

seas. I realized some time ago that it would be an almost hopeless task for me, as a minister of the Crown representing the Canadian Government overseas, to convey to the people a picture which would accurately represent the activities of our army across the water. After the armistice came about on the 11th of November, we commenced to get out a report on the subject, and we succeeded in having that report completed. We could not do very much work on the report before the armistice, because the officers and men who were in a position to assist in the work were fully occupied. I had the honour of laying this report on the table of the House a couple of weeks ago. While it is a large volume, comprising over 600 pages, I think it is fair to say that the volume could have been much larger—indeed, that there might have been two or three volumes just as large—and yet contain, without padding, matters of very great interest in connection with the overseas forces. My task today is to touch upon, as briefly as I can, a few of the most important points in which I think the public may be interested; of course, I cannot do more than touch upon the fringe of the subject.

At the request of the Prime Minister, I went to England in November, 1917, to accept the position of Minister of the Overseas Military Forces of Canada. I accepted the position, with some misgivings, knowing to some extent what the responsibilities were. I realized the difficulty involved in being so far from the seat of Government and from the people of Canada, and of explaining to the people and to my colleagues the necessity for such action as was required from time to time in connection with the carrying on of the war. In fact, from first to last it has been difficult to convey to the people an explanation of the many necessary things that had to be done.

The war was conducted on a tremendous scale. It was difficult for the people of Great Britain to understand the many things that had to be done. The war was, you might say, one surprise after another to the people of Great Britain, and perhaps more so to the people of Canada, who were so far removed from the scene of hostilities. I do not know that any one has prophesied what the effect would be upon Canada of sending such a large part of our population on this mission overseas, of holding these men in restraint, of subjecting them to military discipline for such long periods.

No one, it seems to me, has carefully studied the effect which this phase of our participation in the war will ultimately have upon Canada—in fact, the effect which it is having upon Canada to-day—or the political effect, using the word "political" in its broadest sense—which it will have upon this country. It would be well for us to stop, to consider, to reflect upon the difficulties which we shall have to face in the future in relation to the great task which we undertook under the obligation which we entered into in connection with the war.

The soil of Belgium and of France will always be sacred to Canadians, particularly to those whose loved ones lie there. But out of 420,913 men whom we sent overseas, 264,599 are alive; and for that we should be duly thankful. We rendered great service in the war; our achievements were great. Surely we may hope that this magnificent country will reap some benefit from these sacrifices, aside from the benefit which comes from our having helped to win the war. Surely we may hope that the result will be to make Canada a better country to live in; to make our people a better people, if that be possible.

It is not my intention this afternoon to attempt to deal with the operations of the Canadian corps at the front, because in the time at my disposal it would be impossible for me on the floor of this House to do justice to the magnificent way in which our soldiers conducted themselves in active service. From time to time in the press a record has been given of the operations that were carried out, and in the report which I placed on the table of the House there is a lengthy record of the operations of the Canadian corps during the last one hundred days of the war, which period constituted its crowning effort. The report to which I refer is a preliminary one in the view of General Currie, who was chiefly responsible for it, and who had it written. I understand from General Currie that he has some one now engaged on writing a complete history of the operations of the Canadian corps in the war, including the last one hundred days, and that history will be available at a later date.

The tasks of the Canadian corps were most difficult; the Canadian Corps was always to be found where the fighting was most fierce; and by its valour, patience and skill it brought renown to Canada; its record will endure for all time in the history not only of Canada, but of the world. Its com-

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