

## THE WAR

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS FROM  
TIME TO TIME AS TO PROGRESS OF OPERATIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Before the orders of the day are called I wish to make a suggestion to the Prime Minister in connection with the house procedure. I shall be only a moment; I thought this was the most appropriate time to present it.

In some of the remarks made by hon. members from time to time during the last couple of weeks, it has been brought to the attention of the Prime Minister and of the government that there should be some announcement, some governmental statement, preferably by the Prime Minister, from time to time with respect to the progress of the war generally.

On one occasion it was suggested that a statement on the war might be made periodically to the house by the Prime Minister. If my memory serves me well, during the session of 1940, and again in 1941 the Prime Minister did make to the house statements which, while perhaps not comprehensive, did at least inform the house and the country of the progress of the war with more emphasis than would be given in the ordinary press statement. I am sure the Prime Minister and the members of the house will agree with me that at the present moment we are passing through one of the most serious stages of our whole war effort. We have a victory loan campaign coming on, with appeals being made to the people from time to time, and a foundation for their success is that the people should be made fully aware of the seriousness of the war. I therefore respectfully suggest to the Prime Minister that he should on auspicious and appropriate occasions follow the practice he followed in previous sessions of giving to the house and the country a statement on the war, giving us the bad news and also the good news where it may be appropriate to do so. None of us would ask that the Prime Minister should make public information which would in any way be of comfort or aid to the enemy, but I do believe that it would strengthen the morale of our country if on particular occasions when a statement could normally be expected from the Prime Minister he would make such a statement to the house and the country.

Before I conclude, there is one other matter I wish to mention. I think we should have more of a war mood in this house than

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

we have had during this session. I do not intend in saying that to reflect upon anyone in this chamber, because what I have said may be but a reflection of general conditions throughout the country. Nevertheless, I feel it is our duty to develop more of a war-time psychology in this house, and the Prime Minister can give leadership in this matter. The Department of National Defence and the press from time to time give out reports with respect to medals and decorations that have been won by individual members of our armed forces for gallantry on the sea, on the land or in the air. We have speeches made in this house from all sides which, in my opinion, are of much less importance to the people of Canada than the announcements of these decorations for gallantry, and I suggest that such announcements might well be made to the house and the country by the Prime Minister himself or the Minister of National Defence. I know that the Prime Minister will accept my suggestion in the spirit in which it is offered. I believe that such a practice would improve the tenor of our proceedings here, and I make the suggestion with the sincere desire that the country shall know that we really have our minds on the war.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I accept in the spirit in which my hon. friend has offered it the suggestion which he has made. May I say to him that no one in this house has emphasized more strongly than I have from time to time the importance of the house giving its attention to matters pertaining to the war rather than to some of the domestic questions which it has been discussing. If my hon. friend will look over the proceedings as recorded in *Hansard* he will find that the time of the house which has been taken up by the matters other than those relating to the war has not been so taken up by hon. members from this side to anything like the extent that it has been by hon. gentlemen opposite. There has been, I think it is reasonable to say, far too much time taken up with discussion of domestic questions to the exclusion of more important matters pertaining to the war.

As my hon. friend will recall, in order to facilitate and expedite the business of the house, he and I and other leaders of the house met together and decided upon a programme which we thought would serve that end, and certain measures were made a sort of "order of the month", and the order which was then set down has been strictly followed ever since.