

else, upon the fact that to-day we are in the midst of the greatest struggle for survival with which any people have ever been faced.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): If my right hon. friend will allow me, he will agree that there is one way to avoid that, and he has it within his power to announce that way.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I say to my hon. friend that I thought it would not be long before we would see that we had two leaders opposite. But he and I will have a talk about it, to see if we cannot keep our young friend in order.

I want to emphasize this point, because to-day, with the great successes which fortunately have attended the arms of the allied powers; with what has taken place since the last meeting of this house in the improved position in Russia, in Africa, in the southwest Pacific, and, indeed, wherever the allied powers have been fighting, I think there is in the minds of a great many people the belief that this year is going to see the end of the war. It is not for me to try to discourage optimism in the mind of anyone; I think we need all we can get in the way of support for our continued efforts; but there could be no greater mistake in the world than to believe that we have advanced any further than this, that the allied and the axis powers are a little more evenly matched than they have been at any time heretofore. The power of Germany remains greater, I believe, than anyone in this chamber can begin to comprehend, and that power has to be destroyed before the liberation of the countries that have been oppressed can be brought about. But in addition to the power of Germany there is the might of Japan, which is great indeed; and these powers still have to be overthrown before any of us can begin to concentrate in the main on what is going to come in the post-war period. There was a remark made by the hon. member for Grey-Bruce in his address the other day which I thought very sound. He said he did not think there was any reason to fear what the conclusion of this war would be, but that we should take great care in any estimate we might make of its duration. This war may be and probably will be very much longer than any one of us begins to comprehend; and unless we direct our energies primarily to seeing to it that, first and foremost, we do those things necessary to bring it speedily to a conclusion, we are not going to help either ourselves or the allied powers. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I trust that so far as this session is concerned it will not be thought that I am seeking in any way to

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

abridge debate or discussion if, with my responsibility for leadership in the house, I do the best I possibly can to keep the minds of hon. members centred on the winning of the war—and that in as short a time as may be possible.

My hon. friend has asked me to speak about the conference at Casablanca. May I say that in all particulars it was similar to conferences which have taken place between Mr. Churchill and the President on three previous occasions when these two great leaders, one of Great Britain and the other of the United States, met in conference together. As hon. members will recall the first meeting was off the coast of Newfoundland; the second was in Washington in December of 1941 and January of 1942, while the third was in Washington in June of 1942. The recent meeting, as hon. members are aware, took place at Casablanca in North Africa.

As I have said, the meeting at Casablanca was a meeting between these two leaders and their military experts, the civil and military leaders of Great Britain and the civil and military leaders of the United States. I was not invited to be present at the conference—and that, I think, for the best of reasons. My position or rather that of Canada is similar in all particulars, or at least in many particulars, to that of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and some other parts of the British commonwealth. Not only is it similar to the position of other parts of the commonwealth, but in many particulars it is similar to that of other of the united nations. The countries at war to-day are large in number. There are now some thirty countries forming what are known as the united nations. If one of the united nations is to be invited to a conference between two great leaders, there is every reason why other nations should feel that they were entitled to a like invitation.

From the beginning of the war I have had to face this question, and be prepared to make answer to it: As the leader of the government in Canada, am I in a time of war going to make more difficult than it is the situation which exists, or am I going to try to do all I possibly can to be as reasonable as it is possible for a man to be, and thereby make the situation easier than it would otherwise be?

I could this afternoon protest to the house that Canada had not been invited to the conference. Were I to do so, how much would I be helping the war effort of this country or the combined effort of the united nations? In the first place, as I have said, I do not see how it would have been possible to have singled out one country for invitation, and not to have invited others. But more than