

ADDRESS BY RT. HON. ERNEST LAPOINTE,  
MINISTER OF JUSTICE; 1st JUNE, 1941

We are in the most momentous period in modern history. Whether it will be a tragic tale of long, painful and arduous struggle, or whether the end will be a peaceful and better world, depends upon the outcome of this conflict.

We are fighting first for survival. But we are also fighting for what Hitler took away from the Germans and would take away from us: our liberties, our ways of life, our trade unions, the freedom to do and say what we please.

No sacrifice is too great to check the black plague of the 20th century which is fighting to set us back to the 13th.

Canada is fighting for what we have not lost here and what we will always struggle to preserve.

Whether we will or not, we are in for a test of power on all fronts: military, economic, moral, psychological, as well as in matters of courage, statesmanship and the will to live.

We are at war; we must work, fight, win, or perish together!

Internal spiritual unity is the most essential factor of our effort. Dividing friends and allies is a basic feature of German strategy. That strategy here is to enlarge all the fissures in Canadian unity, aggravate all the conflicts: racial, economic, political, religious and social, that tend to divide us. Let us oppose to the enemy a united national soul.

Let there be no division of section or race, no division of nationality or religion. There is not one among us who does not have a stake in the outcome of the effort in which we are engaged.

Our country is at war; Canada is threatened and she needs now, immediately, today, the help of her children.

Those who cannot defend her in her armies on land, on sea and in the air, have the duty of helping her with their material resources. Let their money become the money of victory. It is furthermore the best way to invest and preserve it because defeat would destroy it. And that money is necessary for the weapons essential to victory.

Industry is fighting today the battle that may engage our armed forces eighteen months from now. We must see to it that when any of our soldiers reaches for a gun it is there.

The vigour and skill with which the builders of munitions, ships and planes are meeting the demand of enormous expansion of production constitute one of the most brilliant performances in the annals of Canadian industry. The machine operator has become a fighting man. This war will be won at the machine as much as at the front.

The difference between France under Hitler's boot and France fighting off the Nazis amounted to five thousand planes and ten thousand tanks which France could have bought or made. Her mistake was the mistake of her Government. That mistake Canada, the British Commonwealth and the United States shall not make.

Fellow Canadians, the British Commonwealth of nations now stands in the front line of the common struggle of free men against the greatest menace to civilization in recorded history. Its cause is the cause of all humanity. Let us be equal to our great mission, let us keep our heads up and a smile on our lips; and take my word for it, our country will come through this crisis with colours flying and the band playing.

There'll always be an England! Aye, and there'll always be a Canada!