

A Speech before the Canadian Club at Halifax December 18, 1914

Those upon whom the duty of directing public affairs has fallen during the past four months are sensible of the tremendous responsibilities imposed by the appalling conflict which has been forced upon our Empire. They have been sustained and cheered by the support and co-operation of the whole nation. It has not always been possible to make haste as rapidly as some would desire, but we have understood the earnestness of those who sometimes have felt constrained to urge that greater expedition should be made in sending aid to the Empire's armies.

My native province, in common with the whole Dominion, has nobly responded to the call of duty. Under the laws of Canada, our citizens may be called out to defend our own territory, but cannot be required to go beyond the seas except for the defence of Canada itself. There has not been, there will not be, compulsion or conscription. Freely and voluntarily the manhood of Canada stands ready to fight beyond the seas in this just quarrel for the Empire and its liberties. With 8,000 men engaged in garrison and outpost duty, 33,000 beyond the seas and 50,000 under arms in Canada, as many more waiting for the opportunity to enlist, and tens of thousands training in Home Guards and similar military organizations, the races which make up the population of this Dominion have shown that they are not decadent. This province has furnished a force of nearly 3,000 men for garrison and outpost duty, besides a thousand now beyond the seas in the first Expeditionary Force and another thousand now enrolled and eagerly awaiting the opportunity to go forward. Including Home Guards and other unofficial military organizations, about 120,000 Canadians are now under arms. Remember, however, that Germany's military strength can hardly be measured. The entire nation is trained to arms and her preparation for war is on a scale which it is almost impossible to estimate. Our Empire is under the temporary disadvantage of lacking such organization, and preparation on a tremendous scale is now necessary. We have been obliged to undertake it since war broke out, and it is essential and even vital to hold the enemy in check while it is being provided. I have reason to believe that the results achieved by the Allied armies for that purpose are considered satisfactory by those best