

*Vimy Ridge*

remote and unknown part, but a tract of land, as sacred as any in Europe, consecrated with the blood of human sacrifice of Canada's own sons in the cause of the world's freedom. This is the gift which we to-day as a parliament acknowledge with gratitude to France, and this we do, deeply moved by all that it implies of a close relationship between the British and French people. We recognize in the gift this larger significance, that above and beyond all the changes that time may bring, changes of the past and uncertainties of the present, there is an enduring friendship between the French and the British peoples, which stands for all that is best in the maintenance of human liberty, and the freedom of the world.

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I desire to express my warm approval of this resolution. The site of Vimy is, beyond comparison, of the various battlefields of the war, the most closely associated in the hearts of the Canadian people with all that the war involved in story and in sacrifice. I am moved by one regret, that the feelings of this parliament, as embalmed in the resolution, feelings of undoubted gratitude and appreciation, cannot be expressed, rather than by me, by one who like yourself, Mr. Speaker, or many others assembled here, is linked by memories more sacred with all that sacrifice. I stood on Vimy Ridge four years ago, and again in 1921. As an observer, I could see something of the story of turmoil, of blood, of terror, of heroism, in which the sons of this country bore so conspicuous a part, and I know that Canadians returning there in the years to come, will be filled with feelings of gratitude to the nation for whom the boys of this country fought so gallantly and who, in recognition of all that has been accomplished, have given us this historic site. It is not in any way related to the question of overcoming a difficulty of purchase that we recognize the value of this gift; the significance of it all lies in the feelings that prompted the French parliament and the French people. That is what makes the gift infinitely more valuable than would be its acquirement in any other way.

Since the war ended, in the tragedy of the events that have ensued, differences of view, differences that I cannot help but think are intellectual and intellectual alone, have unfortunately, in some degree, parted the pathways of Britain and of France. I think I can say that notwithstanding differences of conclusion as to methods that have arisen, the heart of Britain is to-day in sympathy with France, and if the test were necessary, would be shown to be in sympathy to a

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

degree equal to that which prompted her efforts in four years of war.

I believe the action of France in this regard will meet with fitting response throughout the whole of this Dominion, and I hope that years will not measure the time before the heart of Canada will be severed from France. We fought that France might be free; we fought as well that Britain might be free; we fought as well that Canada might be free. In the memory of the common struggle and the common sacrifice, we are linked, and linked forever.

Mr. ROBERT FORKE (Brandon): Mr. Speaker, I should like, in a few words, to associate myself with the sentiments expressed in this resolution. In these trying days, when troubles surround us on every hand, incidents such as these reveal to us the inherent goodness and kindness of the human heart. I know there is an enduring memorial inscribed in the breasts and hearts of the Canadian people to those splendid men who went overseas and sacrificed so much for us. The passing years will, no doubt, obliterate in some degree the memory of those great gifts bestowed upon the Canadian people, and I rejoice in the fact that there will be erected upon the soil of France a monument to those sons of Canada; and that—lest we forget—that monument will still stand during ages in the future. I also agree that it is fitting that you yourself, Mr. Speaker, should have had a part in the negotiations in connection with this splendid gift which France has seen fit to make to the Canadian people. I will not add any more than to say that I am sure that once again this day we remember with gratitude the heroism and devotion of those who sacrificed their all for the freedom of the world and for the good of our Canadian land.

Hon. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Minister of Marine and Fisheries) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, Canada, to-day, in the eloquent terms uttered by its Prime Minister, sends forth to France the acknowledgement of its gratitude. The leaders of the other parliamentary parties have associated themselves with these sentiments; perhaps it is befitting that a French voice should join in this unanimous expression of the heartfelt feelings of the Canadian nation. This plot of land that we possess in France has been rendered illustrious and sacred by the heroism of our soldiers, they have written there a page of history that the sons of Canada will always read with pride and emotion. By granting it to us, France wished that it should ever be dedi-