

To His Excellency Major-General the Right Honourable the Earl of Athlone, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, a member of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Grand Master of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, one of His Majesty's Personal Aides-de-Camp, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of the Dominion of Canada.

May it Please Your Excellency:

We, His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the House of Commons of Canada, in parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both houses of parliament.

I should like first to express my thanks to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) for the great kindness he has shown in asking me to speak to this motion. It is an honour which he has conferred upon the constituency of Grey-Bruce; but I know that every elector in that constituency will join with me when I say that the honour was actually conferred upon the armed forces of the dominion, for in all probability, as the Prime Minister has said, in 1943 all our armed forces will be in action, and for that reason this will be perhaps the most memorable year in the history of the dominion.

Up to the present time the Canadian army has not taken a prominent part in the war, but this year it will reach the peak of its strength, when it will be composed of two army corps. When it goes into battle it will have more tanks and more mechanized equipment than any other army of like size in the world, and in most instances, if not in all, the equipment which it will take into battle will have been made in Canada. It will be led by young officers, most of them younger than I am, who, along with their troops, have been trained for that day by one of the greatest soldiers of the British empire. More than that, our army has been planned and equipped by one of the ministers of this government who knows what an army ought to be, and who has created it accordingly.

The admiration and respect for the Canadian army which I met on all sides in Great Britain were based to some extent, it is true, on the reputation made by the Canadian corps in the last war, and I must say that every member of the Canadian army hopes that he will measure up to that standard. If he does, the Canadian army will take a leading part in the effort of the empire in this war.

While I was overseas I had the pleasure of

being principally with English army units and in English schools, but I did get around to the Canadian army at various times. If I were to mention only one incident in particular it would be the three delightful weeks I spent with the regiment from the home town of the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Ryan). That regiment was placed under, I suppose, rather strange circumstances. The boys were keen for battle and were prepared for it. Their morale was exceptionally high. May I state generally that the morale of the Canadian army was high when I went over there, and it was much higher when I came back, a condition I believe entirely due to the Dieppe raid. In that battle we found that the heroism of the Canadian soldier under the most trying circumstances is equal to any task he may be given. If there is one thing which does depress a soldier it is to find, after he has been completely trained, that he must spend a period of inactivity, during which time he is not being used in battle. Nevertheless when I say this, I am not saying that the Canadian soldiers in Great Britain are dissatisfied with the present condition. Each one, without exception, appreciates the great honour the war office has conferred upon him in saving him to act as the spearhead of the attack when we seek to liberate the peoples of Europe from German domination. That understanding of his ultimate goal and ultimate honour has made the Canadian soldier curb his impatience, and eager to train against that day.

Naturally when overseas I took the opportunity to compare the three armies, that of Great Britain, the United States troops which were present, and our own. I also had some time to see what the civilian population was doing, and if the house would permit I should like to tell briefly what I saw. The male civilian in Great Britain is either in war industry or medically unfit for that work, and is carrying on an essential civilian occupation. He is a member of the home guard and takes his turn at fire watching, checking blackouts and performing similar duties. As a member of the home guard he drills on at least one and sometimes two nights a week, and in the summer months from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning he is in the field with the active army receiving instruction in further defensive tactics. That is a weekly programme sufficient to test the strength of many people listed as category A in the active army. His duties, however, are increasing rather than diminishing, because each member of the home guard in Great Britain realizes that in a short time nearly all the armed forces of