

Americas, it is remarkable because of the vastness of its territory and the inexhaustible wealth of its resources. A young country whose prospects of development are unlimited, Canada is altogether immense and rich. Three oceans, filled with wealthy products, border its shores as a fairyland of lace; to the south, an imaginary boundary separates it from the most powerful of modern countries, the United States, with which it holds harmonious relations which could be set as an example to the whole world. Within, nine provinces, unequal as to size, diversified as to their particular character and products, share a territory often broken by immense rivers and lakes on which sail ocean-going ships which supplement two railway systems serving from ocean to ocean an agricultural and industrial population. So far, Canada has played an important role in world politics; to-morrow, it will be more important. But what has the future in store for us?

Wealth, resources and progress do not make a nation. Indeed, progress is a law of humanity. For generations, the present is the transition between a mediocre past and a better future. But a nation will subsist only if it can draw from itself a sufficient amount of reason to ward off causes of internal ruin or relaxation. Material forces, alone, are inefficient; the real power of a nation rests in its ideal, this invisible power which, by creating visible objects, shows the way to our souls. A nation is a soul; as Renan said, a nation, like an individual, is the convergence of a great sum of efforts, sacrifices and devotion. We shall come out of this war overburdened with the most gigantic financial effort in our history, struggling with an economy upset by the present conflict, and compelled to undergo numerous privations and sacrifices for many years to come. What class in our society will have suffered the most from the war? The one which has paid more income tax? No. The one whose easy pre-war way of living has been curtailed by rationing? No. The one upon whom war has imposed lower revenues and all kinds of annoyances? No. What class will be most affected by this war? It is our youth.

Youth will come out of this war wounded and angry. These words may surprise a few; nevertheless they are true. The foundation of a nation, youth is its ideal, and its progress also. It renovates generations; the youth of to-morrow will be what the youth of to-day formed it to be. Youth, therefore, becomes the cell which gives superiority to a nation, or renders it more decadent.

To turn our attention to youth is one of the present-day problems. I wish to speak

[Mr. L. Bertrand.]

for the youth of my country, whatever be its language, its creed, or the province it lives in. I know youth, because yesterday I was still in its ranks; I know its ambitions, its tastes, its reactions, its fears, because I have been living with it for the last four years, and shared its lost hopes, its set-backs, its bitter feelings. To-day I rise to state this: War has killed our youth, morally and physically. As a reward for the sacrifice it rendered the national cause—or rather the universal cause—youth has the right to be heard, and the right to be understood.

I have been a member here for four years. What has been said about our youth except for such purposes as mobilization or war effort? I pay tribute to the courage of our youth. Its valour gave democracy thousands of soldiers, thousands of airmen, thousands of sailors, who, on all continents, in every sky and on the seven seas, are reaping glory for themselves, besides the glory falling back on their own country. But glory fades away—military glory like any other. No sooner will the signatures be dry on the peace treaty than nations, already oblivious of the horrors of the war, will become intoxicated with the delights of peace. When they look at the future, they will unknowingly forget those whose superhuman efforts and frightful ordeals drew a veil on the bloodiest tragedy of the world's history. The characteristic of human nature is to forget; but will youth ever forget?

Youth will come out of this war with deep wounds. How many, not yet thirty years old, have come out wounded, sick, physical ruins? From now until final victory, how many will emerge in the same physical conditions, unable or almost unable to earn their living, after giving in two years, even in one year, the maximum yield of their physical power? How many, who had built up a future at a period in life when ambition overcomes all obstacles to success, were compelled to drop everything when they were called to the colours and thus destroy with their own hands the projects their courage had built up? Broken careers, jeopardized futures, ruined lives, broken-up homes, lives wilting away before full bloom; these are the actual sights. Let them start over again, one might say. This is easy to say. Easy for those whose parents are wealthy, have established industries or financial influences: But what about the others who are more numerous? I know what it means to make a success of your life when you have no influence and when your way is strewn with obstacles which the ambitions of the powerful render it all the more difficult to surmount.