

THE WAR

ITS CAUSE AND PROBLEMS



A SOLDIER'S MESSAGE TO HIS FAMILY:

"My only prayer is that I may be found worthy. Don't bother about asking for anything else but that; just the strength and courage to do one's duty and to do honour to one's country and one's corps. If I can do that nothing else matters one jot."



The Graduates' Society of McGill University

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Suggested Statement for Circulation Among Universities in Canada

I.

To the Graduates of MCGILL UNIVERSITY:—

A deputation from the Graduates' Society of McGill University recently called upon the Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Robert Borden, to express the wish of the graduates of McGill University to be of service during the war, to offer the services of their Society and to inquire in what ways they might be of assistance, both as individuals and as a body in forwarding the plans of Canada's leaders. The Prime Minister expressed his entire sympathy with the proposed movement, and thoroughly approved of it. As a consequence, the Executive of the Graduates' Society of McGill University have drawn up this communication. It is hoped that its substance may reach and influence every University graduate in Canada.

II.

This is but the first of a series of similar statements which it is intended to issue, in various forms, from time to time during the war. Their object is to assist in maintaining a sound and united public opinion among the professional men and other graduates of Universities who, taken as a whole, are the best educated and the most-listened-to men in Canada: Canadians are accustomed to pay them for their advice. Sound opinions, based upon accurate information, will spread quickly from them to the people among whom they live. By this means, among others, it is hoped to make certain that everyone in Canada will understand why Canadians are at war and that every one of us will realize that *we must win.*

III.

The situation created by the war is so serious that there is now room for but one opinion concerning the conduct of Canadian affairs. Every thinking man believes that all

Canadians should know how this war came about, that every Canadian should realize how the result will affect him and his children; and it is believed that, knowing these things, Canadians must and will freely spend their resources and themselves rather than submit to a victorious Germany.

The history of the rise of modern Germany is almost entirely the history of the increase of Prussian power. Although industry, among other excellent characteristics, has contributed to that increase, its main cause has been the success of a series of well-thought-out and victorious wars of aggression. Germany openly acknowledges, in her printed books, that her last wars against Denmark, Austria and France were deliberately planned, deliberately provoked, and deliberately carried out for the sake of the territory, indemnities and other advantages which Germany gained from these nations when she conquered them.

Germany has prepared for new wars of aggression during the last forty years: the proofs of this statement are many and beyond dispute. The German empire has been so organised that every able-bodied German is either a trained soldier or a sailor. The German soldiers and sailors are so numerous and so well trained that Germany, with Austria, has not hesitated to declare war upon Great Britain, France, Russia, Belgium, Japan, Montenegro and Servia; the Austrian emperor is German and the Germans are the dominant race in the composite Austrian empire.

German willingness to increase German power by strength of German arms and at the expense of sister nations has often been apparent. Germany's threats and half-threats to use force in deciding matters at question between her and other nations have been the cause of many war scares since Germany took Alsace-Lorraine and a thousand millions of dollars from France in 1870-71. On several occasions since then Germany has menaced Great Britain and in a thousand ways, through their schools, their universities and through their press, Germans have been taught that they will one day fight, conquer, and make theirs the British Empire.

The German attitude in regard to certain ethical questions, may be aptly illustrated by the following quotation from R. G. Usher's Pan-Germanism: "The Germans refuse to recognize as moral anything which jeopardizes their national existence. "They claim the right to protect themselves by any weapons "which will secure the desired result, and they have no intention "of foregoing the use of weapons, simply from a supine acceptance of so-called ethical notions, whose very presumptions "militate against them."

For example, "not only does England, and to a great extent "France, depend for its supplies of food and raw material on "distant countries, but it has vast capital invested there without

"the material means of defending it. Whatever is written on paper is paper, and is not to be made into factories or railways or tangible assets of any kind by any process of jugglery . . . Things *are*, and writing on paper does not change the thing or its position. The real wealth of England, the surplus of which she is so proud, comes not from her soil nor from her own factories—in other words, from those things which no one can take away from her, except by force of arms, and which she necessarily protects as long as she continues her national existence,—but from her income from the accumulations of the past, with whose actuality she has parted, and from which she has received for decades, the payments represented by the excess of her imports over her exports. The world has paid her tribute, but the world need continue to pay that tribute only so long as it wishes. The moment the borrowers refuse longer to recognize the validity of her claims upon their revenues and incomes and begin to realize that they hold, with a clutch which she cannot loosen, the actual substance of wealth, then they will begin to see that her wealth is not real, but depends purely upon their willingness to continue to pay her revenue, which they may stop paying her at any moment without suffering any consequences. To be sure, such notions as these presume the violation of every notion of commercial morality and expediency at present existing in the world, but, *if they were violated*, what could England and France possibly do to avert destruction? It is true, they admit, that such a wholesale repudiation of debts would undoubtedly make it difficult for nations to borrow from each other for some time to come, but if such a repudiation took place, the debtor nations would not need to borrow money for generations to come." By teachings such as these has the German point of view been formed.

The real cause of this war was not the regrettable murder of an Austrian prince by a Servian; it was the attempt of German Austria to use that murder as an excuse for entering Servia, and, in so doing, to continue the German policy of extending towards the South and East the territory under the domination of German influence. That policy had already given Austria much territory, and, recently, two large provinces, at least, at the expense of her neighbors.

Though friendship with France and sympathy with her existed, the immediate cause of Great Britain's entrance into the war was the disregard by Germany of a treaty. In a solemn treaty Germany had promised, with Great Britain and other nations, to observe and maintain the neutrality of Belgium. Germany refused to keep her promise and commenced to force a way through Belgium in order that she might attack France by way of her unfortified Belgian frontier. International agreements recorded in treaties must be maintained; otherwise there can be no confidence in international dealings; and peace between the nations can never be lasting. The German leaders say that

they are surprised because Britain fights on account of "the scrap of paper" which records Germany's broken promise; the surprising thing would be if Britain did not fight and did not help the gallant Belgians whose neutrality she has promised to maintain.

It is, of course, impossible to do complete justice in a single paragraph to the political system of a great nation; but, speaking broadly, it is true that although Germany has a parliament, the Imperial family and the Prussian nobles are her absolute rulers. The Prussian nobility are the hereditary lieutenants of the Hohenzollern dynasty; they constitute a military-caste which has no trade and no profession but that of war. Autocracy, class privilege, and their abuses, still exist in Germany. The German nobility support the Emperor in maintaining his divine right to rule; he initiates and directs German legislation personally; in fact, he can decide German policy. His power depends upon his armed forces and his main care is to strengthen them. Civilians bear enormous taxes to support the army and navy; yet officers of those forces, as a class, have extraordinary privileges; and men wearing uniforms are beyond the reach of the laws which govern the common people. When soldiers have been on trial, even in time of peace, it has been impossible for judges to decide otherwise than as the army dictated to them. The German Emperor loses no opportunity of insisting that "the supreme law is the King's wish."

If Germany conquered in this war, or even if this war left Germany half-beaten provided she retained her present system of government, there can be no doubt that, as soon as war was over, the ambition of the small class of able though unscrupulous men who rule Prussia would continue to stimulate their efforts to increase German power and their own influence. Domination of the whole world is the avowed object of the ambitious, Prussian military-caste.

If Great Britain and her allies were beaten in this war, Canada would at once have the choice of accepting the protection of the United States, if they would have her, or of becoming a conquered colony of Germany. She would probably become connected with the United States. The refuge would be only a temporary one, for a German autocracy of enormous strength could never permit its authority to be weakened by the existence of a democratic America. The German population of South America and German interests there are already large; a conflict between the interests, in the Americas, of the United States and of a victorious Germany, would be certain within a generation. The stronger power would win. Individual freedom and representative government, as developed by our civilization, would no longer exist; let us remember that, to-day, the popular will finds its expression in government more quickly in the British Empire than it does in any other great nation.

In this war, we and our allies are fighting the world's battle for the ideals of democracy. The British ideal of democracy holds that every man has the right to the full exercise of his powers, so long as his activities permit a similar exercise of their powers to others. Such an ideal makes the struggle for existence a struggle between individuals. The Germanic ideal of social organization is an autocratic one. It binds individuals together so that they, by their combined strength, may obtain advantages over other groups of persons which they, as individuals, perhaps, could not obtain by their single efforts. The Germanic ideal supports an Emperor whose will is absolute, and a nobility who are his lieutenants. The British ideal creates presidents, and supports a king whose dependence upon the will of his subjects is greater than is the dependence of the president in the world's freest republic upon the votes of his fellow-citizens. If we are beaten now, stable, democratic government will remain only in America; and it is certain that German autocracy will attack democracy there in the future just as it does now in Europe.

Self-interest, no less than sympathy with the Allies' quarrel and admiration of their fight against the enormous army with which Germany has confronted them, should convince every Canadian that the power which rules the German people must be destroyed. The troops collected at Valcartier, the stream of new recruits to old regiments, and the formation of many new regiments, as well as the generous response to all the calls for funds show that most Canadians are convinced of that necessity. The conviction must spread until all Canadians are as a unit in their determination to work steadily and to spend their resources and themselves without hesitation, as they are called upon, until the Power which made this war is so utterly destroyed that it can never make another.

We have, and can have, no quarrel with the frugal, industrious, German people. Our quarrel is with the German rulers and with the German form of government which allows a mere handful of arrogant Prussians to bend the German people to co-operation with them in their schemes of violence and aggression.

Our form of government, our rights, our privileges, our individual liberty as free men are threatened by precisely those forces of class privilege and class right against which our fathers fought. Their blood and effort by Magna Charta, by revolution, riots, emigration and, latterly, through political controversy have won liberty for us. Sons of our fathers must do as our fathers did; and die, if need be, to hand on to their children our birthright of freedom.

IV.

That is the conclusion to which every Canadian must come on considering the situation. The causes which resulted in the war are briefly sketched in the preceding section. The events which immediately preceded the declaration of war are resumed, in greater detail, in the correspondence between the ambassadors of the Great Powers; copies of that correspondence are being sent to you by the Canadian Government. Read them. They must convince you that war has been forced upon Great Britain and that the Empire must fight not only for honour's sake but to preserve our free government and our very existence as a free nation. The sole object of this communication and of those which will follow it, is to convince Canadians of that truth and to suggest to them how they can best serve their country.

The side which has the most resources, with the most trained men—and the will to spend both must win. Therefore, Canada must husband her resources, train her men, and be resolved to spend everything in resisting her assailant.

V.

The first, and one of the greatest services which we can perform for our country is to spread a knowledge, both of the causes which brought about the war, and of the war's necessities, until every Canadian realizes the duty which the war has put upon him and is united with his fellows in a determination to succeed in whatever his chosen leaders ask of him.

We must urge the truth of these matters on everyone and discuss them everywhere; we must prove, by our own actions, that we are in earnest in all that we say. We must advocate the principles which we hold both by contributing articles and personal letters to our local papers and also by arranging for public meetings at which the war, its causes and its effect upon the community in which we live will be discussed. There are well-informed speakers, in every town and village, who are always listened to. Arrange citizens' meetings and get these men to address the meetings on the war. If suitable speakers cannot be found locally, let the local members of Provincial and Dominion Parliaments be asked for help. Failing help from these, apply to us; we may be able to find speakers for you. There are many other ways in which University men may be useful; but, if they are to work to the best advantage, they must vigorously identify themselves, by no means necessarily as leaders, with the activities of the community in which they live. The success of their attempts to help in the organization of a well-informed public opinion and of their attempts to keep public effort in the most useful channels will depend, very largely, upon the simple, frank, unobtrusive and unofficial way in which they work.

When this statement reaches you, read it over; then discuss it with the University men who live near you. It is hoped in this way to secure the formation, in every community in Canada, of a group of prominent and well-informed men; if they, working always as individuals, vigorously advocate their beliefs, few of those who know them will be uninfluenced by their opinions. It is requested, whenever loosely-organized groups of men come together in this way, that one of their number be chosen to correspond with the Secretary of the Committee which issues this statement. It will be of advantage to the Country, if, in this way, entirely unofficial local reports, by responsible persons, can be obtained from all parts of Canada concerning the usual local opinion upon the matters mentioned in this and in future statements. Information concerning any matter which might in any way be of public interest would be gladly received for communication to the Government; for example, notes concerning peculiar local conditions such as threatened strikes, of distress from unemployment or other causes, of the feeling among the foreign population, might all be of great value.

The succeeding paragraphs indicate some of the matters on which Canadian determination should be firm and united.

VII.

Resources as well as soldiers will decide the war. Our resources must be husbanded. Money must be kept in the country and everyone must be kept at work in order that more money may be made. For both reasons, that money may be kept in the Empire and that new values may be created in it, Canadians should purchase only the products of Canada or of the Empire. Thrift should be encouraged; so far as it lies in our power to do so, each one of us should make certain that no man nor woman among those about him is idle and that all are actively engaged in useful, productive work. Over-indulgence in unproductive expenditure should be discountenanced. Every one of us should learn to feel that in saving a dollar, in adding a dollar to his bank account, he is doing a little towards increasing his country's chance of success in this war; and we should realize that in allowing a dollar from our hands to reach Germany, directly or indirectly, we are spending a dollar towards securing our own defeat.

VIII.

The products which have the greatest value in war-time are those which are life's necessities; agriculture produces most of these. Canada is fortunate in that agriculture is one of the greatest of her industries, and in that she has limitless, unworked land. Farmers must be convinced that next year will inevitably bring increased demands and higher prices for all of

the farm's products. Therefore, it will be very profitable for farmers to increase their production. Efforts should be made to convince them of this and to help in finding suitable assistance, so that it may be possible for them to work more land than before.

IX.

Labor Exchanges have been and will be established, under varying names, in many of the provinces, for the purpose of finding occupation for those whom the war has thrown out of work. Farmers and unemployed alike should be urged and helped to make use of these exchanges.

X.

Measures, and a public sentiment, must be provided which will insist upon the public maintenance of those, unable to help themselves, who are dependent upon men gone to the front. There must be no spot in Canada without an efficient organization which will see that soldiers' dependents have opportunities for helping themselves, and assistance when it is needed. The same organization, through its local knowledge, can be very useful in making certain that public relief goes to none but those who are worthy of it. Those who require assistance of this nature should apply to the local branch of the Canadian Patriotic Fund, or, if no such branch exists, to Herbert B. Ames, Esq., M.P., Honorary Secretary, Canadian Patriotic Fund, Birks Building, Sparks Street, Ottawa. Those who are capable of work, or are free and able to enlist, should be given nothing, so long as enlistment is possible for them.

XI.

Advocate, by example and advice, the prompt payment of debts, in order that business confidence may be sustained and that the business and activities by which Canada's resources are created and increased may be continued, little-affected by the war.

XII.

Voice the necessity for responding promptly to Red Cross or other official requests for garments or other supplies, and explain the necessity for conforming to regulation patterns and standards in all work of this kind. Further details may be obtained from Canadian Red Cross Society, Head Office, Toronto.

XIII.

Red Cross work, like other activities indicated in this statement, can often be done better by women than by men. The opportunities and duties which the war offers might be pointed out to women who have not already accepted them. Women

could do more, probably, than any other single influence to make Canada's position secure. They could make thriftfulness fashionable, cowardice well-nigh impossible, and cheating the public an ignominious disadvantage for the "grafter."

XIV.

Men, who cheat the public by "grafting" in work entrusted to them, are dependent, like all business men, upon the public for their existence; dishonesty in them would never appear were an acute public opinion developed which would make of every Canadian a fearless inspector and would make of a "grafter" an outcast with whom Canadians would neither deal nor associate. We must each of us feel that to-day we are part of the Canadian government and that those who cheat the government cheat us.

XV.

There are many Old Countrymen, some of them say that they are reservists, in many parts of North America who are anxious to get to the front. Such men should be sent to the nearest British consul if they live outside of Canada, or, if they are in Canada, they should be directed to apply to Capt. Ferguson-Davie, Officer Paying Pensioners, Butterworth Building, Sparks Street, Ottawa.

XVI.

A call will soon be made on Canada for more soldiers. It, and the calls which may follow it, must be met at once. Every Canadian man feels the obligation that is upon him and he will prepare himself. Young men, with no one dependent upon them should go first; married men will follow as they are needed, those with most dependent upon them remaining longest.

In the meantime, until the call comes, every man should join some corps in order that he may learn how to shoot and the rudiments of soldiering. *It is absolutely necessary to be taught both before even a good woodsman can be made capable of fighting efficiently in this war.*

There are many technical occupations in the army. Men with the habit of learning acquired at a University should reach proficiency in these with little difficulty. But, to be useful, they must commence their training at once; the local recruiting stations under the Department of Militia will direct them. Some of them will join the medical service, others the engineers or transports, others will become clerks, signallers, telegraph operators, motor engineers—there are many other forms of service in which a University training might be an advantage. In this connection it will not be without interest to you to learn that arrangements have been made by which a battalion will be raised at McGill. It will be officered and manned entirely by graduates and students of McGill University.

XVII.

The Central Committee will gladly receive, for transmission to the proper quarter, any suggestion of services which University men, as a body or as individuals, might perform.

XVIII.

The Central Committee, for whom this statement is issued, will issue other statements from time to time. It is being organized to assist in dealing with conditions produced by war; when those conditions are at an end the Committee will be dissolved. It will eventually be composed of representatives selected by the Graduates' Societies of Canadian Universities. Its purpose is to help in maintaining a sound, stable, well-informed public opinion in Canada, and an assured understanding and swift co-operation between Canadians and their leaders.

God Save The King!