

move a motion to the effect that the forces should be reduced? There was plenty of opportunity to do so in the other House, when money was being voted to cover the cost of the armed services, but there is no evidence to show that any honourable member of that House ever presented a motion to reduce the commitments that had been made. Is that correct? I think we should leave that question just where it is. We made the commitments, rightly or wrongly, and my view is that we must stand by them.

There can be only two reasons why our commitments ought to be modified, and if these do not exist, our commitments should remain as they are. One reason would be necessity, real necessity. Let me give an exaggerated example of what I mean. Suppose that to-morrow the Canadian forces in Italy were surrounded and unable to get further supplies of food and ammunition. In consequence they would be taken as prisoners, and would be lost to us. Suppose that three days afterwards the same thing happened to our forces in France—I am not basing this entirely on imagination, for that kind of thing can happen and does happen in war—well, inside of a week or two we might lose our whole Canadian army. Then our commitments would have disappeared completely. That is exactly what happened to the French armies. France fell because she lost a million and a half soldiers within a month or two. Of course, in those circumstances any commitments that France had made became absolutely void.

The other possible reason for reduction would be an agreement reached in conference. Has anyone heard of our Ministers of the Crown or any of our military officers taking part in a conference of that kind? I have not. So far as I know, there has been no conference with any one of our allies with the view of reducing our commitment for the infantry.

Hon. Mr. BENCH: If the honourable gentleman—

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Will my honourable friend pardon me just a moment, until I finish this part of my argument. Then he may ask me a question, if I do not deal with his point in the meantime. Yesterday the honourable gentleman said that Australia had withdrawn men from her army. But that change in Australia's commitments was made as a result of conference and agreement—and for a good reason, of which we all know. I listen for hour after hour to the radio every day—that is about all I have to do—and I have good ears and a fairly good memory. I recall the day I first heard that Australia was taking steps to reduce her commitments. Australia did not do that by herself; she did

it after a conference, and because it would be to the advantage of the United States military forces. The United States had a real war on in the Pacific, and in carrying on that war was faced with a tremendous task. I do not know the exact distance, but I assume that Australia must be somewhere between six and ten thousand miles from the United States. That is a long distance to transport supplies of any kind. But the American government did not ask Australia to supply guns, tanks and that kind of thing. No. The United States wanted to send men to Australia in large numbers and was trying to avoid the necessity of shipping them all their food supplies as well. So the government of the United States said to Australia: "You produce the food that we need and we will be able to send more men for our armed forces." That matter was considered in conference, and Australia agreed to meet the wishes of the American authorities. There was an amicable understanding as to why Australia's commitments should be reduced.

Now, if my honourable friend wishes to ask a question, I shall try to answer.

Hon. Mr. BENCH: I am grateful to the honourable senator for a brief opportunity to correct what appears to be misconception by him of what I said last night. I expressly said that I understood there were objections to the reduction of our commitments, and then I went on to say that, having regard to the existing emergency and the things that it appears to be teaching us, there might be very good grounds, without reducing our commitments, to rearrange them. That was all I suggested.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: I did not get that impression. I may have been wrong.

Hon. Mr. BENCH: I am sorry, but that is what I expressly said. I in no way implied that there should be any weakening of our will to do our utmost. I simply said we must recognize that there are some limitations upon our capacity, and that probably we should consider rearranging our commitments, not reducing them.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: But that cannot be done by us alone; it must be done in conference with our allies. I had conceived of implications which the honourable gentleman, from what he said, apparently thinks do not exist. I apologize to him, and he has apologized to me, so I think we might drop the matter.

I have been dealing with the question of commitments of the Government, and I think I have finished all I desire to say in that regard.