

Canadians who went overseas shows that, with all the ill effects conscription had in our country, it exercised but a small effect upon the war.

On the other hand, neutrality, or independence, or even failure to cooperate with Great Britain, is as repugnant to a large section of Canadians as is conscription to another large section. It seems to me, therefore, that we must adopt a sane middle course in order to preserve a united Canada and, indeed, to maintain this empire. The policy that I suggest is the one which I gave three days ago in an interview: first, that there should be no conscription of Canadians to serve outside the borders of Canada; second, that we should have full cooperation with the British empire short of the conscription of men to serve outside our borders. We should fully cooperate by means of—for example—volunteer units, whether air forces or any other units which voluntarily choose to go. I mention particularly air forces because some months ago another outstanding military authority in Canada, who held an important position overseas during the great war, told me that at the end of that war almost forty per cent of the whole air force of the empire consisted of Canadians.

Mr. POWER: Seventy-five per cent.

Mr. MANION: That would make my argument very much stronger, but I should not like to adopt that figure; I quote what he gave me. But even forty per cent coming from the Dominion of Canada would be a huge proportion, considering the population of the empire. It was pointed out to me at that time, and I believe the fact is admitted in view of the magnificent records of so many Canadians in the Royal Air Force, that Canadians have a special aptitude for that arm of the service. We can also cooperate by acting as a training ground for Great Britain and, if desired, for other parts of the empire; by supplying munitions, food and so forth, and by fully protecting our own territory.

In regard to conscription, Mr. Chamberlain's view is indicated in a dispatch dated March 29 from London to yesterday's *Ottawa Evening Journal*, as follows:

The strength of Great Britain's territorial army will be raised to 340,000 officers and men, it was announced in the House of Commons to-day by Prime Minister Chamberlain.

At the same time the Prime Minister turned his back on conscription and pinned his faith to the voluntary system to get the men needed for the territorial field army which now numbers 130,000 on peacetime establishment.

So we have the British example to follow, as well. I could quote, although I shall not

do so at length, the proceedings of the imperial conferences of 1923 and 1926, in which is emphasized what is the chief duty of each of the dominions, of each part of the empire.

The primary responsibility of each portion of the empire represented at the conference for its own local defence.

Perhaps I had better quote the previous few paragraphs to put the statement in its proper sequence:

At the imperial conference of 1923, a resolution on defence was passed, of which the following is a part:

1. The conference affirms that it is necessary to provide for the adequate defence of the territories and trade of the several countries comprising the British empire.

2. In this connection the conference expressly recognizes that it is for the parliaments of the several parts of the empire, upon the recommendations of their respective governments, to decide the nature and extent of any action which should be taken by them.

3. Subject to this provision, the conference suggests the following as guiding principles:—

(a) The primary responsibility of each portion of the empire represented at the conference for its own local defence.

In 1926, after discussion of the defence policies with the different parts of the empire, the conference went on record as reaffirming the resolutions adopted at the last session, the imperial conference of 1923 from which I have just quoted.

I have other reasons for thinking it is improbable that an expeditionary force on anything like the scale which existed in the last war will ever again be expected of Canada. I am going to take the liberty of quoting the words of the Prime Minister himself, who, in a speech on March 25, 1937, spoke as follows:

I may be entirely wrong, but I doubt very much if the British government itself will ever send another expeditionary force to Europe. I think it is extremely doubtful if any of the British dominions will ever send another expeditionary force to Europe. Were war to come on suddenly, I think we would find that the conditions of a world conflict would be so different from what they were in the last war, that anything in the nature of expeditionary forces to be sent from one continent to another would occasion a good deal more than second thought.

My thought is that the Prime Minister surely based this statement on some information given him by Great Britain, because neither he nor I can claim to be an expert, and I assume he must have had some authority for making such a statement as that.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: British ministers said the same thing a couple of years ago.