

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 50/35 An address delivered by Mr. L.S. St. Laurent, Prime Minister of Canada, on the occasion of the Annual Meeting of the Royal Military College Club, at Kingston, Ontario, on September 30, 1950.

I considered it a great honour to be invited to speak at the annual meeting of the Royal Military College Club, and it is a genuine satisfaction to be here in the company of a group of men who have such a fine record of service to our country.

I know your annual meeting is primarily an occasion for renewing old friendships in an enjoyable weekend, away from your usual daily worries and cares. I hope, therefore, what I have to say this evening will not mar that enjoyment. At the same time I have to assume that you did not invite me here simply to utter a succession of platitudes - though I confess that like other men in public life I have at times resorted to platitudes on polite occasions, but somehow I don't think that would do tonight.

I notice that Article II of your constitution says: "The objects of the Club are: The bringing together of its members for mutual benefit and support; the encouragement and maintenance of that brotherly and friendly feeling which has always existed among cadets; and the advancement of the welfare of its members, the Cadets and the Royal Military College generally". These are worthy aims, and I know the R.M.C. Club has upheld them worthily.

The Royal Military College Club is one of our oldest national institutions. Since its birth in 1876 the College has made a most notable contribution to the life of our country, both in peace and in war. Its graduates - the Agnews, the Crerars, the Drurys, the Gibsons, the Panets, the Tremblays, the Simonds, the Youngs, and a host of others, have rendered service to this nation for which their fellow-Canadians have good reason to be proud and thankful. Anything which its old members can do to promote the welfare of an institution which can produce such men as these is all to the good.

R.M.C. has recently been transformed to meet what are believed to be urgent military requirements of the present period. I imagine some of you may have viewed the transformation with some misgivings. It is always difficult to feel altogether happy about major new developments in any institution to which one is attached. But from what I can learn, most of what is best in the old traditions of R.M.C. is being carefully - one might almost say lovingly - preserved. And at the same time new life

is being added to those traditions in a manner no old cadet will ever need to feel ashamed of.

As you are aware, at the conclusion of the war the question arose as to what should be done with the service colleges at R.M.C. and Royal Roads. A number of alternative courses were put forward; indeed, the number was so large as to prove somewhat embarrassing.

A committee of outstanding citizens under the chairmanship of Brigadier Sherwood Lett was appointed to look into the matter, and later the present Minister had the advice and assistance of a tri-service committee meeting under the chairmanship of Air Vice-Marshal Stedman.

This study and consideration resulted in our adopting the course of setting up both institutions on a tri-service basis. It seemed to us to be clear that modern conditions require closer co-operation, better teamwork than ever before between all three services. With that, I am sure you will agree.

It seemed to us to be clear that if there is to be the kind of teamwork needed between all three services today, it was important that, as far as possible, all the officers of all three services should have the same general background and the same general standards and the experience of working together in their formative years at the college here and at Royal Roads. On that account we adopted the suggestion that both R.M.C. and Royal Roads should be on a tri-service basis, training young men of good physique, character and general education by working together, living together and playing together.

I am informed that in entrance qualifications and all-round bearing, the cadets of today are, let us say, worthy successors of those who have graduated in earlier years. From the physical standpoint it must be obvious that the College has never been in better shape. In buildings and equipment we see on all sides, changes and improvements which must please every ex-cadet. For these and for the many other improvements, I can assure you the College owes a great deal to the constant interest and boundless energy of the present Minister of National Defence.

The important place of R.M.C. in the life of Canada was recognized in a unique way earlier this year when the leading learned societies of Canada held their annual meetings here. I personally had an opportunity to visit the College briefly while the meetings were going on and to see how successful they were.

We are counting, in fact we know we can count, on R.M.C. turning out young Canadians who will serve their country as faithfully and as well as those who have gone before them. Therefore, in advancing the welfare of these young men and in maintaining that brotherly feeling amongst ex-cadets which has always existed in the past you in the R.M.C. Club are continuing to serve the best interests of the College and the best interests of Canada.

I know that while you are linked together by your association with R.M.C., your common interests are

TR.
TRC
37

wider than the interests and welfare of the College. All of you have been cadets yourselves, and nearly every one of you has served in the armed forces in one or both of the two great wars. I feel, therefore, I have every right to assume that you are more than just casually concerned, particularly in these difficult times, about the defence of our own country and the defence of that wider community of free nations, whose preservation is essential alike to our welfare and our security. I should like, therefore, to say something about the way we in the government are organizing our common efforts to provide for that defence.

I feel sure I can speak to you frankly without fear of misinterpretation, even if all of you do not agree with everything I may have to say. The success of our defence policies does not depend on the government alone. It depends just as much on public understanding and support, and we are naturally particularly anxious to have our policies understood by those in the community to whom the public naturally looks for leadership and guidance on questions of defence. And there is probably no group of citizens from whom that leadership and understanding is more likely to be expected than from the ex-cadets of R.M.C.

In recent weeks and months the government has given far more consideration to these problems of defence, in the broad sense of the term, than to any other question. That is only right and proper, because the security of our country and of our kind of society is the foundation of everything else, and we can only afford to take the foundation for granted when we know it is secure. I think I can say that the primary object of our defence policy, as of all our external policies, is the prevention of a third world war.

In a sense armed force has always been an instrument of diplomacy. But it is perhaps not unfair to say that in the past defence policy was primarily concerned with what would happen if and when a war broke out, whereas today defence policy is primarily directed to creating a situation where war is unlikely to break out. In other words, the first purpose of our defence expenditures and our defence force is to deter aggression and we have got to get into the habit of looking at them first from the point of view of their effectiveness as a deterrent - though, of course, that obviously means they must also have a real value if the worst comes to the worst and the deterrent function is not successful.

I do not of course need to tell you that defence always has a wider connotation than a purely military one, but that was never truer than in this present world-wide struggle between totalitarian communism and the free world. Some of the most effective weapons are not military weapons at all. Indeed, the communists have always claimed and probably still hope that they can overthrow the so-called capitalist nations without resort to war, except for revolutionary outbreaks within countries. By fostering discontent, by gaining power over trade unions, by infiltrating into key positions, and by many other subversive means, revolutionary communist parties seek to put themselves in a position to take over governments and thereby gain control over whole nations.

We have seen that process at work in Eastern Europe and in Asia. At the moment there is not the slightest likelihood of anything like that happening in Canada. Happily, we have in this country only a tiny minority of communists and their fellow-travellers and we have an enlightened population which is becoming increasingly aware of how the communists work. We must however be on our guard, both to prevent sabotage by the actual communists, and to create and maintain conditions in which communism is not likely to breed and spread. So long as we can combine a high standard of living and welfare for our people, there will be no effective scope for communist propaganda.

But we have to realize that the maintenance of high standards of living and increased welfare is an objective which competes directly with demands for ever-increasing defence activity. This is what is now becoming for our generation the old question of guns or butter. Of course it is not really as stark as that in a country like Canada, and at this stage when we are not actually at war, we must provide as much as we can of both, though it is obvious that some of our personal wants will have to go unsatisfied for the time being if we are to do our part in the joint effort to build up in the free world the strength required to deter aggression. In building up that strength we must never lose sight of the fact that its primary purpose is to prevent war and that the prevention of war may require many years of sustained effort. In some ways that sustained effort, though it will be a great deal less than the total effort we would not hesitate to make in an actual war, will be more difficult to sustain precisely because we cannot expect it to be supported by the same degree of readiness for sacrifice which an actual war evokes. What is more, in seeking to maintain as high a general standard of living as is compatible with building up our share of the combined strength of the free nations, we cannot resort to many of those devices which can be used for the total mobilization of actual warfare.

In this shadow-land between war and peace we cannot afford to expend our reserves. It would certainly not be wise, even if it were possible, to invoke the War Measures Act, to place our economy and the whole life of the nation on a complete war footing when, in fact, we are not at war.

In relation to the population and resources of our country, our defence obligations are not small; indeed they are likely to be as great as those of any country of comparable population, except those in the most immediately exposed positions.

We, too, have an increased demand merely for the defence of our own national territory. Fortunately we are well placed in the world. Our military advisers think that an offensive against Canada by large numbers of troops is not a feasible operation in present circumstances. Nevertheless nuisance raids by paratroopers and the possibility of bombing attacks are much greater than they were in the last two wars and hence we must devote a proportionately larger amount of our resources than we have done in the past to dealing with these hazards.

Then we have our obligation under the United Nations Charter and the Atlantic Treaty.

Under the UN Charter we all agreed to settle disputes by pacific means, to refrain from using force to attack any state and to give every assistance in any action taken under the Charter to deal with any state that breaches the peace.

Originally it was intended that each member of the United Nations should provide forces under individual agreement to assist in repelling aggression on orders of the Security Council. It was intended that detailed arrangements should be worked out through the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations. Progress with the conclusion of these military agreements was, of course, prevented by the Soviet Union. The result was that when the Korean incident occurred the UN had no forces available to deal with such acts of aggression. It was, of course, precisely because of the inability of the UN to provide for collective security that the North Atlantic Treaty was concluded to fill the security gap in the North Atlantic area.

In this Treaty each of the twelve signatory states agreed to come to the assistance of each of the other signatories if they are attacked. But more important still, the treaty envisaged the creation of sufficient combined military strength to provide an effective deterrent to aggression. At the present time the North Atlantic Nations are actively engaged in working out the form and extent of the contribution which each of the signatories can best make to their combined strength.

Now what does all this mean for Canadian defence policy? The Korean incident resulted in one important change. The creation of the Special Force means that from now on we will have a Canadian Force in being available to assist, without undue delay, in discharging a part of our obligations under the UN Charter and the North Atlantic Treaty. At the present time the Force is being trained for service in Korea, if that seems to be the right place to send it when it is trained and ready. But there are other areas in the world; for what has happened in Korea might be repeated, and it might be that our Special Force would be despatched to some entirely different place if circumstances warranted and Parliament approved.

Provided the Korean incident is successfully terminated before too long a time has elapsed, the Special Force would be available for service as part of a deterrent force in Europe, if its employment there would fit in effectively with the joint plans. Meanwhile, as you all know, the most important obstacle to the creation on the continent of Europe of extensive ground forces is the shortage of equipment and of the capacity to produce equipment, weapons and supplies. I don't need to tell you either that, speaking generally, it takes longer to get into large-scale production than it does to train men to a fighting pitch. For the immediate future, therefore; so far as Europe is concerned, there is a most urgent need for military supplies to be put into the hands of the men who are already there.

Now I must admit I have been rather surprised to see that this point has been misinterpreted in certain

quarters and that it has been suggested that Canadians are going to be too busy producing munitions to do any of the fighting. It seems to me Canada's proud record of participation in two world wars is a simple and sufficient answer to any such suggestion. But at present there is no fighting going on in Europe, and what we are concerned about is trying to prevent another war starting over there, and that means putting up the best possible evidence of united ability and readiness to resist and overcome any possible aggression.

To help at once to meet the pressing need for armed forces on our side in Europe, the government recommended to Parliament earlier this month that \$300,000,000 be appropriated to provide munitions and supplies for our partners in the North Atlantic Treaty, and Parliament overwhelmingly approved that recommendation.

At the same time and in addition to producing and providing munitions and supplies, we are strengthening all our own forces as rapidly as possible. We are pressing on with recruitment for our own regular forces; we are raising their ceilings as we go along. We have in training here at R.M.C., in the Universities and elsewhere a large number of officers for the three services. We are speeding up planned rates of production in nearly every line of military equipment. We are proceeding with the putting into commission of ships in the navy just as fast as men can be trained and the ships can be successively modernized, and we are also procuring a number of new ships. Our training facilities as well are being enlarged.

As you know, we are producing the F86 fighters and the "Canuck", the only two seater jet propelled fighter of its kind in the world. To provide additional immediate combat strength we have bought a large number of fighter aircraft from the United States. In addition to our own men we are training here in Canada, in increasingly large numbers, aircrew and army officers from the United Kingdom and several countries in Western Europe.

This, of course, is just a brief indication of what has been done so far. One of the things which we would like to see is a larger number of men in our reserve forces. The Department of National Defence, as you know, has organized recruiting programmes, but we have to admit that in a time of full employment and while we are not at war it is difficult to get all the men in the reserve which we would like to see.

Now I know that many of you are closely connected with our reserve forces and you know of the difficulty in getting men just as well as I do. But I wonder if I might make a special appeal to you, since most of you occupy influential positions in your respective communities, to do everything you can to encourage young men to join the reserve forces. We hope to avoid a third world war, but if in spite of the efforts of our associates and ourselves it does come, we will have to rely on these units to the same extent as we have done before. And the better shape they are in now the more rapidly we would be able to play our part if a general outbreak of hostilities should occur. And in the meanwhile the better state they are in the more they contribute to our total deterrent strength.

Despite the gloomy outlook in the world at the present time, I remain an optimist about the possibilities of a third world war. I may be wrong but I have always thought that we are likely to hasten the coming of such a catastrophe if in our own minds we regard it as inevitable. But we must face the facts, all the facts, and while trying to build for the future and make this earth a better place to live in for those who come after us, we cannot afford to be unprepared to deal successfully with those evil forces whose aim is to undermine, by every means, our free way of life. In making our preparations I know we can count on the cadets and ex-cadets of the Royal Military College. For that reason, it is a great pleasure to ask you to join with me in drinking a toast to that institution which has promoted so effectively the ideals of service and sacrifice for Canada, for the Commonwealth and for the free world - The Royal Military College.

S/A