

Now, ladies and gentlemen—or, as I would prefer to call you at this time, men and women—I know that it is not the function of a toastmaster to be a speechmaker, and I am not going to undertake that activity. Let me remind you merely of this, that times are coming—and perhaps they are here now—when the greatest of all the sacraments shall present itself for our acceptance—that of self-sacrifice. As a test of our willingness to conform to that virtue today I must announce that we had expected to be addressed by General Wood and all the arrangements had been completed for his presence with us. We have received his telephone message that he is unexpectedly and hurriedly called to Philadelphia, for reasons I know not, but that no doubt pertain to Government duty.

It is usually unwise and always dangerous to prophecy or to predict. May we not at least venture to say that we are entering upon times when pussyfooting, mollycoddling, weasel wording or watchful waiting can be no longer useful. Upon that scene of action where we shall, unless all signs fail, soon be entering, there are three elements with which we shall have to contend, as they—our allies—are contending: First, open enemies that shall fight us upon land and sea: they will be met by those whose duty it is to make peace with the sword, namely, the Army and the Navy. Secondly, there are the secret plotters and propagandists of sedition, who we hope will be properly handled by the Secret Service and the Police, and, thirdly, the element that, ignorant of Nature's law, the law which commands and compels that constant conflict by which the human race and everything in Nature continues to exist, the cessation of which even for a short time produces in turn stagnation, attenuation and final disintegration. Nature will not stand for a non-fighting people. She either enslaves them or pushes them off the earth to make room for a more virile race, and this law, however harsh it may seem, we have to recognize and reckon with. There must be no sublimated exaltation of what is termed peace, which in the minds of many means but a glorification of ease and comfort, the absence of sacrifice and the selfish conservation of property.

And now, shall we send back this message to Canada? America has been sluggish, the time had not arrived, circumstances had not yet formed themselves into that context of conditions that encouraged us to move, however impatient some of us have been. But we are being aroused, we are awakening and the wave of action is gradually—I might say rapidly—coming over us, and when the splendid hour strikes and war's fierce cry comes ringing 'cross the sea, America, her sons—and aye, her daughters too, whose hearts are no less brave than that their heads are wise—will be found with you standing shoulder to