

I should perhaps touch on the chief source of criticism of Canada which is that we do not have a system of compulsory military service. That is true, but that does not mean that we are holding back in our preparedness effort. Quite the contrary. In the opinion of the Canadian Government, Canada's defence effort would be weakened instead of strengthened by an attempt to introduce conscription at the present time. All I ask you to remember is that, when in the past the need arose for men to fight for freedom, Canada was not found wanting, either in quality or in quantity. A few days ago, our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent, placed his views before the House of Commons on this problem of compulsory military service. I cannot do better than quote him:

"...we have been endeavouring to obtain the best possible information as to the most effective way in which our contribution can be made. So far there has been brought to my attention nothing that would indicate that the institution of national selective service at this time would be beneficial. On the contrary, the information we have obtained is that it would hamper what is being done at this moment. Now, that does not mean that the situation cannot change, and it does not mean that if and when it does change there will not be changes in the manner in which our resources will be contributed to this pool of international strength. But those changes will not be recommended by this government on any sentimental grounds because of any appeals on a racial or religious basis, but on their actual effective value to the joint strength of the combined forces of the North Atlantic Alliance."

That is my story. I have welcomed this opportunity to talk about Canada and what we are doing to help strengthen the defences of the free world against aggression. Like you, we regret the necessity for such a colossal waste of human and material resources. There is so much to be done to improve the lot of mankind that must now be postponed because of the insane ambitions of the Kremlin. But as General Marshall said in his 1950 Memorial Day address, "There is nothing to be said in favour of war except that it is the lesser of two evils. For it is better than appeasement of aggression, because appeasement encourages the very aggression it seeks to prevent."

I am confident that under the inspired leadership of General Eisenhower the NATO countries will, with all speed, provide forces in being in Europe, and on this continent, that will forever end the threat of aggressive Communism.

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