

*The Address—Mr. Graydon*

vention was a successful war-time achievement, and one which has been beneficial to the whole of Canada.

I come now to another subject which is of grave importance to all of us. Since the last meeting of parliament the Canadian troops have gone into action in the much discussed Dieppe raid. Having no reason to constitute myself an arm-chair critic with respect to army strategy and tactics, I shall leave for others the privilege of discussing those matters. But this afternoon on behalf of the party I lead in the house I do wish to pay tribute to the courage, the valour and the bravery of our men under what to many of us, who perhaps do not understand military tactics, seemed almost insuperable difficulties.

Canada emerged from the last war heaped with honours won on the field of battle. Her first contest with the foe on land in this war has brought to one of our greatest Canadian soldiers, Lieutenant-Colonel Merritt of Vancouver, no less an award than the Victoria Cross itself. Many other officers and men received high awards and decorations for valour on that occasion. Dieppe at least displayed to the world that the same quality of Canadian soldiering abroad which added so much to the prestige and reputation of Canada in the last war, has been well maintained, preserved and promoted in this one. I pay that tribute to Canada and to her fighting men.

In recent days the news has come of the momentous meeting at Casablanca of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt. I should like the Prime Minister in his address to make clear several important points arising from the Casablanca meeting. Perhaps if he has time this afternoon he will be good enough to answer these questions, because to my mind it is of the utmost importance that the public should know the answers. The questions are these:

(1) Was the Canadian government kept fully informed of the course of the discussions, and consulted with respect to the decisions reached?

(2) Is the Canadian government a party to the decisions arrived at, and does the government fully concur in those decisions?

(3) Was an invitation extended to the Prime Minister to attend this conference?

(4) Has the government advocated to any or all of the united nations the setting up of a supreme war council, in which all the allied nations shall be represented, so that there may be coordination of the efforts being put forth in this common cause?

[Mr. Graydon.]

I believe the Prime Minister will at once agree upon the necessity for such a council; or, if such a council is not possible—and there may be many reasons which it may not be proper to state as to why it is not possible—would the Prime Minister indicate whether there is any prospect of the setting up of an empire or imperial war council, so that a closer liaison may be maintained between the various members of the British commonwealth of nations?

It would seem to the public generally that closer coordination of the war effort throughout the world must be achieved by the united nations. It is a necessity which becomes more apparent every day. Such a supreme war council, or a master plan for the defeat of our enemies, would instil into and induce a great measure of courage among our people. And, Mr. Speaker, unity in war time would be followed by unity in peace time, a consideration which I suggest is of grave importance at this moment.

What is the position with respect to our own armed forces overseas? I would ask the Prime Minister to give an answer this afternoon to this question. I am going to warn the government at this stage that only in the rarest circumstances during this session, and only when we are dealing with the most confidential matters will the official opposition stand idly by and allow the government to hide behind five words which are well known throughout the country—"not in the public interest". I know that certain information the government has cannot be divulged because it might give comfort to the enemy. But in many instances where no comfort would have been given to the enemy by disclosure of the information sought, the government has nevertheless hidden behind those five words.

I know the Prime Minister will not feel badly if I say that throughout the country the words "not in the public interest" have become almost a joke. I heard a story the other day and I think perhaps it is true. A lady was giving evidence in one of our Ontario courts. When the crown attorney asked her how old she was—I am sure the Minister of Pensions and National Health (Mr. Mackenzie) would have known better than to do that—she replied, "I am just thirty years of age." He said, "You gave evidence in this court five years ago, and I have it on record you said then you were thirty years of age." She replied, "There is nothing wrong about that, because I am not one of those who say one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow." When he pressed the question and asked her point blank just what her age