

"Britain to-day is not engaged in an ordinary contest. The war in which she is engaged will in all probability, nay, in absolute certainty, stagger the world with its magnitude and its horror. But the war in which she is engaged is for as noble a cause as ever impelled a nation to risk her all upon the arbitrament of the sword. That is no longer a question which is at issue, the judgment of the world has already pronounced upon that point. I speak not only of those nations which are engaged in this war with Britain, but of nations which stand neutral, which are not engaged on one side or on the other in this struggle. Take the testimony of the ablest men of those nations, and that testimony is unanimous, it is without dissenting voice, that to-day the allied nations are fighting for freedom, against oppression, for democracy against autocracy, for civilization against the reversion to that barbarism in which the supreme law, the only law, is the law of might. (Prolonged cheering.)

"It is an additional source of pride to us that Britain did not seek that war. It is a matter of history, that one of the noblest pages of the history of Britain, that she never drew a sword until every alternative had been exhausted to secure and to keep an honorable peace. For a time it was hoped that Sir Edward Grey, who on more than one occasion has saved Europe from the awful scourge of war, would again avert such a calamity. But, sir, it will go down on a still nobler page of history that Britain could have averted this war if she had been willing to forego the position which she has maintained for many centuries as the head of European civilization, to desert her allies, to sacrifice her obligations, to allow the German Emperor to trample upon heroic Belgium, to infringe upon the rights of isolated France, and to put down his booted heel upon continental Europe. At that price Britain could have secured peace. These are the proposals of the German Emperor. The answer of Britain was: 'Your proposals are infamous, and rather than accept them we enter into this war.' There is not to-day all over the universe a British subject, there is not outside the British Empire a single man whose admiration is not greater to-day for Britain by reason of this noble and firm attitude. (Cheers.)

"So to-day Britain is at war. Her fleets are maintaining the freedom of the ocean, her armies have already crossed the Channel for plains made famous more than once by British valor, this time to take a place in the fighting line beside the small and heroic Belgian army, to maintain the independence of Belgium, and to render assistance to the almost as heroic France, whose efforts are to-day concentrated in an effort to repel an invader, and to maintain and to save intact that which to a proud nation makes life worth living.

"I am well aware that the small contingent of some 20,000 men which we are going to send will have to show double courage and double steadiness if they are to give any account of themselves among the millions of men who are now converging towards the frontier of France, where the battle of giants is to be decided. But, sir, it is the opinion of the British Government, as disclosed by the correspondence which was brought down, that the assistance of our troops, humble as it may be, will be appreciated, either for the material help that they give or for the greater moral help which will be rendered, whereby it will be seen by the world that this daughter of old England intends to stand by her in this conflict. (Cheers.)

"When the call comes our answer goes at once. It goes in the classic language of the British answer to the call of duty: 'Ready, aye, ready!' (Renewed cheering.)

"If my words can be heard beyond the walls of this House, in the Province from which I come, among the men whose blood flows in my own veins, I should like them to remember that in taking their place to-day in the ranks of the Canadian army to fight for the cause of the allied nations a double honor rests upon them; the very cause for which they are called upon to fight will be to them doubly sacred.

"We are not all in this country of the same origin; we are not all of British or of French descent. I was struck by the words of the hon. member for South Oxford (Mr. Sutherland), in reference to our fellow-citizens of German origin. They are certainly among our best citizens; this has been acknowledged on more than one occasion. They are certainly proud of the land of their adoption, to many of them the land of their birth, and they have shown more than once their devotion to British institutions. But, sir, they would not be men if they had not in their hearts a deep feeling of affection for the land of their ancestors. Nobody would blame them for that. There is nothing, perhaps, so painful as the situation in which mind and heart are driven in opposite directions.

"But let me tell my fellow-countrymen of German origin that Britain has no quarrel with the German people. We respect and admire, as much as they do, the proud race from which they have descended. We acknowledge all that the world owes to the German people for their contribution to the happiness of mankind through their advancement in literature, in art and in science. But perhaps our German fellow-citizens will permit me to say that in the struggle for constitutional freedom, which has been universal in Europe, during the last century, the German people have not made the same advance as some of the other nations of Europe. I am sure that they will agree with me that if the institutions of the lands of their ancestors were as free as the institutions of the land of their adoption this cruel war would never have taken place.

"Nothing can be truer than the words which are reported to have been uttered by a German soldier made a prisoner in Belgium, that this war is not a war of the people. So if there is a silver lining to this darkest cloud which now overhangs Europe, it is that, as a result and consequence of this war, the German people will take the determination to put an end forever to this personal imperialism, and to make it impossible forever afterward for one man to throw millions of the human race into all the horrors of modern warfare.

"We must know, and we cannot forget, that the issue of battle is always uncertain. Indeed, this has been proved already in the contest which is now going on. Invading Belgium some two weeks ago, the German Emperor invoked the memories of his ancestors, and called upon the blessing of God. The German Emperor might have remembered that there is a treaty guaranteeing the independence, the integrity, the neutrality of Belgium, and that this treaty was signed by the most illustrious of his ancestors in the last century, Emperor William I. of Germany. He might have remembered also that there is a precept in the divine Book to this effect: 'Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.'

"But, sir, the German Emperor threw his legions against this landmark in the fulness of his lust of power, with the full expectation that the very weight of his