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FACTS VS. EXAGGERATION

PREMIER MACKENZIE KING'S statement on the war situation, made in the House of Commons yesterday, is not only timely but significant. It should act as a steadying influence on public opinion, which is apt to be influenced too easily in the direction of optimism or the reverse by the daily reports. In such a war as this there must of necessity be, as Mr. King pointed out, many matters which give us grave concern as well as many things to cheer us.

There would seem to be ample ground for the Premier's declaration that it remains an incontrovertible truth that the broad outlines of British strategy for ultimate victory as planned from the outset are and were fundamentally sound, contemplating a war not of months but of years, and an increase in and extension of the theatres of military operations. All the developments that have taken place since the collapse of France tend to justify this attitude.

It is difficult to understand upon what grounds the Leader of the Opposition based his statement of Thursday last that "the war situation in Europe is more serious today than at any time since the fall of France." All the facts combine to demonstrate the contrary, and Premier Mackenzie King was using conservative words when he said that the situation for Britain and her Allies is much better today than it was when France collapsed, despite the fact that the war is increasing in fury.

It should not have been necessary for Mr. King to challenge Mr. Hanson's reference to "the virtual destruction of the cities of Birmingham, Bristol and Southampton." Undoubtedly and admittedly great damage was done to property in all three cities, but there is also overwhelming testimony to the fact that the damage done to military objectives and to establishments engaged in producing war essentials was comparatively limited. To

talk about a city the size of Birmingham being virtually destroyed, therefore, is to indulge in an exaggerated form of expression which should never be employed by anybody holding the responsible position of Leader of the Opposition. It is misleading and absolutely unjustified, on the testimony of many who have visited these cities, particularly neutral observers, and have both cabled and broadcast what they have seen, with the reiterated declaration that no obstacles whatever were placed in their way of seeing all the damage that had been done.

Mr. Greenwood, speaking on his responsibility as a member of Mr. Churchill's Cabinet, told us only last week:

"With close knowledge of the industrial damage we have suffered, I say unhesitatingly that it has not eaten to any serious extent into our industrial capacity."

Mr. Greenwood and other Ministers, however, were at pains to emphasize the danger of estimating either German resources or power too lightly. Mr. Churchill has hardly once omitted to give this same warning when addressing the House of Commons, and Mr. Mackenzie King, who has from the first reiterated in the gravest words the long and terrible ordeal which faces the Empire in this war, once more tells the people of Canada that "we shall completely err if for a moment we fail to recognize how appalling is the danger which threatens, not only Britain, but civilization, and be tempted thereby to relax any and every effort to put forth the utmost of our strength."

The Premier even went further than he has yet gone when he declared:

"It is wholly probable that we shall witness much of anarchy as well as of war ere the death-grapple between totalitarianism and democracy has told its tale.

"No one can say that the world, even now, may not be heading for Armageddon. . . . In order to overthrow the enemy and to save mankind, it is going to take all that all of us can give."