

ain to-morrow, even before the declaration were made public it might be the policy of the German empire to have her ships in front of Halifax and on the way up the St. Lawrence to Quebec, just as the Japanese fleet has destroyed the Russian fleet before any overt declaration of war was made. Canada is an integral part of the British empire, Canada belongs to the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the seas. Canada is subject to any attack that England herself may be subject to, and the people of this country should understand that they are of the empire, that they are with it; that they are exposed to the same hostility as any other part of the empire may be subject to, and that it is their duty to be prepared to defend that empire and in defending it to defend ourselves. But there is still more striking language in a document which is not set out in any of the statutes but which was prepared by a committee of this House some years ago and the form of which was agreed to with unanimity. The people of this country do not know so much of that document as we who are members of this House because it is the form of prayer used daily at the opening of our proceedings here and it contains the political and religious creed of the great bulk of our people. There are two or three petitions in it that I wish to bring before the House and before the people of the country and I read them with the utmost reverence. The prayer reads:

Most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favour to behold His Most Gracious Majesty King Edward, and so replenish him with the grace of Thy Holy spirit that he may always incline to Thy will and walk in Thy way, endue him plentifully with heavenly gifts; grant him in health and wealth long to live; strengthen him that he may vanquish and overcome all his enemies;

Most gracious God we humbly beseech Thee as for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and His Majesty's other Dominions in general so especially for this Dominion that Thou would'st be pleased to direct and prosper, to the advancement of Thy glory, the safety, honour, and welfare of Our Sovereign and his Dominions.

So in this daily prayer this House recognizes that Canada is a part of the empire; we pray for its prosperity; we pray that peace may prevail in it, and that His Gracious Majesty should vanquish and overcome his enemies. And, not withstanding that, there are men writing in the press of this country who say that in some way Canada can be of the British empire and yet not recognize the responsibilities that are set out in the oath of office in the British North America Act and in other official documents. It surprises me that any one who professes to be a Canadian can say that Canadians are not responsible for the defence of the empire. And what is

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there about the British empire that interests us? First of all the British North America Act confers upon us the British system of government as the system which is best suited to us, and which we believe is best suited for government generally. It is better than the autocratic system of Germany, it is superior to the system of the United States; and as England is the mother of free parliaments, and as we are the beneficiaries of this grand system of government, why should we not defend it? But more than that, the British empire stands to-day the hope of humanity and the greatest factor in the progress of the world that history has ever known. The British empire is to-day the hope of the oppressed people of all continents; it is the hope of the struggling people in Europe, in South America, in all countries on the globe where the aspirations of the people are for higher things. The greatest calamity that could befall the world—worse than the decay of the Roman empire, which fell because it probably deserved it—would be that the British system of government should be in any way confined in its scope for good and its mission to promote the welfare of the human race. Another thing, under the British system has developed that blessing of freedom to express public opinion which really governs the world to-day and which flourishes throughout the British empire as in no other. We as Canadians, in our own interest, and in the interest of humanity as well, are bound to recognize our duty as subjects of the empire and to assume our responsibilities, whatever they may be, for its defence.

Now, Sir, in view of the fact that the mother country has called our attention to the state of her defences and of our own, we are just now at the parting of the ways. We must choose whether we are to be of the British empire or not. There may be four courses open to us, but there are only two of any great concern. In the first place, we may say that Canada shall remain one of the partnership of free self-governing British states working together for common purpose and mutual defence. I believe that is what we will say. Or we may cut ourselves adrift and become a separate nation and pursue our own policy irrespective of all external conditions. Or we may sink our individuality and become a portion of the United States. Or, as a fourth possibility, we may remain within the empire while refusing co-operation, which to me is unthinkable because unpatriotic and repulsive to the people of this country. We must do one of two things; we are at the parting of the ways, and we have before us only the choice of Heracles, to choose the course that is with virtue, with honour, and with duty, or the contrary. Our choice must be whether we are to be with the empire or to separate from