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### Mr. King on the War

Prime Minister Mackenzie King took the opportunity in the House of Commons to correct the statement of the Leader of the Opposition, R. B. Hanson, that in his view and in view of many members, and, as he said he felt quite certain, in the view of many people in Canada, the war in Europe is more serious today than at any time since the fall of France. Here the Leader of the Opposition created a wrong impression. If he had qualified his statement by adding that the situation is more serious for Hitler than for Great Britain and her Allies, he would have been nearer the truth. This was made clear by Mr. King in his reply to Mr. Hanson.

Referring to the statement of Mr. Hanson, the Prime Minister said: "May I say at once, and most emphatically, such is not my view." We have in the case of Mr. King a man who, in the position he holds, speaks with authority, not, as he described his attitude, from impulse but from reflection, as opposed to a man who is not in a position to judge beyond his personal viewpoint. To follow Mr. King's speech in the House, he said that "there can be no doubt in the world that the situation of Great Britain and her Allies is much better today than it was, not only at the time of the signing of the armistice between France and Germany, but as it developed in the months which immediately followed the fall of France."

The Prime Minister presented a concrete view of the situation which arose after the speedy capitulation of Norway, Belgium, and France. As he truly said, the situation was pessimistic so far as Britain and her Allies was concerned. This pessimism spread to the United States. All that has changed, said Mr. King.

It is true, as he told the House, that the war is increasing in its fury, but, as he added, it is also true that in the months that have elapsed since the downfall of France, Britain's strength has steadily increased.

Mr. Hanson referred to the "virtual destruction" of the cities of Birmingham, Bristol and Southampton. He has never heard or read, said Mr. King, anything which would justify Mr. Hanson's assertions as to those cities. Nor, we may say, does the destruction of cities, even if true, mean defeat.

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Mr. King referred to the statement reported to have been made by Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador to the United States, that Britain was at the end of her financial resources. Such a statement made by a man in the position of Lord Lothian would be incredible were it not that it led to a wrong interpretation. Mr. King took what was an opportune moment to refer to the statement reported to have been made by Lord Lothian. Dealing with this statement, he said it should be realized that what Lord Lothian said about Britain being near the end of her financial resources had reference to British purchases in the United States. This places an altogether different complexion on Lord Lothian's statement. The problem which faced Great Britain, as Mr. King pointed out, was providing U.S. exchange for British purchases in the United States. This, he said, was a "very real problem," stating that while it was true that Canada and Great Britain were faced with this problem, it was also true that in the United States they had access to the greatest industrial resources in the world, resources denied to Germany.

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The war has not yet passed its critical stage. Much has to happen and may happen. There may be grounds for pessimism on the part of those who look to the dark side of the picture but shut their eyes to the light and encouraging side. There is the light and the dark side of the picture, but the light, as shown in recent happenings, is slowly but surely overcoming the darkness. This Mr. King's speech should succeed in impressing on the minds of those who form their views on the pattern of Mr. Hanson. The Prime Minister has never at any time minimized the gravity of the situation, and his words in the House in these circumstances gain greatly thereby.

It has to be remembered that, as Mr. King said, if British leaders spoke at times in a way which suggested pessimism, it was just that they wished to give their people the true picture. In all such statements, however, he emphasized, appeared the "absolute refusal of the British people now or at any time to consider the prospect of defeat." This is hardly the attitude of a people who, if we believed Mr. Hanson, take it that the situation has decidedly turned against them. Mr. Hanson has showed himself to be a man, in the position he holds, lacking in that reflection which exercises discretion in these momentous times in what men choose to say.