

forward from time to time, to express his views upon whether or not those measures adequately meet what he and his party conceive to be the present need.

I should like to take this opportunity at once to express to the leader of the opposition my appreciation of his attitude at the time of the great crisis last September. By his silence he sought not to embarrass the government at a very critical time. It is true that he was not at that time a member of the House of Commons nor was he the leader of the opposition. He could not be leader of the opposition until he came into the house. He was, however, the leader of his party and I understand, in fact I read, criticisms directed at him for his failure to attack the administration for not having come forward at the time and indicated whether or not it was prepared to have Canada engage in a European war. I thought my hon. friend showed good judgment on that occasion, and not only good judgment but also true patriotism. He has been long enough in a government to know something of the responsibilities that a ministry incurs when dealing with great problems that affect the well-being of nations, particularly to the extent of involving war. If there are hon. members who think the attitude taken by the government last fall was wrong in maintaining a steady, thoughtful and careful position while matters were in a very critical state in Europe; if there are any hon. members who are of the opinion that the government's attitude on that occasion should have been different from what it was, I wish to say that the government will gladly afford them ample opportunity to debate that issue at an appropriate time during the course of the present session. I believe, as I felt at the time, that the greatest service that this or any other country can render at a time of great need or peril is to be prepared, in whatever it does, to act in a united and whole-hearted manner. The administration, knowing the critical situation that existed last fall, took the view that if at all possible no premature word or utterance on its part should in any way become responsible for the slightest occasion of disunity or even of question in the minds of the people of Canada. I believe that our attitude in that respect has been proven to be more than justified.

Some members of my hon. friend's party were, however, very critical of the administration. They seemed to feel that we ought to declare that Canada was prepared to go into a European war the moment war broke out, and make that declaration even before

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

it was at all apparent what the particular issue was likely to be in the event of war, or whether or not Great Britain herself was likely to be involved. It might as well be said now, at the beginning of this session, because it will be the attitude of this government for its time, that before this country goes into any war this parliament will be consulted.

The other day I was reading a most interesting book recently published, a work which is full of valuable personal and political information, written by a well known former hon. member of this house and, I am happy to say, a former colleague in a previous Liberal administration. The volume is one of *Recollections, Political and Personal*, by the Hon. E. M. Macdonald, and has just been published. Mr. Macdonald's book contains amongst other of its contents, a great deal of valuable historical material in reference to the policies which have been adopted by the respective parties in bygone years. In reading Mr. Macdonald's book I came across a statement of the Liberal position with respect to participation by Canada in conflicts which might take place in other parts of the world and the attitude taken thereon by the Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier as long as thirty years ago. I should like to read that statement to-night because at the time it was made it was expressive of Liberal policy concerning the relation of this country to other countries at a time of war. It was a statement of the Liberal policy which was accepted then, a statement which sets forth the Liberal policy as it has been followed ever since. I wish to give it as a statement of the Liberal policy as it is to-day and as it will continue to be under the present Liberal administration.

At page 331 of Mr. Macdonald's book, referring to the debate that took place in this House of Commons on the Naval Service Act in 1910, the author quotes Sir Wilfrid Laurier speaking in that debate as follows. Here are the words of Sir Wilfrid:

I am a Canadian first, last and all the time. I am a British subject by birth, by tradition, by conviction; by the conviction that under British institutions my native land has found a measure of security and freedom it could not have found under any other regime.

Then in another place at that time:

If England is at war we are at war and liable to attack. I do not say we will always be attacked; neither do I say that we would take part in all the wars of England. That is a matter that must be guided by circumstances, upon which the Canadian parliament will have to pronounce and will have to decide in its own best judgment.