

*Address of Right Hon. Peter Fraser*

river, the great lakes, the long miles of western prairie, on which there is no fort and no gun, and where on both sides of the line there is friendship and cooperation. That example of two great countries on the North American continent, with the understanding which in the past has been established between them, has stood us in good stead in our hour of trial, and its influence has extended to all the united nations. Canada has given the lead.

I am not going into details with respect to your war effort. You know about that. The fact that 800,000 men and women have been enrolled in the forces, and the further fact that 2,000,000 persons are taking part in the industrial war effort of this country, are sufficiently eloquent and convincing testimony as to the whole-hearted way in which Canada has thrown itself, without reserve, into what it knew was a struggle for the existence of all that is decent in the life of mankind.

Canada, like New Zealand, had no doubt in September, 1939, as to where it would stand. Canada, like New Zealand, like South Africa and Australia, knew that our mother country had gone to the limit—yes, had gone beyond the limit—and had risked dangers in her endeavour to convince people who would not be convinced that the path of righteousness was the path of safety and security for everybody.

Our countries had not piled up arms. They had not invested their capital in huge, hidden forces to be let loose in a flood of destruction upon mankind. Whatever may be said as to the wisdom of policies immediately preceding the war, this at least will be counted to the credit of the United Kingdom and the British commonwealth of nations, that our feet were turned into the paths of peace, and our thoughts were toward benefiting our people rather than dominating and trampling other peoples under foot.

You have fought in every field of action. Your men fought bravely against overwhelming odds at Hong Kong. They took part gallantly and brilliantly in the commando raids, particularly at Dieppe. They took a share, too, in the hazardous and dangerous landings in Sicily and Italy, and the other day they again covered themselves with glory, being among the foremost fighters for freedom in the landings in Normandy.

I am not going to deal with your amazing industrial contribution—and I underline the word "amazing", for the development of your munitions industry, your factories and your shipbuilding is indeed a surprising and gratifying story and something beyond what your most sanguine citizens had a right to expect. I might mention, too, your contribution on the

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seas, and your help in convoying ships of the united nations, including New Zealand ships carrying New Zealand food. Again, your acceptance and your carrying out of the air training scheme, with all its complexities and perplexities—all these services to our cause have placed the rest of us under a debt of gratitude to your dominion, a debt which we gladly recognize. Canada can say, equally with the United Kingdom and with other countries of the British dominions, that she has given to the limit of her resources. No more can be done.

One word of gratitude for the hospitality extended to our New Zealand boys, of whom such generous recognition was made only a few moments ago. We are very proud of them. I knew we had every right to be proud of them when, the other day, I saw them in our division in Italy, right from the base camps up to the firing line where our Maori battalion, composed of representatives of one of the finest races on earth, was fighting and leading the attack against the enemy at Atina and Sora. I saw that division working; I saw its efficiency, its smoothness, its good spirit. Its spirit was democratic, too, for every officer in that division had come up through the ranks. It has been a most successful experiment in democracy.

It is a splendid fighting division—as no doubt your divisions are also; indeed we know their qualities—but we realize that our divisions to be first class must also be efficient business concerns. There is the feeding of the men, the organization, the huge transport of a modern force; all these require business capacities as well as soldierly qualities. They require efficiency and acumen as well as courage. I was proud to see the New Zealand lads assume their responsibility and carry on so well. I have seen these lads, as no doubt you have seen your own in the army, the air force and the navy, rise to great responsibilities and carry on steadfastly and efficiently.

It is mainly because of the widespread capacity to take advantage of democratic opportunities, educational and otherwise, that our boys have done so well. As was stated by Mr. Mackenzie King, the boys of our army, our air force and our navy have been fighting wherever there is fighting to be done. Our boys were in the desert, in Greece and in Crete. They fought in that terrible fight, which was one of the worst experiences that could be undergone, the battle of Sidi Rezegh. They were there when Rommel was sweeping everything before him to the very gates of Egypt. Our men made a record journey from Syria down to Mersa Matruh. I well remember a letter to me from General Freyberg in which he said he was going up on to the