

Canada had emerged from war in 1918 with a deep national consciousness and a place of her own in the comity of nations. But our country was a nation of only seven millions, and we did not easily recover from the loss of over sixty thousand precious young lives. All over North America, there was disillusionment with the old world. It is easy now to see that we should have been saying 'Let us try to keep war out of the world', but all too many of us were actually saying 'Let us try to keep out of war'. In the result war was not kept out of the world, and neither did we keep out of war.

When war came to Europe in 1939, we in Canada were not in it automatically. But our external connections and sympathies were still important. Reluctantly, but deliberately and unitedly, Canada entered the war by the free decision of our own people in their own Parliament. And, once more, our people put forth a tremendous effort for victory. Again, in 1939 as in 1914, there were many who hoped and felt that the United States need not be involved. But that also proved to be a vain hope. And notwithstanding the ultimate unconditional surrender of the nations which had set out to dominate the world, the allied victory again cost untold misery and devastation to all our peoples.

Of course, what we saved is infinitely more than what we had to expend.

And I am still convinced that if we had to do it again, we could and we would do it successfully. But we don't want to have to do it again, and I don't think we need to if we are willing to pay the price of peace.

Nevertheless we all realize - you in the United States and we in Canada - that the people of this continent cannot hope to avoid the catastrophic consequences of war whenever a major war breaks out anywhere in this world.

For many of us in Canada it was difficult to realize that appalling truth. But when we saw that the people of the United States, with all their might, and the almost complete self-sufficiency of their economy, had to acknowledge that even they were powerless to protect themselves against the calamities of war whenever there was war in the world, we had to face that fact as a fact for us, too.

We now know - at least most of us know - that our only real hope lies in the prevention of war. Though in 1945, our hopes were not as high as they had been in 1918, I believe there was - and is - a far more resolute determination on this continent, and among all the free nations, to look upon the prevention of another world war as a matter of urgent and grave and constant concern. That was the spirit in which our Canadian representatives went to San Francisco to take part in the completion of a Charter for the United Nations. The Charter we signed at San Francisco was the best instrument on which there was the slightest hope of getting agreement between the great powers. We knew it was far from perfect, but we thought - and still think - it was better than having no agreement at all.