

opinions cannot be expressed at this time is wholly undemocratic and contrary to our standards. If there ever were a time when public opinion should be enlightened and given the true facts of our present situation, it is now. I am sorry to say that in my opinion at least the lack of pronouncement by the government on its external policy, and what it would do in the event of a continental war, creates unrest among all classes of Canadian people.

The policy so far has been directed in such a way that all shades of public opinion have been given the impression that the government's policy was their own. Imperialists have been led to believe that this government was sufficiently imperialistic to please them, while the isolationists have been given some indirect reassurance by the pronouncements of some of the ministers.

The bare truth is that none of us can tell what the policy is, and we would all be hard put to define it at this time. Prior to the right hon. Prime Minister's declaration of January 16, 1939, wherein he stated that when Great Britain was at war Canada was at war, and that parliament would decide, we did not know where we stood. It is all becoming a little clearer now. But it took a long time to bring it out, and the isolationist element of the cabinet seems to have been finally over-ridden.

It is quite clear that the hesitant yes-and-no external policy of the government has gone by the board, and that we have joined for better or for worse the world-rearmament race. We have not been told where the danger of attack comes from. We have not the slightest inkling of where the impending invasion lies, although four thousand miles of sea must be crossed before we are attacked, and the combined sea forces of Great Britain, France and the United States appear to stand in the way of an invader. These combined sea forces would not bar the passage of the enemy through altruistic motives alone; they would firstly be defending themselves and their commercial seelanes.

Now, can this country be attacked by air? I should like to quote from the book of George Fielding Eliot entitled "The Ramparts We Watch" as condensed in the *Reader's Digest* of February, 1939, at page 68. Mr. Eliot, by the way, was major of military intelligence reserve, in the United States army. He states:

We need not fear air attacks from abroad. The record for distance flying is 6,295 miles, set by Russian fliers from Moscow to California. But for war operations, the aeroplane's radius of action is but one-fourth its maximum range; for the plane must return to its base, and it must be prepared to fight, to manoeuvre, to

waste time searching for its objectives. Moreover, warplanes must sacrifice fuel load for bombs. All this brings down the warplane's range to less than 1,500 miles—about half the distance across the narrower of our two oceans frontiers.

Another military expert Colonel Frederick Palmer, writing in the *Montreal Standard* of January 28, 1939, says this:

We are perfectly secure. No enemy can reach our shores. Yet we have never been more apprehensive lest we be attacked. . . . Until bombing planes can go more than 800 miles with a full bomb load, an air raid across 2,500 miles of sea is out of the question. But what if they come on aircraft carriers? Italy has no aircraft carriers; Germany two building. An aircraft carrier without fleet protection is an egg-shell to our destroyers and cruisers.

If the opinions of Mr. Eliot and Mr. Palmer can be taken with reasonable assurance, the attack would not come from the air. Under these circumstances, and assuming that Mr. Eliot's and Mr. Palmer's opinions are the considered opinion of the majority of our military experts, what is the purpose of laying particular emphasis on air defence? I say, without any disrespect, it appears to-day, just as it did in 1914, that we are still the rich uncle from America; that we are bound again to help make the world safe for liberty and democracy. When Britain is at war, Canada is at war! What an admission to make when 70,000 Canadians are sleeping their last sleep in France, and we have a two billion dollar war debt for having followed this now-antiquated policy in 1914! We are not able to save our own people from poverty, hunger and unemployment, and yet we can afford the luxury of spending hundreds of millions of dollars and risking possibly another 100,000 Canadian lives, a full generation of Canadians, to help pay for the glaring blunders of French and British foreign policies made during the last twenty years.

We have had no share in the framing of these policies; we have not been able to cast one vote in approval or disapproval of the public men of the countries who framed these policies, but now we are considered important enough to rearm and stand by their mistakes with our Bren guns pointed at the enemy. Then we are not a north American nation; we are only a glorified extension of Britain and France in America! According to this government, when Great Britain is at war, Canada is at war. What becomes then of the late Lord Stanley's declaration in Toronto when he was secretary of the dominions? I quote:

Is Canada at war when Britain is at war? Certainly not. Canada has entire responsibility of her own. She is a sovereign state and decides for herself.