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COMMONS

Another word and I shall take my seat. One respectable newspaper—I never look at the little sheets which no decent Canadian would even read—has said that I seem to have modified my attitude on this great question. I challenge the writer of that dispatch, I challenge any newspaper, I challenge anyone in Canada to find in any of my statements or declarations, either during the late war or since, anything which is inconsistent with the position I am taking to-day. If anyone can find one word or one statement, then he will be entitled to criticize me. No, I have always been consistent: I am taking to-day the attitude which I have always taken. Since the war I have consistently tried to impress upon my fellow Canadians the necessity of the League of Nations and other institutions of peace. I have worked for peace when those who criticized me were hostile or indifferent. I shall continue to work for peace, and I contend that I am working for peace when I try to protect my own country. We should be ready to show the world upon which side this country stands in the international fight for freedom and liberty. I shall continue to try to impress upon my fellow countrymen the necessity of working for peace. I shall continue to try to see that our great country has those opportunities for development which she must have to fulfil her great destiny. I hope that in the future those who are criticizing to-day will help me a little more in my efforts to work for peace.

Hon. J. E. LAWSON (York South): Mr. Speaker, with much of what the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) said in his speech delivered to the house yesterday I agree. As I listened intently to his very carefully prepared statement of Canada's foreign policy, there was borne in upon me at one stage of his address the realization that he made no distinction between that degree of responsibility which Canada has to the empire—no distinction between our foreign policy with respect to the British empire—and the policy we have or should have as a member of the League of Nations as applied to any other member of that league. For me that is the parting of our ways so far as foreign policy is concerned. At the outset I state my disagreement in that regard; I shall finish with the same theme after I have travelled the road of reasoning which leads to my conclusions.

The Prime Minister outlined adequately and well the history of disarmament by the democratic nations and rearmament by the dictatorships. I suggest that out of that policy of disarmament there grew up in this country,

(Mr. Lapointe (Quebec East).)

and indeed in many other countries, a spirit of pacifism which in a large measure is responsible for the position in which the democracies find themselves to-day.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I did not say anything about disarmament.

Mr. LAWSON: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. I thought it was the Prime Minister.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: It was the leader of the opposition.

Mr. LAWSON: Very well. I am not going to speak of disarmament. But I should like to make it clear when I speak of the spirit of pacifism that I distinguish clearly between those who have the spirit of peace, and those who have the spirit of pacifism. By peace I mean the spirit which was so eloquently enunciated this afternoon by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe). By pacifism I mean the spirit of those who believe and have advocated that the greatest security for peace under all conditions in this world is to have no arms, no means of defence, to be helpless and useless in the face of an aggressor. Unfortunately pacifism is no factor in the consideration of a dictator. But the spirit of pacifism grew in this country until it permeated into our private and public schools, and we had the abandonment of cadet corps. Though the crises of the past year have changed that attitude of mind or that spirit of pacifism in this country, we still find it prevalent, and one very strong evidence of it, I suggest, was the speech made in this house yesterday by our youngest member, the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Pelletier), when he accused Prime Minister Chamberlain of playing with the people's emotions to gain support for an armament program. In that speech, sir, he utterly failed to realize the threat to peace-loving nations which the dictators of this world constitute.

I must confess that I have sometimes been weary of the talk I have listened to from the pacifists. None is more ready in support of his argument to call upon British freedom and British principles. I would find it extremely refreshing to hear a declaration occasionally from some of them that instead of standing for British freedom and British principles they were willing to stand, at least once in a while, for the empire which gave them that freedom, and which established and maintained those British principles.

I was very happy this afternoon to find myself in agreement with the Minister of Justice in his declarations as to the neutrality of Canada. That may not make him particularly happy. I may tell him that only

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my Scotch caution restrains me from saying that I found myself in agreement with a great many other things that he said this afternoon. To me neutrality, from a practical point of view, is simply an utter impossibility for the Dominion of Canada so long as we hope to remain part and parcel of the British empire.

Mr. MANION, Hear, hear.

Mr. LAWSON: The primary duty of any neutral nation is to maintain strict impartiality in respect to belligerent nations. The leader of the opposition last evening cited some of the instances that might arise, and the Minister of Justice gave others this afternoon.

Is it realized that if we declared neutrality we could not allow goods or munitions or supplies from Australia, we will say, to pass through Canada in order to reach the United Kingdom if the United Kingdom were at war? Our obligation would be to seize those supplies and to retain them in Canada. Is it possible that such procedure can represent the thought of Canadians? Again, it would not be possible for us, if we declared neutrality, to permit troops going from one part of the empire to another to pass through Canada, because our obligation would be to seize, arrest and intern them, and to keep them in internment camps for the duration of the war. To me it is inconceivable that we should seize empire troops passing through Canada and place them in internment camps for the remainder of the war.

We could not allow, if we attempted neutrality, any single act of war, such as the seizure and capture of any vessel within the territorial waters of Canada. If the United Kingdom were at war and a British ship attacked an enemy ship within the territorial waters of Canada, can you imagine the Canadian navy being sent out to fight that British ship, and to capture both ships, bring them into a Canadian port and intern them for the duration of the war? Let me assume that a British ship under attack by a superior force were seeking succour and put into the harbour of Halifax or Saint John. Our obligation, if Canada attempted neutrality, would be to seize that ship, and to seize those British sailors, and to intern them in Canada for the duration of the war.

No, Mr. Speaker, I submit that neutrality is an utter impossibility for the Dominion of Canada. How much respect, I ask, would the other nations of the world have for the senior dominion of the British empire if we attempted to declare neutrality when the United Kingdom was at war? The Prime Minister in his speech yesterday made it very clear that in the event of an aggressor attacking the United

States, Canada would not be neutral but would be a participant for the purpose of preventing any attacking force from passing through our country. I refer to the remarks of the Prime Minister at page 2614 of *Hansard*, where he said:

We, too, have our obligations as a good friendly neighbour, and one of them is to see that, at our own instance, our country is made as immune from attack or possible invasion as we can reasonably be expected to make it, and that, should the occasion ever arise, enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way, either by land, sea or air to the United States, across Canadian territory.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is protecting our own neutrality. That would be necessary in the event of a war between another nation and the United States, that we were not in.

Mr. LAWSON: Right. Would anyone suggest that Canada's attitude when the United Kingdom was at war should be less impartial than the attitude it would have to take to maintain neutrality if the United States were at war? No, Mr. Speaker, I think we might as well fairly and frankly face the fact that a great truth was stated in this parliament many years ago, that when Great Britain is at war Canada is at war. Having said that much, I ask, what should be the extent of our participation?

In the event of war, in the event of an aggressor nation desiring to make an attack upon Canada, we are particularly vulnerable. We are particularly vulnerable to aeroplane attack by reason of the development of our great resources. We have proceeded on a basis of developing our natural water power, and we carry the power thus generated for miles on miles to turn the wheels of important industries throughout the province of Ontario and Quebec. It is not difficult to conceive that a few well-placed bombs in this country might create havoc, not merely where they were dropped but upon our industrial fabric throughout the length and breadth of this country. Hence I urge, Mr. Speaker, that every hon. member, having regard to our particular situation, should realize the necessity, pointed out this afternoon by the Minister of Justice, of building up in Canada a defence force which would enable us to do something for ourselves and for our own protection and not leave us entirely dependent, as we have been for so long, upon the United Kingdom and the other parts of the empire, and, as some will say, upon the United States.

Let me ask hon. members what would happen if the United Kingdom were at war; if she were attacked; if she were defeated