

war, that the battle line in France and in Flanders was the first line of defence of Canada, and that therefore any contributions we gave to that line of defence of our own country. That, of course, was what the hon. member thought and expressed, and I am sure that the Government and the hon. gentlemen of this House will so understand it.

The Acting Prime Minister said that Germany made unlawful war on Belgium. There is no doubt in the world about that. Belgium had a right to suppose that Germany would abide by her solemn treaty; so had France; so had Great Britain; so had every other nation in the world. They had a right to suppose that they had only to make certain defences against Germany at certain places and that Germany would not attempt in an unlawful way to make war on France. Consequently it was *ab initio*, as we say in the law, an illegal war, started illegally and continued illegally throughout.

When a thing starts illegally, as this war started, it is seldom if ever brought back to a legal basis. Therefore this war was just as much illegal, just as much in violation of treaties, just as much without justification so far as we are concerned as it was so far as any other country was concerned. True, it struck Belgium first. True, Belgium suffered more than any other nation. But the action was just as illegal to us as it was to Belgium or to any other country; consequently in international law our claim for reparation, for indemnity, is just as strong against Germany as is the claim of Belgium or of France.

It is almost impossible to calculate our loss, even in ships, in property, in material things; but in the lives that were lost and in the misery and sorrow brought to our people, it is unthinkable. These losses, of life as well as of material things, the pensions which we shall cheerfully pay to relatives of those who were killed and to others who have been deprived of the means of supporting themselves—these are legitimate claims that should be taken into consideration in determining the amount that we should receive from Germany or her Allied countries as a result of this war. If the war had not been brought on, our men would not have been maimed, and crippled, and killed. Our men have been maimed, and crippled, and killed, widows and orphans have been left on our hands, through the rascality and the brutality of Germany in instituting an unreasonable and unjust war, and she should be held to

[Mr. McKenzie.]

know the result and significance of her act. Germany started this war without justification, and she is just as responsible for her act as is the man who throws a stone through his neighbour's window for his act. He may not have intended to kill the man inside or destroy valuable things in the house; he may have thought that there was nobody in the house at all. But he will be held to have known that he was going to kill a man; he will be held to have known that he was going to destroy property; and when he comes before a tribunal to make good the loss he cannot plead that he did not know what was going to happen. Properly, legally, logically, even humanely speaking, therefore, we can hold Germany responsible for the consequences of her act. If Germany and Austria and their allies are, or will be within the next two hundred years, in a position to pay this indemnity, arrangements should be made to have them pay it.

I do not quite agree with the Acting Prime Minister that it is a mistake to discuss this matter in this Parliament. I agree that it is not, perhaps, well to pass a resolution in hard and fast terms, or to say to the Prime Minister or the representatives of this country at the Peace Conference that such and such are our hard and fast views. But the representatives of Canada will find their hands strengthened by the stand that this House will take, not necessarily in the form of a resolution, but in the form of expression of opinion by the Acting Prime Minister and members of the Government and by members of the House. Our representatives can then go before the Conference, not with a formal resolution of this House of Commons, not with an Act of Parliament, but with an official representative expression of opinion of the House of Commons of Canada, and say: "This must not be ignored." It is a good thing, therefore, for members of this House to have an opportunity of expressing their views on this question.

I am thankful to the Acting Prime Minister for the excellent address that he made and for having made his views and the views of the Government absolutely clear. I feel confident that the discussion which has taken place and may further take place on this subject will neither be detrimental to the country, nor weaken the hands of the representatives of Canada at the Conference. On the contrary, it will furnish them with a strong, sound argument representative of the views of the Canadian people and of this House of Commons. I