

requires the complete support of the Canadian people for anything that we decide to do at this conference or in any later plans that are made.

Prior to 1914 Canada knew little about war. We had in fact had the South African war, but for all practical purposes I assume that war came to Canada for the first time in 1914. We had become world conscious before that because the west had developed wheat and had exported it in great quantities to Europe and we knew that dislocation of trade in Europe would adversely affect our economy. Nevertheless, it was not with that in mind that we went to war in 1914; it was because we decided that small nations had rights which had to be protected and that Germany in particular had acted in a most uncivilized manner in attacking a smaller nation. So that while we entered the war to aid a small nation we knew we had nothing to gain ourselves and would only have losses as a result. In fact, we had 60,000 killed and many more incapacitated, and when we came out of the war we had nothing to show except our losses.

Prior to the war our position in the British empire had been one which required a certain amount of consideration and which did not altogether agree with the situation as the world knew it. Owing, I believe, to our contribution to the last war, and to other matters as well, it was agreed during the war that our position needed clarification, with the result that in 1921 it was first made known informally and in 1926 formally by statute. What had been the practice became the law; that this country was free and self-governing, and by a common allegiance to the crown, was a member of the British commonwealth, free to do as it wished. Therefore upon the appearance of world war II, there was a very considerable difference in the method by which we joined it. World war I had been entered because Great Britain declared war on Germany and we automatically followed. We followed then, I believe with almost the unanimous support of all hon. members of the House of Commons at that time, and certainly with the practically unanimous support of the country.

On this occasion parliament was assembled, the government recommended a declaration of war, debate ensued and war was declared. It was not suggested on that occasion that we had automatically followed in any event because Great Britain had gone into the war. On the contrary it was tacitly admitted, I believe, that it was within the full power of this parliament to have made a decision not to enter the war. To an outsider there might have been certain evidence that it would

have been in our material interest to have decided to stay out, because war is undoubtedly the greatest evil that can overtake a nation, and that it might better serve the people to postpone it as long as it would be possible to do so. However, it is my personal opinion, for what it is worth, that had any government attempted to stay out at that time it would not have lasted much longer after having made known its intention.

The reason for the practically unanimous decision of parliament to enter the war was I think due to a circumstance which I believe was properly explained by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) when he called parliament. He said something like this, that the fate of a single city or the independence of a particular nation was the occasion rather than the real cause of the war; that the real cause was that there had grown up in one nation of the world a belief not in the individual personality of all of us, but that the person belonged to the state and in consequence it was proper that states might use might in its relation toward any neighbour, particularly a smaller neighbour.

By September, 1939, the Canadian people had been firmly convinced that that was the intention of Germany, and that if we were to defend our homes, our religious and our parliamentary institutions it was necessary to go to war and it was desirable to go to war at the time when we had friends with whom we could join. Once again we had no material gain at stake in Europe, but once again we hazarded everything, knowing that we would have losses, and knowing that there was nothing we could gain directly by entering the war. Up to the present time we have in fact lost over thirty thousand people again, and our losses are mounting each day and will continue to the end of the war. Yet on each occasion, Mr. Speaker, we did not entirely lack all profit in the war. There is such a thing as national honour, which is something like the individual conscience. On each occasion I think we have saved that honour, because had we not done so national life in this country would have been empty and we would not be entitled to the future which I think is in store for the Canadian people. We decided that evil as war was there was no price that we would not willingly pay if we could reassert again certain spiritual values which seemed to have gone out of fashion in the world.

To say that world war II was an admission of failure of our efforts to maintain the peace after world war I is of course true, but there is no nation that sought to maintain