

take that step! I am thinking now of groups, sometimes noisy, who are not always guided by judgment and prudence. Would those groups be willing to abandon the privileged condition enjoyed in this country by all religions and all races, a condition which has resulted in the meting out of liberty and justice to every citizen in the land? I doubt whether any considerable numbers of our population would manifest a desire to do so. But if they did, what would it mean? Everybody knows the ultimate result would be our exposure to a war, not three thousand miles away, but at our very door-step. It would mean civil war.

If we are at war, it is not Great Britain and France who are responsible. Everybody knows that.

Hon. Mr. LACASSE: Even Hitler.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: Great Britain and France have done everything in their power, short of submitting to slavery and dishonour, to maintain peace.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: Everybody knows that. They have receded from position to position, sometimes to the despair of their friends. For what? To prevent the awful catastrophe into which the world is thrown to-day.

If we wish to go back, as some persons desire, and seek in its inception the responsibility for what has taken place, is it not true that Canada must assume its share? Let us not forget that immediately after the Covenant of the League of Nations was signed Canada was the first nation to throw up her obligation under section 10 of the Covenant and to withhold participation in collective security. We may be the humbler and the better for not forgetting that. It is true also that in 1925, when the protocol was agreed upon between Herriot and MacDonald, Sir Austen Chamberlain stated that he could not agree to the protocol, which also guaranteed collective security, because the Dominions were opposed to it.

I am attacking no party; I am simply reminding the House that when some persons inconsiderately go back over a number of years in an effort to attach responsibility for what is now taking place, they should not forget that the first thing Canadians have to do is to strike their breasts and say "Mea culpa" with the other nations then members of the League. Undoubtedly we have our responsibility for what has occurred. But whatever we did in the past is irrevocable. We cannot retrieve or change it; it is done.

But what have we to do at present? In my opinion our duty is simple. We have to uphold the Government as faithfully and as strongly as possible in its guidance of the country through this war.

Hon. Mr. DUFF: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: Let not those who are opposed to the Government's policy forget that in this war everybody's contribution is free. I say that advisedly, for in some quarters it is suggested that there is no sincerity in this proclamation of freedom of action. Well, the Government has pledged itself to that freedom, and so has the Opposition. I need scarcely add that we shall always remember the speech delivered at Winnipeg in 1927 by my right honourable friend to the left (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen), in which he pledged himself to that freedom of action, at all events until the people of Canada should pronounce otherwise. I repeat, we are free to choose our course. But that freedom does not mean our duty is to do nothing. Enrolment is going on rapidly throughout the country. If our young men are willing to hazard their lives for what, after all, is the cause of Canada as well as the cause of Great Britain and of France, they should know that the whole country will not hesitate to give them all the support it can.

When I was in France a few weeks ago I heard it stated by persons in authority, and particularly by a gentleman holding a very high position in the army, a member of the Conseil Supérieur de la Guerre, that the policy of Germany had never wavered since the time of Bismarck, when the Iron Chancellor proposed to President Grévy of France that their two countries should each equip an army of 1,000,000 men to conquer Great Britain and divide the British Empire. The gentleman to whom I refer told me, "Make no mistake, Hitler is driving, as Bismarck would have done, at the jugular veins of Great Britain—at Suez and Gibraltar—because these are the prizes worth while if he wins the war."

If that unhappy event should befall, what would be our position? After all, honourable members, the world must live in peace some day. Trade and commerce must be free, and freedom of intercourse must exist in the universe some day. If trade routes are not kept open by Great Britain, will honourable members tell me by what other nation they can be kept open? There is only one other nation capable of the task, and it is the American nation. If this war should be fatal to France and to Great Britain, if the hands of Hitler, not only tainted by the