

CANADA

House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT

SPEECH

OF

HON. SIR EDWARD KEMP, P.C., K.C.M.G., M.P.

Minister of Overseas Military Forces

ON

CANADA'S OVERSEAS FORCES

In the House of Commons, on May 27th, 1919.

Sir EDWARD KEMP (Minister of the Overseas Military Forces): Mr. Speaker, I ask the indulgence of the House for a short time in order that I may have an opportunity to make a statement with reference to the administration of the overseas military forces of Canada. I was obliged to go across the water before the elections took place in 1917; and in making a few observations on the subject to which I have referred I ask the indulgence of the House the more readily because of the fact that I was unable to take my place in the House last session, and also because I have not taken up very much of the time of the House this session.

When in 1914 we decided to participate in the war to the last man and the last dollar, I fancy that none of us, none of the people of this country, fully realized what the obligation we then assumed really meant. We did not hesitate; we did not stop to bargain; the one point which was uppermost in the minds of all was: What would happen to the world; what would happen to the Empire; what would happen to Canada, if Germany could force her will upon the world, as she intended to do? But Germany was unable to carry out her scheme to change the map of the world. It is the intention, I understand, of the Peace Conference so to change the boundaries of European countries as to make it impossible for all time to come for any European nation

to undertake, with any hope of success, such an enterprise as Germany entered upon.

I venture to say that few of Canada's soldiers, who enlisted so readily and with so much enthusiasm, particularly in the earlier days of the war, anticipated that they would be away from their homes so long or that they would be subjected to such privations, such hardships, and such sacrifices as overtook them. Neither did we expect that we would require to send such a large force overseas. If any one had predicted in the early days of the war that we should send 50,000 or 100,000 men overseas, the estimate would have been considered a large one. Yet we have sent overseas in all 420,913 of the best blood and sinew of Canada.

This, however, does not by any means represent the whole effort of this country. Many things were done by the people—the House is familiar with them—to help win the war. I shall not attempt this afternoon to enumerate them; in fact, I would be unable to do so, because these efforts were so varied and branched out into so many different directions and had such a far-reaching effect in bringing about a successful conclusion of the war, that it would be an impossibility to state them in detail.

It is desirable, Mr Speaker, that the people of Canada should familiarize themselves as much as possible with the activities of Canada's army while it was over-

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