

Hon. H. A. BRUCE (Parkdale): I was about to ask a somewhat similar question, and I also notified the Prime Minister of the fact. My question is: The newspapers report a statement made by Senator Gerald Nye accusing this dominion of doing nothing for Britain except what is paid for in "cash on the barrel head."

As this might have some effect on the lease-lend bill before the senate, will the Prime Minister inform the house what steps he has taken to refute this slander?

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): My hon. friend who has just spoken did give me notice of the question he was about to ask. My hon. friend the leader of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation group (Mr. Coldwell) also gave me notice of the question he was going to ask, and I prepared a reply to be given to whichever one of the two spoke first. I have reserved in brackets a place for one name or the other, so that each might get full credit for having asked the question.

The government is of course aware not only of the specific statement to which the hon. member has referred, but also the similar allegation concerning Canada made in the course of the discussion in the United States on the lease-lend bill. After careful consideration the government decided that it would not be wise for us to make a public statement in regard to a subject of domestic debate in the United States, even for the purpose of correcting misrepresentations of Canada's action.

We have felt that Canada's position as a belligerent and a co-partner with Britain in the present war was well known in the United States. It has been a considered view of the government that the facts are so easily available and so widely known that it is much wiser to rely on Americans themselves, who are aware of the facts, to correct in public damaging statements, than to undertake Canadian intervention in a debate between Americans on United States policy. We have the best of reasons for believing that those in positions of chief responsibility in the United States are under no misapprehension as to the extent and form of Canada's contribution. They are not likely to be misled by such statements as that referred to by the hon. member—I should say now the hon. members.

The misrepresentation of any public intervention by Canada might easily prove much more damaging than the original statements it was sought to correct. The fact that we can rely with confidence on the more serious newspapers in the United States to correct

misrepresentations can be illustrated by an editorial which appeared in the *New York Times* on February 21, and which I should like to read into the record. This editorial appears in the *New York Times* of February 21 this year. It is entitled "Misrepresenting Canada," and is as follows:

Our good neighbour Canada is fortunately not unduly sensitive to misrepresentation of her status, her actions and her motives in our congressional debates, or she would have cause for resentment over a recent speech by Senator Wheeler of Montana. "Canada, which is a colony of Great Britain" said Senator Wheeler, has a law "for the drafting of men for three months' time and in that law expressly provides that no draftee may be sent abroad without his consent."

Canada is not a British colony but a free and independent nation, voluntarily linked with other free nations of British origin in a commonwealth of nations in which all are on an equal footing, and from which any of the partners has the right to secede at any time. The senator should know this, for it is part of the information shared by everyone at all conversant with international affairs. Moreover, the reason for Canada's restriction of her drafts for national service is notoriously that she has already, and can continuously command, so many volunteers for service abroad that to draft more men would only be an embarrassment.

Australia and New Zealand, also characterized by Senator Wheeler as "British Colonies", have the same status as Canada. When he goes on to say that "they are not even loaning, to say nothing of giving," war supplies to Britain, but are "insisting that the cash be put on the barrel top," he echoes a statement wholly contrary to the facts and frequently exposed. Canada, Australia and New Zealand all entered this war by the side of Britain of their own free will. Their participation in it is not restricted by monetary consideration other than their capacity to contribute. They pay their own bills, even reimbursing Great Britain for any supplies they cannot themselves furnish, and from their own resources they give to her freely, without measure and without price. Assertions to any other effect by responsible statesmen in Washington do not tend to help our relations with a spiritual ally and staunch friend.

I have thought it desirable to place this editorial on record to illustrate how the best informed citizens of the United States really view statements of the character referred to. I am sure hon. members will, on reflection, agree that nothing could be more unfortunate with respect to furthering the interests of Canada or the interests of the British empire at Washington than for either this country or any other nation of the British commonwealth to take any step at Washington which would give the administration, or the opponents of the administration there, reason to say that we in Canada—particularly the government—were trying to interfere in matters of