

Under the lighthearted and seemingly thoughtless manner of our soldiers there is an intense seriousness and a great earnestness of purpose. We who have survived and who will live to enjoy the blessings of peace and the joy of life can never divest ourselves of the deep reverent feeling of indebtedness to those who have fallen. We cannot, in days to come, take unthinking pleasures because of the remembrance that those who have been less fortunate, but perhaps more deserving, are not there to share them. Our lives must be dedicated to the purpose for which those others died, and that purpose was the establishment of a great, free and happy nation.

In matters of policy, in questions of state, we shall among ourselves disagree. I do not think it will be possible to maintain a soldiers' party for the simply reason that every soldier is also a citizen and as soon as he has returned to his citizen status he will be bound to have once more his independent views. It is true that upon certain questions, such as military training, compulsory service and the like, we may find the great body of soldier citizens throwing their united and their determining influence into the scale. To a great extent the soldiers will have been freed from the shackles of purely party politics. Where a community has but a single purpose, such as the winning of a great war, a continuance of party politics is an utter abomination. We are likely to return to Canada sick to death of political intrigue and determined to exercise independent judgments. One thing which we will demand above all others is decency and honesty in our public men. That is a thing upon which we will all agree and which, if we are true to ourselves and true to the sacred trust which our dead have left in our hands, we can most assuredly control.

After the war there will be no more powerful political element in the country than the returned soldiers. They can wield if they will, an invincible power and, I believe, always a power for good. They will be influential because of their service to the country, because they represent the more intelligent and energetic and enterprising of the citizens, and because the influence of their experiences here will have served to develop them in every sense.

In proportion to the sacrifices and contributions which individually and collectively the citizens of Canada have made to this war, so, I believe, will they derive power and influence at home.

The one danger which may arise is this — that we may place our military interests before our citizen interests and may demand too much. We are fighting not for ourselves, not for any particular body of citizens, but for the nation