

LET'S FACE THE FACTS

No. 8

**Address to the Men and Women
of Canada**

BY

Miss CLARE BOOTHE

**over a national network of
the Canadian Broadcasting
Corporation, Sunday night,
Sept. 8, 1940, at the invita-
tion of the Director of Public
Information for Canada**

Text of Miss Clare Boothe's address over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation national network Sunday night follows:

On this Sunday evening we in America give thanks to God that England stands. England stands and will stand. This is the happy and glorious fact besides which all the ugly and bitter facts that you have had to face—and that we are beginning tardily to face—are endurable at last. This is the fact—the one fact—that Hitler dares not face. It is the one fact that must crumble all totalitarian logic, and undermine all the other facts which the Fascist nations can present to themselves or to the world as an argument for their so-called "inevitable" victory.

We in America salute the bravery of the British. As France collapsed from top to bottom, Great Britain seemed suddenly from bottom to top, to grow firmer, prouder, stronger, fiercer and more unafraid. But we also know that the physical strength and the vast, swift, sudden upsurge of spiritual force and moral valour which has so far won the defensive Battle of England is the strength and spiritual valour of nothing less than the entire British Commonwealth of nations. We know that it has so far been mainly a battle of the air, and we know that in that battle the Royal Canadian Air Force plays a unique and heroic part. And so it is with special pride that we of North America salute you of North America, and honour you for the magnificent fight which you have been waging from Dunkerque Beach until this very day.

In bringing our tribute to you for your part in the Battle of Britain, it is not merely as distant spectators or as an appreciative audience of a stirring and epic show. Nor do we do so merely as close neighbours. The tribute that the United States pay to your valour is a tribute of gratitude which comes from the bottom of our hearts, because we

know that in all vital respects your battle is also our battle.

When I say that we know that your battle is, in all vital respects, our battle, I mean that the entire American nation acknowledges that this is also a fact—one of the large and important facts which will decide the ultimate outcome of this war and the peace which will follow it after.

U.S. OPINION CONSOLIDATING

Now the entire nation does not mean any mere statistical fact like 100% of the noses counted. There are of course a great many Americans, millions of them, who still do not because they are ignorant, or will not, because they are confused by years of isolationist propaganda and post-war pessimism and disillusionment, acknowledge to themselves that the Battle of Britain is our battle. It takes time for opinion to form in a great democracy, criss-crossed by often bitterly conflicting sectional interests, cross-currented by many different bloods and prejudices. It is a curious fact that whereas it took Adolf Hitler seven years to unify his nation in an evil cause, all Britishers were unified against him the day the war was declared. And we, 98% an isolationist nation as of a year ago, are abandoning that position and becoming a nation unified in our will to thwart Hitler actively, —so rapidly that those remaining isolationists' greatest complaint against our democracy is that it moves too fast. Strong and articulate minorities, the strength of a peaceful democracy, are often in a crisis its weakness and its curse. In the United States these minorities, who have in the past and are still hampering us in our efforts to aid Great Britain and to arm, will now rapidly and without violence or persecution, surely bend to the popular will. And the precious time it takes to achieve this goal in the democratic way is the costly, but not too costly price, we must pay for staying democratic even in a crisis. Democratic Canada and

democratic England would have it no other way.

Our democratic American nation expresses itself through the leadership of its two great political parties. The leader of one of those parties is Franklin D. Roosevelt. To be sure President Roosevelt has not in the past said in so many clipped and clear and exact words that a British victory is vital to the welfare of the United States. But all his actions and the implication of many of his speeches have practically said so.

LEADERS THINK ALIKE

The leader of our other great party is Wendell Willkie, and Wendell Willkie has said very plainly—I quote—that the fall of Great Britain would be a calamity to the United States. And he has also said in his acceptance speech of the nomination for the Presidency:

"I promise, by returning to those same American principles that overcame German autocracy once before, both in business and in war, to outdistance Hitler in any contest he chooses in 1940 or after."

There can be no doubt in the mind of Britishers everywhere where the two **leaders** of our great parties stand. The fact is, the issue involved between them on this joint stand is which can avert that disaster more firmly—and more efficiently.

So both Mr. Willkie and Mr. Roosevelt favour the extension of all possible aid short of a declaration of war—a war for which the American people are not yet adequately prepared—to Great Britain and the Commonwealth. But for those who do want to count democratic noses, there stand behind these two men, Franklin Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie, on this question at least 70% of the rank and file of the people of the United States. Something like 70% is the average that various national polls show have been in favour of more and more aid to you and your battle. Today, one Briton in every four carries an American

rifle in his hand. As a matter of fact, the people themselves in the matter of aid to you were way ahead of the present administration. For almost two months a majority of the American people clamoured to let Great Britain have 50 of our destroyers. Thus, it is a fact that we, the people of the United States, have sent 50 destroyers to Great Britain although in circumventing our Congress the action of the President has tended to make it seem like a personal gift from him to you.

But beyond all this it must be clear at last to you that the true spirit of America must inevitably stand with you in such a battle as you have been fighting—a battle for liberty and independence, and against the monstrous, insane challenge of military and spiritual dictatorship. I would be prepared to make that statement without any other evidence to support it, except that America is still the land of the free and the home of the brave. But when we have the fact, that even in a tense election year the two leaders of the two great parties have refused to make a political issue of Isolation and have scorned to catch the still substantial vote of those who believe in it, then surely no one could deny that it is indeed the true spirit of America speaking truly to itself, to declare that in all vital respects your battle is our battle. Now when it comes to deciding what more we ought to do, that is not so easy. And I think every intelligent Canadian understands the problem. It is, regrettably, partly a matter of politics. In passing let me say that the fact which Great Britain tends to forget is that, whereas our domestic troubles are not tragic troubles of war, like yours, we have plenty of them here. We have vast unemployment, a dislocated inefficient economy, and bitter though bloodless political warfare between those who believe in more and more domestic socialization of Government and Industry, and those who wish

to stop that trend and return to the historic American way. These ills, complicated by our problems in the Pacific and in South America, make it all the more remarkable that the majority of Americans agree on the fact that Britain's battle is our battle. We are not, as a nation, divided on our premises, but on our **strategy**—not if to strike, but when and where and how and above all, with what, are the questions which divide most of us now. I believe that after next January this nation will proceed much more swiftly and confidently than in the past to make clear-cut decisions in foreign affairs.

I believe, that in this question, it matters very little who is elected President. Either candidate when elected will have a mandate to make America's influence felt more effectively both on behalf of our vital interests as well as on behalf of our vital ideals, and both candidates see very clearly what those vital interests and ideals are.

WHY U.S. CAN'T HELP MORE.

If we are not able to be of greater aid than we have been to the British Commonwealth so far, it has been mainly for the practical concrete reason that we do not have enough of the things which you needed—airplanes and tanks and material. We have not got them for the same reason that you have not got them—we were asleep at the switch too long. For the past four years we have tended to believe what we wanted to believe—we have all been wishful thinkers—that is the unpleasant fact for which there are now many excuses but few good reasons. We have been blind, incredulous and lazy and more than a little soft, but that is in the past. We have all seen the errors of our ways. We have come bang up with realities now. But we must waste no precious time in regret and remorse. We shall leave post-mortems to the historians and to such politicians as

can make cheap capital of them, or can wisely use them for the lessons of the future. In short, we the people of the United States have entered the race now, believing against all homilies that the democratic hare can still outdistance the totalitarian tortoise. So we are at last getting under way with the production of war materials. We are getting under way with our training of men for the defence of this continent. Obviously most Americans felt we could not be of any decisive help in aiding you when we were pathetically unable to defend ourselves. And even those out-and-out Interventionists, who agreed from the beginning that Britain is something for us to defend could not agree on such short notice as the collapse of France gave them that we should risk any large part of our own defences on a **distant**, however precarious, Battle of Britain. I am simply pointing out that the extent to which we can be of aid in this battle must necessarily, both of political and military necessity, be proportionate to our own capacity for defence. By next year our production capacity will have been greatly increased, and we shall have at least the beginning of a modern trained army. Like yours, our air program will become big scale. And so we can confidently say, together, that next year the power and the influence of the North American Continent will be felt throughout the world. And I, for one, have no doubt that that power and influence of the North American Continent will be decisive in the affairs of mankind in this decade.

Two months ago the United States was almost paralyzed with fear and remorse;—it seemed that we had come awake too late. It now seems that God has granted Great Britain a respite, a breather, a little time. The Blitz has failed, only the Krieg remains. So Great Britain and North America will have all this winter to prepare for the Second Spring Blitzkrieg. With that much time how can

Great Britain, how can North America fail?

I suggest that we can only fail if in these long, bitter, cold winter months of comparative military inactivity that may well face Europe now, we begin again to speak of a "phony war," and if we in this country make the same mistake that Great Britain and France made last winter, slackening our efforts at home and beginning to hope, wishfully, that a quiet Hitler is a beaten Hitler. We can fail if we count too heavily on internal dissension and famine in the conquered countries, and the flaws in totalitarian economy in Germany to bring the realistic victory that can only be achieved on a field of battle by superior arms.

THE REAL FIFTH COLUMN.

We on this North American Continent can also fail if we listen to the Fifth Columnist—not Hitler's Fifth Columnists so much as the Fifth Columnist which, unfortunately, lives in every man's heart. The Fifth Columnist in every man's heart is that part of him which says, "Let George do it," now that the crisis has temporarily passed. The Fifth Columnist in every man's heart is that part of him which counsels him to further his sectional interests, to secure his own temporary comfort or profit at the expense of the interests of the nation and the comfort and profit of all its citizens, that makes him forget that from laissez faire to laissez tomber is a very short step indeed. Above all the Fifth Columnist in every man's heart is that part of him which whispers that a man's life at best is too short and that he must take very good care—tender, personal care—to enjoy it peacefully and preserve it comfortably to the last possible moment, until, in short, the enemy is at the door. The Fifth Columnist is the man who, in solicitude for the years of his own life, forgets

that his children will in any case live longer than he, and that his obligation is to his children's adult world. The fact is, the issue between Democracy and Nazism is so grave and historic, that no man can today make his choice for himself. He makes it for his children and his grandchildren. And the choice is very simple: shall they or shall they not live and be born in a world of men who are free? Again the Fifth Columnist is the man who sees nothing worth fighting for except the small piece of ground on which he stands, because he refuses to see that that small piece of ground is all of a piece with the whole world and that what happens in the heart of the Eastern Hemisphere must have its repercussions in the Western Hemisphere in a violence in proportion to which they happen there.

Now the average Canadian by his superior knowledge of geography, which he has learned so effortlessly as a citizen of the far-flung British Commonwealth, by his knowledge of the economy which makes his country prosperous in trade with the other commonwealths, and by the spiritual and political tradition of a great liberal, sea-faring nation which he has inherited, understands better than the average American how much of a piece the world has always been, and with planes, radio, telephones, movies, and the rapidity with which the earthquake shocks of economic collapse travel around the world, how much smaller that all-of-a-piece world is now. The Canadian understands these things better than we and so, perhaps, orders them better. But we in America are growing more wise. Many of us have once and for all faced in our imaginations the sort of a world this world would be if Hitler had won a clear-cut victory this summer. Now most of us are willing to admit that Isolation has too

long been the dubious compliment which we have paid the British Navy, and, as I say, fortunately for us, we have not found that out too late. We have begun to see that there is no such thing—there can be no such thing—as a free United States or a free North America as an island in a victorious Fascist world. And in that knowledge we have at last realized that in all the larger matters, the problems and troubles and dangers, which beset Canada are ours. Indeed, we have at last seen that the problems of democracies everywhere are one after all. Unfortunately, it needed a war to make this abundantly clear. Had we all seen it when we were at peace, there would have been no war. When peace comes, and come it will with a victory for Great Britain, and with Great Britain for all the democracies—I hope that we will not forget that knowledge so bitterly and costly won.

Pride of nation, pride of speech, pride of tradition are good and strong things for a citizen to have. Still I believe that the free union of the great democracies of the earth must take place one not too distant day if democracy is to survive. When it comes it will simply be a political ratification of the spiritual truth we forgot, or never clearly realized, after the last war, but which we all know now in our hearts—that when people share the same ideals, the same way of life, the same belief in liberty and in justice, they are one people no matter what crown they serve or what beautiful and unique flag they fight under and for. We know now, and if we on this Continent do not forget for another fifty years that you are one with us and that we are one with you, in peace as well as in war, we will have already made one great step forward in the brotherhood of free nations.

Thank you.

*When you have read this speech it is suggested that
you pass it to a friend.*

