

within itself all the elements that are necessary to make a great nation. Take our wheat crop. Hon. members from the West talk about the western wheat. The Empire grows enough wheat to supply all the Empire with all the wheat it requires and still leaves seventy or eighty million bushels a year to hand over to France and Italy. It is essential to us in Canada, therefore, that we should take steps before this war is over to see that our commercial interests are forwarded. I am not one of those who believe that everything should be put over until after the war is ended. Nobody knows when this war is going to end. I have had some experience of the war. When I first started off for France we all thought the war would be over inside of six weeks and we were wondering if we could not get to the front a little sooner so as to be in the fighting. As a matter of fact, after being at the front and realizing the condition and state of the army at the present time, I unhesitatingly say that we are only at the beginning of the war, that this war is going to be carried on for another year, if not two years, possibly three or four; and if there are no means by which we can strengthen the position of ourselves and our Allies in any possible way, by commercial treaties or otherwise, we should take immediate steps to do that now and not wait until after the war. When Great Britain was in a great war once before, at the time of the Seven Years' War, and called on her colonies to assist her, everybody in the colonies expected that it would be only a few months until the Empire and the colonies would be one. As a matter of fact, Pitt had a number of delegates from the American colonies meet and discuss a union. All the states were assured that they would get representation in the British House of Commons. In fact, a Bill was prepared for that purpose. But something happened, the doctrine of states' right; with the result that after the war there was nobody with strength enough, or energy enough, to carry out this plan, and the result was that inside of fifteen or twenty years the Empire was torn asunder simply because things had been left undone until after the war. If we are going to have a long war, let us take action for unity now. Let the colonies and the Empire get together with the Allies on these commercial questions now and not postpone action until after the war, because if we do the chances are that there will be some other interests calling for our attention then and nothing will be done.

With reference to the war itself, I want to congratulate the House upon the excellent support that has been given to the war and to the troops in the field. Perhaps it may not be amiss for me to give a short sketch of the operations of the Canadian division at the front. I had the honour at the time when war broke out to be the commanding officer of one of the Canadian militia battalions, and it was my duty, not only as commanding officer of that regiment, but also as a Scottish Canadian to offer my services, which the Minister of Militia accepted. The officers of my regiment offered the services of the regiment and that offer was also accepted. I also considered it my duty as a military member of this House to go. I know that a great many members, probably 80 per cent of this House, are beyond the military age, and no matter what previous experience they had had, or what their ardour was, they could not go. But I considered it my duty to go. My battalion was mobilized, and we went to Valcartier. Valcartier camp was a great example of the ease with which Canadian troops could be mobilized, a marvellous example of organization. Some 22,000 men were at first required, and in about three weeks something like 33,000 were under canvas. The troops got a great deal of very practical drill at Valcartier; in fact I have heard nothing but praise for camp Valcartier. I think it reflected great credit upon the Minister of Militia who organized it, and on those who carried through the work there. There is no doubt that at the beginning there were certain difficulties, but there are difficulties at the beginning of all things; they are to be found also in connection with the continuing of all great undertakings. They were quickly overcome at Valcartier, and the camp proved a great success.

After receiving a certain amount of drill, the troops were sent to England. I shall never forget the great armada that sailed from Gaspé Bay—three great lines of ships, eleven in each line, each line flanked by a war vessel, with a warship in front and another in the rear. We were quite fully guarded all the way across, and within two days of reaching the shores of Britain the greatest warship in the world then came to meet us, the Princess Royal, and we were afforded an example of the tremendous naval power of Britain. I wish here to say a word on behalf of the British navy. It has done just what it was expected it would do; it has swept the enemy from the seas. At that time, the enemy was not swept entirely from the seas; the battle