

that the voice of party strife was hushed for the time being, and that he and his friends would co-operate in every way with those upon whom falls the duty, the very responsible duty at this moment, of administering the affairs of this country, in taking all such measures as may be necessary for the defence of Canada and for maintaining the honour and integrity of the Empire whose flag floats over us.

The war has come upon us in the end very suddenly indeed, and perhaps we have not all adequately considered the awful responsibility that must have rested upon the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom when they and their colleagues took the issue which meant war—which meant the first general European war for a hundred years, and beyond all question the most appalling war history has ever known. We read in the press of the haggard faces and the tremulous lips of Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey when they made their announcements; but there as here they were sustained by the thought that for the time being party strife was stilled; and we do not forget that those in the British Isles who had protested most strongly in the first place against the participation of Great Britain in this war united in upholding the hands of the Government and in maintaining the interests and duty of the Empire.

I need not dwell very long upon the incidents which led up to this war. Last evening I had the opportunity of reading with the deepest possible interest the White Paper which was laid upon the table of the House to-day, and which gives a very full and detailed history of the untiring efforts of Sir Edward Grey—who has been rightly characterized by his colleague the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, as the Peacemaker of Europe—to prevent war. The splendid efforts made by Sir Edward Grey to preserve the peace of Europe command our warmest admiration. When that proved impossible he most earnestly endeavoured to find some way of escape, short of dishonour, by which Great Britain might remain neutral in that awful contest. The armed forces of Europe, as we all know, during the past twenty or twenty-five years have been increasing beyond measure, and the closest students of the world's politics have believed for many years past that war was bound to come. It did come, and with startling suddenness; and it is my duty to say that after reading the docu-

[Sir Robert Borden.]

ments to which I have alluded, after giving them the most careful and attentive consideration which was permitted to me in the short time that has elapsed since their arrival, I am convinced that no government ever with more whole-hearted earnestness sought to keep the peace of the world and the peace of this Empire than did His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. It has been the policy of the British Government for many years past to seek reduction of armaments and thus to lessen the danger which lurks in the enormous armed forces with which the nations of Europe have confronted each other. At and ever since the Hague Conference in 1907, British statesmen have pleaded with the nations of the world to reduce their armaments. At the Hague Conference, and on many occasions since, Great Britain offered to give up what would seem to be very material advantages to her in time of war, if by such concessions she could induce Germany and other countries to abate the awful increase in armaments which had been proceeding. Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Churchill, Mr. McKenna, Mr. Acland—I have their utterances under my hand and could read them to the House if there were occasion—time after time, year after year, on occasion after occasion, the British Government has shown itself most truly and earnestly desirous of bringing about such conditions in Europe as would make for permanent peace if that could be accomplished. Those who may read the papers that have been laid upon the table of the House to-day will find that in the very last moments of peace, before Great Britain finally embarked in the conflict, she made this earnest proposal to the German Government: that if this most appalling crisis could be passed, she would use every influence and every effort that she could command to bring about such an understanding between Germany and her ally on the one hand, and Russia, France and Britain on the other hand, as would relieve Germany and Austria from any possible apprehension of attack from that quarter; and the minister declared himself to be inspired with a very full confidence that if this crisis could be passed, that great result would be brought about.

I will not dwell for more than a moment on the earlier aspects of the war—the war which broke out between Austria and Serbia; but I cannot escape the conviction, after having read the documents to which I have alluded—and I do not think any