

The action suggested is really not to the point. I appreciate the motives of those who urge such action, but I think they exaggerate the importance of legal forms and formulas. Canada's decision in any case that can now be envisaged will not be determined by the legal position. We would not go into a war merely because of legal uncertainty as to our power to stay out. We would not stay out of a war merely because we had provided unquestioned technical freedom to do so. Our country's decisions on such vital matters, now or later, will depend on deeper forces, they will depend on the thoughts and feelings of our people.

While another world war will, I trust, never recur, it is desirable nevertheless to consider some questions which would arise in the event of our participation in such a conflict. That participation could not be passive or formal, nor could it be unplanned or irresponsible. It would be necessary to consider in consultation with others involved and with regard to the objectives and operations of the enemy, what would be the most effective form our action and our cooperation could take.

It is clear that the conditions determining the nature of participation in such a conflict have undergone a great change since the last war. The balance of world power has shifted, and Canada has to keep its Pacific as well as its Atlantic coast in mind. From both the military and the economic aspect, the attitude of the United States would be immensely more important for the world and for us, than twenty years ago. The weapons and tactics of war have materially changed; naval conditions have perhaps not greatly altered, so far as the sea reaches, but armies have become mechanized, great Maginot or Siegfried lines bar the possibility of rapid infantry advance. Aeroplanes have brought new resources and scope to other arms in joint operations, and have in themselves given war new range, new flexibility and new terrors. Mechanization on land and in the air, and the colossal demands for supplies and renewed equipment, demands which would begin far beyond where the demands of the last war left off, greatly increase the importance of the economic factor, the indispensability of adequate supplies and staying power-factors in which the democratic countries are overwhelmingly strong.

The change in the world balance of power, the change in the strategic conditions, the change in economic needs and in relative industrial capacity, have brought about a marked decentralization of defence activities

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

in the British commonwealth. They have brought about a greater preoccupation of each part with its own defence, a greater responsibility for that defence, a greater self-containment in the provision of the means of defence. Anyone who has followed the discussion of defence not only in the United Kingdom but in Australia and South Africa, is familiar with that fact. One strategic fact is clear: the days of great expeditionary forces of infantry crossing the oceans are not likely to recur. Two years ago, I expressed in this house the view that it was extremely doubtful if any of the British dominions would ever send another expeditionary force to Europe.

One political fact is equally clear: in a war to save the liberty of others, and thus our own, we should not sacrifice our own liberty or our own unity. Planning and coordination would be essential, but the necessary coordination could be made, and if this government were in power it would be made, without sacrificing those vital ends and conditions of our existence. Profits could and would be rigidly controlled, and profiteering suppressed. But men's lives and men's wills cannot be put on the same basis as goods and profits. The present government believes that conscription of men for overseas service would not be a necessary or an effective step. Let me say that so long as this government may be in power, no such measure will be enacted. We have full faith in the readiness of Canadian men and women to rally for the defence of their country and their liberties, and to resist aggression by any country seeking to dominate the world by force. There is in our people, in every part of Canada, a deep sense of duty, a power of facing realities, a tenacious courage, that would rise to any emergency.

I have spoken a good deal of war and the possibility of war. In a review of foreign affairs, under present world conditions, it is necessary to give that subject special emphasis. I do not wish, however, to go further in that direction than is absolutely necessary. There is no doubt that the outlook is disturbed. The heaping up of rival armaments, the clash of new doctrines, the concentration of power in a few hands, are factors which make it necessary to become prepared for whatever may happen. It is not possible to ignore that situation. But while there is no ground for an easy-going optimism, neither, I believe, is there ground for persistent pessimism. We should be on our guard against reckless rumours and the credulous acceptance of rumours. I do not believe in the prophecies of inevitable wars and forecasts of the inevit-