

country; but unfortunately the regular business of the country is far outweighed by the necessities and terrible responsibilities of the war. Although we can rejoice that the terrible movement of the German army which was in progress while we were here in the month of August last has been baffled and most victoriously repulsed—that movement, the object of which was the occupation of Paris and the crushing of France—still, notwithstanding this early triumph, we must recognize that the horizon is still dark and very much clouded, and unfortunately we cannot see any sign on the horizon which would lead us to hope for an early return of peace. At the outset of the hostilities one man there was who had a clear vision of what was impending, and that man was Lord Kitchener when he stated that the war must be a long protracted struggle, and that perhaps three years would not see the end of it. Many there perhaps were at the time who were inclined to think that this was a pessimistic view, and who believed and hoped that the events would falsify it. And, considering the weapons, the terrible engines of destruction which the application of the discoveries of modern science has added to the art of war—if I may degrade so far the word art—and considering also that European militarism has forced millions of men into armies, perhaps the supposition was not unnatural that, whichever side might win, the struggle must be short and decisive, as it had been in 1866 in the war between Prussia and Austria, and as it had been in the war of 1870 between Prussia and her allies and France. Such was undoubtedly the view of the Kaiser and the German staff, and if they gave any heed to the defence which was forecasted by the word of Lord Kitchener, they evidently felt they could afford to ignore it, supposing they could win before such a defence could be successfully organized. This was the first mistake of the Kaiser, and the first time that Lord Kitchener showed his prescience. It is a historical fact that, when the German armies were mobilized at the end of July last, there was not a man in those armies, from the Kaiser and the German staff down to the lowest corporal and the youngest private, who was not convinced that in four weeks at most they would be in Paris, and France would lay prostrate at their feet. They came within sight of the citadels of Paris, within hearing of their

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier.]

bells, when the sudden movement of the armies under Generals Joffre and French threw them back upon the Marne and from the Marne to the Aisne. The Germans were thrown back to the Aisne; but—let us be sincere with ourselves—though defeated, they were neither routed nor crushed. That was in the early days of September and from that time to this the German armies have been unable to penetrate the lines of the Allies, unable to reach the new goal they had set for themselves after they were driven back from Paris: Calais, on the English channel. The most famous regiments of the Prussian army were in vain thrown against the lines of the Allies, and the flower and pride of the German army were sacrificed, I will not say wantonly, although that might be justified. But let us be frank with ourselves. Though, since the month of September the Germans have been unable to pierce the allied lines, yet the Allies have not yet been able to drive the Germans out of France and Belgium and back across the Rhine. The prognostications of Lord Kitchener seem to be verified. It seems probable that the war will become a process of attrition, and that the sacrifice of human lives to this Moloch of war of which we have a daily account, will go on for weeks and months, and the months may lengthen into years. On both sides there have been successes and reverses, and on both sides the blood of men has flowed in torrents. If this were an ordinary war, the very circumstances to which I have just referred would justify the hope of an early opening for peace. If this were an ordinary war, I repeat, some friendly mediator might step in between the combatants and ask them to desist, to listen to the voice of peace. But this is not an ordinary war.

It is useless at this time to argue about the war; but we can never forget that the struggle which has been going on in Europe for the last six months is a contest between two principles: the principle of liberty and the principle of dominance. If there ever was any doubt upon this point in the mind of anybody, that doubt has been removed by the German professors, German publicists, and German journalists, who have attempted to lay before the civilized world the causes of the war. Though they pretended that Germany was not the aggressor, they plainly showed that the thought at the