle, Norway was being crushed into submission, and the fall of France was imminent. We felt one shock after the other and we were dismayed. The dramatic evacuation of Dunkirk, followed by the tragic fall of France made the defence of Great Britain itself a matter of intense concern. Dramatic events took place quickly in Great Britain, which fast became an island fortress. We were dismayed in Canada. There was anxiety here that our war effort was not adequate. The government had been elected, in the main, I believe, because the people of Canada had confidence in the administration and felt that it would give Canada a wise and careful administration of its war effort. That war effort had been geared to the war effort of Great Britain, which had been conducted in an orderly and somewhat leisurely manner. The dramatic turn of events in Europe changed all that. It changed the course of events in Great Britain. The anxiety that was felt in Canada was reflected in this house in the spirited criticism that came from hon. members opposite. The government of Canada made rapid decisions. It took one step after another in quick succession. It rapidly increased the size of the army and the navy.