

The present government deserves well of the country for having protected our savings, for having organized our national life and for having given ceaseless and generous consideration to the problem of our finances, trade and industry. They have made every effort to ensure the welfare of our citizens and they have succeeded, in a great measure, in destroying the last causes of conflict or struggle between the nationalities of which our nation is composed. Canada occupies a most enviable position in the economic world of today. She has become a great country, and her people a great people, justly proud of themselves.

The record of our government during the years of relative peace which the world has enjoyed and throughout the depression should, I repeat, give us the greatest confidence in the wisdom, the moderation, the good faith and the sincerity of our respectable and deservedly respected leaders. Those who have so worthily administered the affairs of the country during the depression are undoubtedly capable of giving Canada wise leadership in these times of war. May I be permitted to state, without offending anyone, that I prefer their administration and that under their leadership I feel much safer than I would under that of a government composed of persons perhaps as sincere as they are, yet who have not and cannot have their experience, their spirit of moderation and their prudence. In this respect, I feel sure that I am expressing the opinion of the great majority of our citizens and, more particularly, of those of my province. I have no desire to-day, at this solemn moment, in this grave hour, to doubt their intentions nor to urge them to be moderate and prudent, for I know that they are and shall remain such. If the past is any guarantee of the future, the government's record in the past sufficiently guarantees, to my mind, both the present and the future. To the citizens of my country and my province who are slightly alarmed at the moment, I say most sincerely: "Be calm and confident."

I heartily endorse the government's decision to take all measures required to restrict profits and prevent speculation on the necessities of life. Our population needs to be protected against the activities of profiteers, big and small, who see in war an opportunity to rob the consumer and unjustly increase the cost of living. It is abundantly clear that the government shall adopt the necessary measures in this respect and that severe penalties may be inflicted on all offenders.

The present government does not intend, I am sure, to lead us into any venture exceeding the bounds of our economic and social position.

The statements made by the Prime Minister and his colleagues when, thinking of the future, we were somewhat uneasy, have reassured us. It is consoling to note that these statements have never been withdrawn; on the contrary, they have been reiterated on several occasions. I am convinced that they will be repeated once more during this session.

As a matter of fact, while recognizing our duty to interest ourselves in the conflict of ideas which has brought about this war, while recognizing the importance and the propriety of some form of cooperation with the countries which are defending the ideas and opinions which are ours and the attitudes from which we in Canada have benefited, it would be neither proper nor wise for us to go to extremes. Our cooperation, our participation must necessarily be limited by our interests and by our economic and national situation.

I feel that I express not only my own views but also those of the government when I say that I am strongly in favour of all useful and necessary measures tending to ensure the defence of Canada, the maintenance and protection of her institutions and the safeguarding of her trade and of her agricultural and manufacturing industry.

It would not be wise nor worthy of us to place our reliance in some foreign protection which, obviously, could not be disinterested. Canada, an independent nation, of full age and master of its destinies, should be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to ensure her existence.

I am entirely in favour of establishing the organization necessary to ensure the defence of my country. Coming from Quebec and belonging to the French-Canadian nationality, I deem it my duty to work for the defence of my country in the fullest harmony and the most complete cooperation with the other citizens of Canada whose origin is different from mine. I wish to view the question not from the narrow standpoint of a single province, but from the standpoint of Canada as a whole. Like my fellow-citizens of Compton and of the province of Quebec, I am attached to the whole of Canada and I want to safeguard the Canadian confederation.

To my mind, it cannot reasonably be contended, after due reflection, that it would not be wise to cooperate to a reasonable extent with France and England in the present conflict, taking into account, however, our resources and our capacity and without sacrificing our vital interests. Who is there in this house who will state that the form of government at present existing in Germany would be welcome in Canada? Who would dare to say that he prefers it to the system of government we have now?