

The Address—Mr. Hanson (York-Sunbury)

one, the realization of which will require a supreme effort on the part of Great Britain and her allies. He visualizes such a campaign in 1942 or 1943 and has intimated that that is the objective of Great Britain. When the Minister of National Defence speaks to us I ask him to tell us whether or not this government is preparing anything in the way of reinforcements to strengthen our units in Britain, and to provide new units when Mr. Churchill's plans are matured. I would ask him for a statement of policy in that regard.

May I at this point pause to enunciate the views with respect to public business of the party I have the honour to lead. I want to be very definite about this matter. To-day the policy of the Conservative party is to continue the policy of cooperation with the government in waging the war over there, and for the defence of the nation here, and to render such assistance as may be in our power to attain the supreme objective.

I say further to my right hon. friend that we desire to persevere in this course by offering constructive criticism. We reserve the right to criticize the proposals and actions of the government which are deemed not to be for the common good, both in its war and in its domestic activities. With respect to all domestic and peace-time questions we reserve the right to criticize, condemn or praise. In a word we will preserve all the rights and will exercise all the privileges of a peace-time opposition.

I hereby rededicate this Conservative party in the House of Commons and in the country to the service of the state, to the supreme task of helping to win the war overseas, to prepare for the defence of our beloved country, to help solve the problems of government in the domestic sphere, and, so far as in our power lies, to promote the greatest good for the greatest number of our fellow citizens.

I assume that the government and I am quite sure that the country would not wish this opposition to be a mere rubber stamp. It would not be good for the government, and I am equally certain that it would not be good for the country. If this were not a party government there might be something to be said for the theory of non-opposition, but there is nothing to be said for such a theory when the affairs of the country are being conducted on the party basis which we have in Canada. I say this in the face of the fact, that, regimented as we are to-day, it is not always popular in some quarters to criticize this government. However, as long as I occupy this position I shall not be deterred by adverse criticism from doing what I deem to be my duty. Fortunately to-day in Canada there is evidence that the question of freedom of

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

discussion in the press and on the public platform is forging to the front. In any free country there must be freedom of the press and freedom of discussion, otherwise liberty perishes.

I approach the consideration of Canada's war effort with some diffidence, and may I say with some reluctance. I approach it with diffidence because I realize that with my limited knowledge of matters military I am not well equipped either to criticize or to make real constructive suggestions. But subject to that handicap I propose to give to the house and the country the benefit of such views and conclusions as I have arrived at.

My main objective during the last session of parliament—this was also the objective of this opposition—was to push on by admonition and precept the supreme task of assisting Britain in winning the war, winning the war over there, not here on this western hemisphere. I said then, as I say now, that Britain with her mighty navy and dauntless air force was our only defence. I now desire to add to this my humble meed of praise and admiration for the dauntless courage of her leaders and of her people. I pause here to pay them all a tribute, humble though it may be.

Throughout all the ages of history there has never been witnessed an epic like Dunkirk, and there has never been such a display of dauntless courage and tenacity as has been exhibited by our hard-pressed kinsmen in the old land. Dunkirk stands as an historic moment comparable with the Charge of the Light Brigade. Some day soon it may be that a great poet will record this heroism in immortal poetry. Pride in their success, pride in their determination and pride in their courage wells up in the heart of the most humble Canadian. To those of us who have in our veins the same blood which flows in the veins of our kinsmen overseas there will ever arise a feeling of pride and thanksgiving that we are sprung from the same race. No wonder people everywhere are singing the toast, "There'll Always Be An England." May I be permitted to quote just the first and last verses of this song:

There'll always be an England
While there's a country lane;
Wherever there's a cottage small
Beside a field of grain;
There'll always be an England,
And England shall be free,
If England means as much to you
As England means to me.

But while we are thankful and grateful that there has been no invasion of England we are conscious of the fact that the battle of Britain is not yet over. In these circumstances the theory of aid and more aid to