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CANADIAN WAR ACTION

The Government has been giving continuous consideration to the question of the most feasible and effective measures which Canada could take in furtherance of the great task that lies before us.

I may be allowed to quote from a statement I made to this House on March 30th of this year:

While another world war will, I trust, never recur, it is desirable nevertheless to consider some questions which would arise in the event of our participation in such a conflict. That participation could not be passive or formal, nor could it be unplanned or irresponsible. It would be necessary to consider in consultation with others involved and with regard to the objectives and operations of the enemy, what would be the most effective form our action and our co-operation could take.

It is clear that the conditions determining the nature of participation in such a conflict have undergone a great change since the last war. The balance of world power has shifted, and Canada has to keep its Pacific as well as its Atlantic coast in mind. From both the military and the economic aspect, the attitude of the United States would be immensely more important for the world and for us, than twenty years ago. The weapons and tactics of war have materially changed; naval conditions have perhaps not greatly altered, so far as the sea reaches, but armies have become mechanized, great Maginot or Siegfried lines bar the possibility of rapid infantry advance. Aeroplanes have brought new resources and scope to other arms in joint operations, and have in themselves given war new range, new flexibility and new terrors. Mechanization on land and in the air, and the colossal demands for supplies and renewed equipment, demands which would begin far beyond where the demands of the last war left off, greatly increase the importance of the economic factor, the indispensability of adequate supplies and staying power-factors in which the democratic countries are overwhelmingly strong.

It is not possible at this stage to forecast the character and requirements of the conflict. We know the present alignment of nations and can in some measure conceive the economic and strategic factors inherent in the present situation.