

Our Prime Minister's Inspiring Leadership

DURING the week-end we have been reading one of the great documents of our time — a document which will be an inspiring record for all future generations of Canadians.

We refer to the full Hansard report of the speech which the Prime Minister delivered in Parliament at Ottawa on Tuesday last — the 31st anniversary of his entry into the House as Minister of Labor — in reply to the address in which the Hon. R. B. Hanson complained that Canada's contribution to the first Battle of Britain has been "rather pitiful."

This contribution, by the way, is the one which the Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison, then British Minister of Supply, referred to on September 16 last as "colossal," adding:

"If ever I was tempted to indulge in a mental slump — which I seldom am, being an incurable optimist — I immediately would think of what Canada *is doing* and going to do. That is more than enough to knock the bottom out of any fit of the blues."

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IT HAS been said that there are none among the present public men of Canada with the pure eloquence of Laurier or the command of metaphor which distinguished Sir George Foster, but that on the other hand, among Premier King's contemporaries there is not one who rises to such heights of noble thought, nobly expressed, as Mr. King himself achieves.

That, we think, is a just estimate. Witness the peroration of the speech we have referred to — a speech occupying 20 pages of Hansard and containing a masterly and well-documented review of the war and Canada's part in it. Dealing with the dependence of the dictators upon material power to achieve their ends, he said:

"Material power alone, however, is not an enduring power. Strip domination of its material trappings and there is nothing left. Freedom, truth and justice belong to a different realm. They are not material things capable of being consumed and destroyed; they are of the mind and of the spirit, they belong to the eternal realities. They are attributes of God Himself. In the end they are certain to triumph. In their conflict with those who make of material power an end in itself, those who treasure the world of mind and spirit may, for the preservation of their physical existence, find it necessary to forge and to use against their adversaries the weapons of material power. It is well to remember

that 'he that liveth by the sword shall perish by the sword' is a part of Christian doctrine. To my mind the simple test of the right or wrong of any aim or institution is: Can it endure? Domination by a single dictator or group of dictators may last for a time. It may extend its sway and its sweep, but it cannot endure. Freedom, truth and justice crushed to earth will rise again. It is the breath of God which alone gives life to the bodies of men. Freedom, truth and justice, these will endure; for not only do they give life but they continue to give it more abundantly."

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LIKE so many of the great men all down through history, Mr. King is a student of the Bible and draws some of his finest inspirations from it. To win the present war, he said, it is necessary to "put on the whole armour of God," for:

"Let it never be forgotten that 'we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' Let us make sure that the helmet is also one of salvation; the sword, one of the spirit; and the shield, one of faith; that our loins are girt about with truth and that our breastplate is one of righteousness, and that our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

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AND then his last word, so characteristic of the main purpose of his life — the seeking of the greatest good for the greatest number. While emphasizing the point that the first task of a civilization which would save itself is to "slay the dragon which has been fascinating its victims by fear, poisoning the springs of their moral and intellectual being at the source and which would prey upon their vitals for years to come," he said:

"In equal measure, however, we must strive throughout the struggle itself, and more than ever when the evil dragon of Naziism is slain, to see that never again, in our or in any other land, shall the gods of material power, of worldly possessions and of special privilege be permitted to exercise their sway. Never again must we allow any man or any group of men to subjugate by fear and to crush by the power of might the spirit and the lives of honest and humble men."

Do you not agree with us when we say that this speech will be an inspiring record for all future generations — just as it is an inspiration to us of this generation, called now to the greatest task in our whole lives?