

that might arise from time to time, and at least some hon. members of this house may be expected to devote their energies to them freely as a war service.

The speech from the throne says that a state of war exists. Until this afternoon we did not quite know what that meant, but we now know more clearly. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation — because I am speaking not only for myself, but also for the movement with which I am associated—has placed before the house some of its thought in connection with this situation, and in doing so has endeavoured to offer some constructive proposals. We do not expect all of them to be adopted immediately, but we offer them for the consideration of the house in the hope that at least some of them may be helpful in meeting the situation that we now face and which we shall face in the days to come. Frenzied speeches, heroic appeals and frantic efforts, such as we are witnessing here and there throughout the country, in my opinion will hinder rather than help the government in this crisis.

We of this group abhor war; we have said that over and over again. I know other members of the house feel as we do, but perhaps we have been rather more vocal in that respect, if I may put it that way, than some other people who may abhor it equally. We believe that the causes of these wars lie in the contradictions of the present economic system all across the world. In spite of that, however, we recognize that in this struggle there may be other factors. The future of our democratic institutions and the stopping of aggression may be involved as well. We do not think, as some appear to think, that war is a Christian duty. Rather indeed we regard its occurrence as an indictment of our Christian society, and we urge the people of Canada to respect those who have a conscientious objection to participation in war on that account. Let us remember that we are being told this war is being waged to preserve democracy and prevent aggression. Surely these things, like charity, should begin at home. And let there be no interference with the right of labour to organize, with the right of farmers to demand and receive a proper reward for their products and their labour, with the rights of free speech, of peaceful assembly and of religious freedom. The measure of our success, it seems to me, will be our success in preventing regimentation and repression and in maintaining, yes and extending, our democratic rights, which totalitarianism in every form and under every guise threatens throughout the world. We must see to it that in Canada at least the lights of such freedom as we have are not blacked out.

[Mr. Coldwell.]

Mr. MAXIME RAYMOND (Beauharnois-Laprairie) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, at the general election of 1925 a Liberal convention held at Valleyfield invited me to be a candidate in the county of Beauharnois. In accepting the invitation I made it a point to set forth clearly my attitude in respect of foreign policy, and this is how I concluded my speech: "Should I be elected as member for Beauharnois county, I will go to parliament to preach a policy of autonomy, a Canadian policy formulated in Ottawa and not in London, a policy of Canada for the Canadians."

The mandate I then received from the electors of Beauharnois county was given to me again at every subsequent general election, particularly in 1935 by the electors of Beauharnois-Laprairie, and I am conscious of having faithfully fulfilled it. To-day I should be failing in my duty were I not to give utterance to the views of practically all the electors of Beauharnois-Laprairie and to oppose with all my might the principle, enunciated in the speech from the throne, of participation in a European war.

I have already set forth my views respecting our foreign policy; they have not changed one iota. The statements I made in this house in April last are truer than ever. There is no such thing as a war of ideologies, there are only wars of interest. History is there to prove it. Each country bases its policy on its own interests. Let us do likewise.

According to the manner in which a question is approached, opinions may differ with the greatest sincerity, but it seems to me that were every one to be guided by the principle laid down by Lord Tweedsmuir that

Canada is a sovereign nation and a Canadian's first loyalty should be not to the British commonwealth but to Canada,

we would achieve that unity of thought which is so necessary to Canada. This principle, which I make my own, will guide me in the observations I am about to make.

Before embarking on a war whose consequences will be ruinous, to say the least, we should be entitled to ask ourselves why we should fight, for what purpose and in whose interest. Why would we be fighting? Not to defend Canada's territory. It is neither attacked nor threatened. Not to repel an attack on England, for it is England that has declared war on Germany.

We would be fighting to defend the territory of Poland, because Great Britain, "in order to honour her guarantees and her treaty obligations," decided to declare war upon Germany following the invasion of Poland.