

6. The matter cannot be delayed

Every psychologist will agree with the following generalization as regards the influencing of attitudes; while they are still fluid and diverse they may easily be moulded in a desired direction, but once they have crystallized the most determined propaganda often succeeds only in reinforcing them.

The truth of this may well be painfully exemplified by Quebec. Had a board been set up immediately war was declared, with a Frenchman of prestige as its vice-chairman; and had this board immediately taken the initiative in selling the war to the French Canadians, it would have had excellent chances of success. We did not take the initiative, but relied on our mere declaration of war to accomplish everything. M. Duplessis saw his opportunity and took the initiative himself; and now Ottawa must fight an up-hill battle, the result of which is very dubious.

What was true of Quebec is almost equally true of the rest of the Dominion. It is unlikely that leaders will arise to oppose participation in the war, but crystallized attitudes of indifference and non-participation will be every bit as dangerous. People are at present still confused, still uncertain; now is the moment for the intelligent and comprehensive campaign of education. Soon it may be too late.

7. Politically the moment is opportune

If a board of information had been set up at the outbreak of war there would, on the other hand, have been a good deal of criticism. This might have reflected unfavourably on the government. But in the past week two of the chief organs of opinion in Toronto have demanded that something be done to clarify the war issues and to solidify and direct public attitudes. An editorial in The Financial Post suggested a board of the kind here recommended, and B.K. Sandwell in Saturday Night pointed to the confusion of public opinion and urged that steps be taken to clarify it.

With such clear leads as this - and opinion is probably similar elsewhere than in Toronto - the government need hesitate no longer to set up machinery for a real mobilization on the Home Front.

J.D.Ketchum
Oct. 9th, 1939.

Results in Quebec had answer to course for need of the Government

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