

CANADA AT WAR

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It is indeed an honour that I, as a Canadian, should be invited to speak on the subject of Canada's experience and achievements in the war before such a gathering as this, composed principally of citizens of the great United States, you friends of whom we in Canada like to think of as our Allies, you whom we have long been in the habit of calling our cousins, but whom we can now feel we can call our brothers. And yet I feel a diffidence in attempting to address you on such a subject. The work which the United States has undertaken in connection with the war is so vast, and the spirit in which it is being carried out is so magnificent and so enthusiastic, that what we have accomplished must of necessity appear rather small in comparison. You of the United States are to have the honour and glory of being to a large extent the deciding factor in bringing this terrible war to a happy conclusion, and of turning what might possibly have been a drawn battle into a glorious victory. The efforts which you are putting forth are the delight and admiration of your allies, and the dismay of Germany and the Kaiser. I wish to express my enthusiastic appreciation of all that you are doing and are planning to do in the future. We Canadians are delighted at the manner in which you have taken up your task. Your achievements in France have already begun. The story of Chateau Thierry has stirred all our hearts, and this is but the beginning. There will be many Chateau Thierys within the next twelve months or I am greatly mistaken. The help you have given far exceeds the men and munitions you have furnished, great and valuable though they are, for you have put new heart and vigor and sureness of victory into the French and British troops, who had begun to be a little war-weary and stale after four years of struggle.

After four years of hostilities, when the war is now gradually nearing its close, it is difficult to place ourselves in thought back to the early days when the great German military machine, which had been preparing for forty years, was crashing through Belgium and Northern France. The sky was clouded and the outlook dark; the brave men of France and Britain were being overwhelmed by superior numbers; we had few guns to answer the German artillery, and ammunition was so short that many of our guns were restricted to five rounds a day—it was at that time and under those circumstances that Canada had the privilege, on account of our British connection, of getting into the fray, and we all feel a joy and pride that we were able to do something, even though but little, to help stay the Hun in those gloomy days.

At the beginning of August, 1914, we were not only unprepared for war, but had so long breathed the atmosphere of peace, that we were unable at first to realize the importance of what had happened, and the magnitude of the crisis into which the world had been plunged. As to our duty, there was no doubt. From the Atlantic to the Pacific we felt that it was both our duty and our privilege to put our whole weight into the struggle, side by side with the Mother Country. But what were we able to do? In what way could we help? As for military organization, we had practically none. We had 60,000 militia, but they had had little training, and had taken their duties lightly. Bernhardt had said that in the event of a European war Britain's Dominions and colonies could be completely ignored. As for financial help, we had been a borrowing country, and how could we begin to lend?

But our national spirit rose to the needs of the occasion. Our people quietly determined to do their best. The call went out for 25,000 volunteers to go overseas, and, thanks largely to the energy of Sir Sam Hughes, within a few months we had sent off not 25,000 but 33,000. Within two months of the outbreak of war, some of our troops who had been hardened in South Africa were fighting in France, and within seven months even our green troops were on the field engaged in a life and death struggle with the Huns—and holding them! Further detachments were despatched as quickly as they could be raised and drilled, until we now have a total of over 550,000 enlistments, and will soon have 600,000, and

of these about 450,000 are already in Europe. Every month is adding to the number. We have promised that we will send over not less than 500,000, and we propose to keep that promise.

Canadian Losses Have Been Heavy.

Our enlistments, including those secured under the Military Service Act, already number about one in thirteen of our population. In the same proportion the figures for the United States would be around 8,000,000, which is about the number you are preparing to raise.

We began with voluntary enlistments, but, just as in the Mother Country, we had to come ultimately to the draft system. You have profited by our experience, and have very wisely adopted the draft system from the beginning. We fully agree with you that this is the only right and fair method, and that it is besides vastly more efficient and more economical.

And how about the casualties? In the early days of the war, when we were short of artillery, and even of rifles, and were unprepared for poison gas, we suffered heavily. Up to June 30th of this year we had 27,040 killed in action, 9,280 died of wounds, 2,257 died of disease, 4,342 presumed dead, and 384 missing. This makes a total of 43,303 deaths.

In other words, of the total number who had gone overseas up to June 30th last, 11.3 per cent. were already dead. In addition there were 113,007 wounded and 2,774 prisoners, or 115,781 altogether, so that in addition to the deaths, 30.2 per cent. had been wounded or made prisoners. It is a comfort to know that between 30,000 and 40,000 of the wounded were ultimately able to return to the firing line.

The total casualties were 41.5 per cent. of the number who had gone overseas. But even this does not tell the full story. Most of those who had but recently gone across had, of course, not been long exposed, and the casualties were chiefly among those who had gone over early. Among them the casualties were tremendous. Those noble fellows paid a terrible price, and I can assure you that among them were many who were the very cream of the Canadian nation.

Financing the War.

Now let us turn to finance. We are a young and borrowing country; we have been an extravagant country; and we thought we could do little towards financing the war. At the beginning the Mother Country advanced money to the various Dominions at the same rate as she herself had to pay, but by 1915 we began to rely on ourselves. The government issued the call for the first domestic loan. They asked for \$50,000,000, and wondered if they would get it. The subscriptions came to over \$113,000,000. On the strong urgency of the larger subscribers the government took \$100,000,000 of this amount. In September, 1916, they asked for \$100,000,000, and we offered them \$201,000,000. Six months later, in March, 1917, they asked for \$150,000,000, and we offered them \$254,000,000. In November of the same year they asked for yet another \$150,000,000, and we offered them \$419,000,000. For this loan the government had reserved the right to accept all subscriptions, and they did take \$400,000,000. If in 1915 a man had told us that within the next two years the people of Canada would supply the government with \$750,000,000, or \$100 for every man, woman and child in the country, he would have been looked on as a wild visionary. People do not know what they can do until they really try, and we surprised ourselves.

The subscribers to our first loan numbered 24,800; to the last loan they numbered 820,000, or nearly one in nine of the population. And now our government is about to ask for \$300,000,000 more, and I shall be surprised if the answer is not at least \$500,000,000, and I imagine that they will take it all: We shall have a heavy debt, but what of that? We shall carry it with ease, for we are young and growing, and our shoulders are broad. Canada never was so strong or so prosperous as at this moment. The safest government bonds in the world are those of the United States and Canada, and I bracket them together as regards security. We pay 5½ per cent. on ours, so if any of you want higher interest with equal security, subscribe for the next Canadian war loan.

Not merely have we raised these large amounts of government loans, but we have kept up the price of our bond issues, so that every person who bought a Canadian Victory bond can to-day get for it on the spot more than it cost him. The brokerage and bond houses of the Dominion have been organized into a great committee, and whenever any bond is offered for sale it is at once resold to other purchasers. The de-