

# LET'S FACE THE FACTS

No. 23

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Address to the Men and Women  
of Canada

BY

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*Superintendent, London Bureau of The Canadian Press.*

over a national network of  
the Canadian Broadcasting  
Corporation, Sunday night,  
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tion of the Director of Public  
Information for Canada

*Text of the address of Edwin S. Johnson, over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation national network Sunday night follows:*

I have been back in Canada for two weeks. I returned here from the British Isles, where, since 1937, I have been in charge of the London bureau of the Canadian Press. I have followed the events which preceded this war and to many of them I have been an eye-witness. Three weeks before the declaration of war I was in Berlin and only six days before we went to war with Germany, I was in Rome. I have been bombed out of my home and out of my office and I have had more narrow escapes from death than I like to contemplate. I tell you this not for the purpose of giving you any exaggerated opinion about myself but to emphasize the fact that what I have to say to you tonight is the truth.

In the few days that I have been in Canada, I have been from coast to coast. Wherever I have gone I have heard it said that much of what you read in the daily newspapers and what you hear over the air is just so much propaganda. Well, there are two opinions about that. But what I would like you to know is that what I may say to you tonight is the truth and any opinions that I might venture to express are based upon the truth as far as my perception and my experience let me understand it.

Tonight, I am putting aside my official clothes as a member of the Canadian Press. I am going to talk to you as one Canadian to another and the responsibility for what I say is mine.

To anyone returning recently to this country it is obvious that you, my fellow Canadians, find it difficult to realize or even to imagine what is going on in our embattled Motherland. You try hard to do so but you can't even begin to understand how, over there, every day and every night death and a stark terror ride the skies or to sense the desolation and suffering that is occurring. You do not realize how appalling it is to see the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians—defenseless men, women and children; the destruction of their homes and of treasures which have enriched our history for centuries. I hope you never will see it there or here. But I would like you to realize it and all its terrible implications.

## JUST THE BEGINNING.

This sort of thing is taking place every day in the British Isles. Yet it's just the beginning of the frightfulness we can expect from this ruthless, barbarous foe whose leader has said he never will put aside his corporal's tunic until he has smashed the British Empire and achieved world domination. World domination includes the domination of North America.

There is no doubt about what is in this man's mind. Nor is there any doubt that the one challenge to it is Britain—Britain under the brilliant and dynamic leadership of Winston Churchill. This was the challenge he spoke and it is the challenge of our Empire. "We shall never surrender." . . . "Britain will fight the menace of tyranny for years and, if necessary, alone."

Thus is the issue joined. It is a fight to a finish. A violent clash between diametrically opposed ideologies—the most stupendous struggle in history between civilization and barbarism. At the moment the advantage lies with Germany and her satellites although her junior partner in crime, Italy, is reeling badly under the relentless pounding of Britain and her gallant ally, Greece.

We shall gain nothing by bitterness and incrimination for those mistakes and those policies which permitted our Empire to lapse into such a sorry state of unpreparedness to meet this challenge. You and I as well as our leaders were to blame. And we have paid dearly for that era of blundering and incompetence. We came very close to the humiliation of defeat which France suffered. But there is reason to believe, to hope and to be confident. For when we survey the magnitude of the disaster that overwhelmed our expeditionary force in Europe, we must feel a surge of pride in the resilience of our Empire when we contemplate its recovery.

## BRITAIN NEEDS HELP

In the British Isles they are no longer saying "things may not be going so well for us but we'll muddle through somehow." The grim realities of common danger have ended such complacency. Canada must end it too for the defeat of Great Britain means that we in Canada will be in the position that Great Britain is in today. And I say to you solemnly that

Great Britain cannot win unless you help her with all your might.

Britain will fight to the end. You can depend upon that. Under the spur of able, energetic leadership, the people of the British Isles have submitted to a self-imposed discipline. With sober awareness of the menace that confronts them they are marshalling the full power of their resources and energies not only in the defence of their home but of this Empire and civilization everywhere. Never were the British people more courageous. Never has it been so aptly said that "Britain awaits her hour and counts not the hours between." How true ring today the words uttered by Walter Page, United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James in 1916 when he said:

"Just when you would like to hang them for their stupidity you become aware of such noble stuff in the British people that you thank God they were your ancestors. Europe would be a bloody slave pen today but for them."

Except for activity in the air and on the sea the war today is almost a counterpart of the war a year ago. Yet, from bitter experiences we can rest assured that Hitler has not been idle and is not idle now. You can be sure that he is concocting some nefarious and dreadful scheme, the full weight of which he will unleash against us with all the fury within his power at the moment when he believes it will be successful.

## WHAT WE ARE FACING

Have you ever pondered what we are facing? Do you realize that we have not yet felt the shock of the full momentum of a total war by a regimented nation of nearly 75,000,000 people, all of these people subordinating every interest to that of the state, obedient to and worshipping with fanatical faith this new-found god of theirs—the former Austrian paperhanger?

Do you realize that for years German factories have been operating full blast day and night, producing weapons of war aimed at our extermination? To attain this end they are still working. Under compulsion, the German people long ago ceased to enjoy those rights and privileges of life that the people of the British Isles are just beginning to surrender voluntarily. We in Canada and in the rest of the Empire must match the sacrifices of our fellow men



in the Motherland for Nazi Germany enjoys a long head start. In every branch of military preparedness and striking power they are superior to us. We can only regain the lost ground through concerted effort, work and relentless determination.

The average Britisher appreciates the material and moral support that has been extended to the British Empire by the United States. But he feels—and rightly—that Americans have just as much at stake as Britain in this struggle. Therefore, he wonders why the United States has not faced the facts plainly and acknowledged this to be true. The majority of Britons believe firmly that the United States must come into this war. Not to save Britain from defeat (they have no illusions about that) but to safeguard American future and American subjects from enslavement.

#### BRITAIN MANS FRONT LINE

Meanwhile Britain heroically mans the front line of civilization buoyed up by the hope that a constant stream of vital supplies and skilled personnel will soon be crossing the Atlantic to provide her with those essentials which will aid her to ultimate victory. But Britain has no illusions about this either. She knows she faces the reality of new, increasing violent attacks upon her lifeline in the north Atlantic. Enemy submarines, surface raiders and long-range bombers are being sent out in strength to harass her sea-borne commerce. Food for Britain, raw materials, airplanes, ships and all the other riches pledged to her by the United States and Canada now have to face ever increasing dangers. No one in the British Isles underates this fact. But all are confident that the British Navy will, in the end, prove equal to the challenge.

So far with a single exception, the people of Britain, have been able to meet the threat of Germany. Our airmen have inflicted crushing defeats on the German air force in daylight raids on the British Isles. The guns of Dover have matched the German guns across the Channel, shot for shot. But there is one threat they have not been able to meet effectively. That is the night raider. But this problem is just as serious for Germany as it is for us. Whoever first solves it and prevents the secret from falling into the hands of the enemy will have gone a

long way towards winning the war.

#### RAIDS ARE DAMAGING

There is no sense underestimating the results of these mass attacks and indiscriminate bombings by Nazi night raiders. Britain has suffered very severe material damage and a considerable loss of life. In such ruthless and concentrated attacks it is inevitable that vital targets should have been hit and that the production of war materials should have suffered. I do not wish to imply that Britain is being beaten to her knees by those hammer blows. But it would be folly for us to minimize their significance. It would be well for Canadian industry and Canadian labor to contemplate this fact before it is too late.

One thing the Germans have not done. They have not even begun to destroy the morale of the British people. I have lived for months in the midst of this reign of terror and ghastly destruction of life and property. I can tell you honestly that the fighting spirit of the British people is stronger today than ever before and that their courage is sound to the core. The people of Britain have resigned themselves to a war of long duration with all its unpredictable hardships, untold suffering and discouraging setbacks. But I have yet to meet a person in the United Kingdom who does not believe firmly that Britain will win.

Yet, all this fine spirit, this indomitable courage of the British people will not avail them unless the aid so urgently needed is given to them in this their hour of unprecedented trial. I tell you frankly that unless this aid is given now, fully and liberally, there is a very real danger that the war may end in a stalemate. I need not tell you what that would mean—postponement of the struggle to be fought out a little later on with even greater violence and frightfulness; a further era of feverish and expensive rearmament; the menace of economic bankruptcy for the Axis and the Empire. And probably, in the end, we would see "Uncle" Joe Stalin perched securely on the European throne and wielding the sceptre of communistic dictatorship.

#### VICTORY OR NOTHING

It is your duty and mine—the duty of all of us to see to it that there is no possibility of a stale-

mate. It must be victory or nothing and if we sincerely want victory we must be ready to work for it, fight for it and pay for it to the very limits of our human and material resources. If you had seen London as I have seen it, bruised and battered, with dead and dying in its streets, you would be prepared to work and to fight and to pay so that this evil thing which has caused this suffering and sorrow would be destroyed forever.

This is a fight to a finish. It is and can be no other kind of a fight. There is no referee in the ring and it's no time to talk of Queensbury rules. There are among us, over there and here, high minded people who believe that chivalry, honor and fair play, should prevail. Not so long ago I recall hearing a minister of the church say, "Let us keep our escutcheon clean. If we sink to the level of the enemy we shall not be able to use the language of Christian morality when the time comes to discuss the terms of peace." When that time comes, as now, we will still be dealing with a people—the Germans—who know no honor in war and who interpret chivalry and fair play as signs of weakness and inferiority.

Against such an inhuman enemy can we in justice to our Empire and our loved ones continue to pursue the policy of turning the other cheek? Out of my bitter experience, I say to you that I think not. In the face of such ordeals and tragedies as Britons are experiencing today such an attitude must be regarded as nothing short of stupid, reckless martyrdom. As long as we adhere to it, just so long, will we allow the initiative to remain in the hands of our foes and permit them to continue the methods of the marauding gangster and vicious killer. In total warfare as I have seen it, it would be folly to sit back bravely while an unprincipled people seeks to destroy everything that is worth anything to us. We have no other duty and no other course except to marshal the full power of our strength and strike back with all we've got. That is the only kind of language the Germans understand or respect. And when the time comes to settle the terms of peace we must not lose that peace as we did against the same foe after the first Great War. Then we were all too prone to forgive and to forget. This time we must not forgive. This time we must not forget.



## CANADIANS ARE ADMIRER

From the time the first Canadians arrived in the British Isles more than a year ago until I left I was the Canadian Press war correspondent and I was attached to our overseas forces. I made five trips to that mystic port we have come to know as "Somewhere in Britain" to greet incoming contingents of our troops. I would like you to know—and the feeling is shared by the British people—that I have never seen a more enthusiastic, eager, finer body of men. One instinctively felt that every man-jack of them would bring honor to himself and to his country when the call comes for the real test. From the time that the advance guard of the First Division arrived on the other side just over a year ago, I shared their joys and hardships in camp billet, under canvas, in the open . . . watched them pass through the hard school of training . . . on the parade ground, ranges, out-on-field manoeuvres and have seen them emerge as hardy, well-disciplined troops who today rank among the most proficient and best-equipped in the United Kingdom.

When the Canadians arrived, it was generally believed they would be fighting by the side of their British comrades on the continent within a few months. But the collapse of the allied cause in France and Belgium changed all that.

Following the tragic disorganization of Britain's heroic expeditionary force, the First Canadian Division became one of the mainstays of the Motherland's defence. Almost everybody was positive Hitler would follow up his con-

tinental successes with a lightning invasion of Britain . . . Canadians moved into positions of readiness behind hastily-erected barricades and strong points ready to meet the blow. So high was their morale and the enthusiasm of our lads, who were fully aware of the gravity of the tasks imposed on them that they boasted they could hold at bay whatever force Hitler might elect to send against them.

But you know as well as I what has happened since then. Those same grand lads are still manning the Empire's front line, not only confident of being able to repel an invasion should it ever be attempted, but all set to launch an offensive of their own when the command is given.

## WAITING IS TRIAL

Yet it has been this eternal waiting for something to happen that has proved such a trial to our boys. Three times selected units of the Canadian forces have actually moved off for battle . . . first, the dash to Dover last May from whence it had been proposed to dispatch our men on a relief foray to Calais and Dunkirk . . . then the stillborn expedition to Norway and, finally, the ill-fated incursion into France. Each time they returned dejected and disappointed to the same training areas.

Had it not been for the intelligence and efficient leadership of the officers who commanded units that did arrive in France, many Canadian homes today would be mourning loved ones. Instead, they're hale and hearty . . . true, they are miles away from home and probably giving vent to a bit of grumbling now and then . . . but, nevertheless, alive.

However, a good soldier never

gives thought to death—and all our boys are good soldiers. Today they are more anxious than ever to come to grips with the foe.

They are willing to tackle any assignment or go anywhere so long as they get action. For they realize that until they have attended to Hitler and his crowd once and for all, there is small prospect of getting back home . . . to the life of peace and contentment they would naturally much prefer.

In these circumstances it is inevitable there should be a certain undercurrent of boredom. Our leaders, however, are fully aware of this danger and have already taken steps to deal with it. But we over here also can do much to stimulate and cheer our boys over there. Write them often, send them parcels, papers and magazines, encourage them and help to keep them happy.

These Canadian soldiers, sailors and airmen have earned a fine reputation for themselves in the British Isles. They are liked by the British people and the British people have confidence in them. By their actions and by their words from the corps commander down to the man in the ranks they have inspired belief not only in themselves but in this country. These men of ours have made the people of the Old Country sure of their faith in Canada. In the faith that Canada, her factories safe from enemy bombs, is becoming the arsenal of the Empire. In the faith that Canada, willingly, is pouring forth her treasures of the earth and of the factory and of the home in the defence of the Empire. This faith these men of ours have given them. We must not let them down.

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

