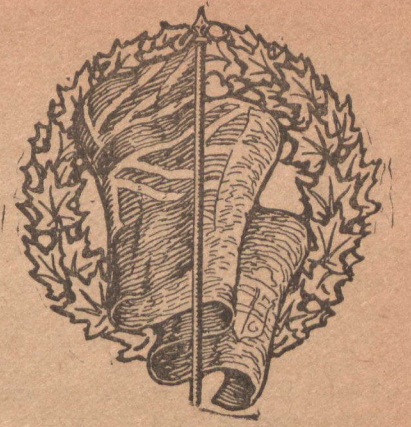




CANADIAN COURIER



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THIS DAY THREE YEARS AGO

CANADA went to war with Germany, August 4, 1914. Some people say Canada did no such thing. One set of objectors say that when England is at war Canada is also at war. Quite wrong. We were under no technical obligation to send a man or a gun. We could have stayed out. Any attempt of England to dragoon us into war would have been resisted. We are Imperial free agents.

Another set of critics allege that Canada was never under an obligation of any kind, to go to war when England did. Wrong again. The fact that the country went to war before Parliament met to consider the question proves that there must have been some obligation. Going to war is not an Imperial picnic. We are not a crazy people. We went to war as a matter of common duty, based upon Canadian sentiment and considerations of our own nationhood. If the Canadian Parliament which ratified the action of the Premier in offering troops went to war for anything else than a Canadian reason, there must have been a mistake. The battalions we raised and sent overseas were not British, but Canadian, battalions, paid for by Canadian money which was raised by Canadian war credits. The mere fact that Parliament did not technically declare war upon Germany proves only that in such a matter we are not a sovereign state and that such a declaration, even if it had been made, would have been of no value in the case.

Canada went to war for a very good reason. Nothing but a good reason ever would have taken 400,000 men out of civil life into khaki at such a time.

The reason was—The Stake. Canada's existence as a free people was imperilled, just as England's, France's, Russia's, Italy's, America's, Australia's. The common peril gave those nations a common reason, aim and responsibility. To have kept ourselves out of war would have been an everlasting monument of disgrace to Canada. And at that point we shift the onus from mere patriotism or historic sentiment to something more Canadian to get the real reason why we went to war, and the reason why we are now under obligation to stay in the war with a crescendo till the end of it and to the complete fulfilment of our national obligations. We don't have to believe the rumour that German agents had planted cement caissons on the Isle of Orleans to make gun-emplacements for the bombardment of Quebec. All we need to do is to consider,

Canada's Stake in The War.

And what have we at stake? As a people, far more than any other country, according to what we have borne and suffered in history. Of all countries in the world, Canada at the opening of this century had put herself most in the world's debt for so young a people. In fifteen years we had gone into the ledgers of the world for money, people and protection on the seas in order to develop the greatest resources country left in the main lines of world traffic east and west. We have spent acres of newspaper space glorifying our potentialities as a country and our achievements as a young people. Almost any railway folder in Canada was a certificate of character to what we had done, were doing and still intended to do in the epic of world-progress.

END of the much-talked-of Three Years of War finds Canada resolute, unexhausted, but not united. The great things we have done are now being discounted by the great things yet to do that we differ in opinions about the best way of doing. This is a war of Hard Facts, not of Political Doctrines. And the biggest things we have done in peace should be surpassed by the big things of war.

By THE EDITOR



ANSWERING THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR:

BELGIUM was the gatekeeper of European liberty; the highest, most onerous and most dangerous trust ever imposed on a people. The Junkers have thrown the Chancellor into the wastepaper basket, along with the "scrap of paper," and Junkerdom will follow. It is the business of the German people to form any Government they choose, but it is our business to restore Belgium to a free and independent people—and not to a protectorate. The road to Bagdad is open. The Zeppelins are gone. Now we have to deal with Turks and U-boats, good company one for the other. I would disillusion the Chancellor. England will not be put out of business.

That national achievement was part of a world-wide movement; as much a part of world-prosperity and betterment as anything ever done by any people. If we had chosen to isolate ourselves in a time of world war, we had no business world-girdling ourselves in a time of peace. All we had as a nation and all we expected to become from sea to sea, was as much dependent upon stable conditions abroad as the far greater, because older, nationhood of the United States. In mapping out Canada as a home of world peoples we had paid no great historic price for the right to stay on the world's map; no price such as has been paid some time by every great people under the sun. All we expect to make

this country—and most of it is yet to be made—is conditioned on the completion of just this world-job that the free nations have on hand August 4, 1917.

When England declared war on Germany, August 4, 1914, a man named Kitchener was on his way to Egypt. That man was recalled from his ship's state room and made Secretary of State for War. In accepting the post he said he would take office,

For Three Years or the Duration of the War.

Kitchener did not predict that the war would last three years. Those who read his words that way are the same people who read Pope's famous line, "Lo, the poor Indian of untutored mind," and ever afterwards call the Indian Lo. Kitchener was not a prophet. He was a great soldier. He knew the war would not be over in 1915, or probably 1916, whatever he knew or did not know about the war strength of Germany. He was willing to be War Secretary for longer than the duration of the war, if the war should quit before the end of three years; and if it lasted longer than three years he would stick to his guns. The only sure thing he seemed to say was that the war would not last longer than he did. But it did.

WE had been so used to regarding Kitchener as the great war-man of the world that it took us two years to realize that no one man's idea of war was being enacted in Europe. We called our army Kitchener's Army. One author called it Kitchener's Mob. The early Canadian contingent that swung away from Valcartier and Quebec in October, 1914, was part of K's army. His message to the First Hundred Thousand was a classic then along with "Tipperary."

Looking back over the war from the Canadian angle we recall a vast moving picture of impressions, hopes, fears, doubts, patriotic impulses and political disturbances. Just now they are all focussed on a possible election. For a day or two we'll forget that and remember the war. The war is the biggest thing we shall have to remember in our time. Nobody now living will ever outgrow it. And if our children don't understand this war when they grow up we don't expect them to become real citizens of Canada.

We rather expect our own historians to write the story of this with a real Canadian turn. Those writers must be bigger minds than any of our past historians. In the light of how we feel now about the war and how we felt about it the morning of August 5, 1914, we expect these philosophers to re-