

1916-35

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE CANADIAN CLUB
AND THE
WOMEN'S CANADIAN CLUB
OF OTTAWA

FRIDAY, 10th NOVEMBER, 1916

BY

The Honorable N. A. BELCOURT, K.C., P.C.

THE EFFORT OF THE "ENTENTE"

PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL REQUEST

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The Effort of the "Entente"

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Empire Parliamentary Association, which has for its main object the promotion of matters of general interest to the British Empire and which recruits its members from the ranks of the Parliamentary representatives of the United Kingdom and the self-governing Dominions, holds its meetings alternately in London and in some one of the Capitals of the Dominions. This year, the meeting took place in London, where thirty-three delegates, from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Newfoundland and Canada, met as the guests of the Executive of the Association, of which the Right Honorable Mr. Balfour is Chairman.

It was my good fortune to be selected as one of the ten representatives from Canada. Our visit to England, Scotland and France and the confidential conferences of the Association, which extended over the months of July and August, included the inspection of the Munition Factories, Military Camps and Hospitals in England Scotland and France, the French and British fronts, on the Somme and in Picardie, and the Grand Fleet in the North Sea.

We were received and entertained by the King and Queen, the President of the French Republic, the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and France and the members of their cabinets; we had confidential interviews and conferences with the statesmen, military leaders and great captains of industry, and many journalists as well, of both countries. And by all we were treated with greatest kindness and unbounded hospitality. Such a visit, in constant company with members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and all the Dominions, under the unprecedented conditions caused by the world war, with every facility and opportunity to see, learn and observe, has left in my mind and, I am sure, in the minds of all the participants, impressions of the deepest kind which can never be forgotten or duplicated.

Our vision was clarified, deepened and widened, our knowledge greatly enlarged, our sympathies quickened and intensified. New conceptions were opened to us. We were deeply impressed with the prodigious preparations and efforts made by Great Britain and France in the great war. Our hopes in the ultimate triumph of our cause were congrmed. Illuminative, impressive, inspiring and reassuring indeed was our visit.

To relate my observations and impressions would take a great deal more time than your indulgence and the occasion permit; I can give you but a few of them and I trust that you will pardon me if I do so without

any attempt at real co-ordination and just as I have hastily since jotted them down. Beyond some figures, rather hurriedly taken, I had no notes and therefore must rely on my memory.

Our first visits were to the Admiralty, the War Office, the Munition Department, the Treasury and the Colonial Office, where we had the inestimable advantage of being received by the respective heads of these Departments, the Right Honorable Messers Balfour, Lloyd George, McKenna Bonar Law and Sir William Robertson, all of whom spoke frankly and freely on the part taken by Great Britain in and the then situation of the gigantic struggle. Their statements to us were in many respects new and surprising, always most interesting and generally full of hope.

We were most graciously received and entertained by Their Majesties at Buckingham Palace. I was delighted to see that His Majesty had fully recovered from the accident which he met with in Flanders and to hear from him that it had left no ill effects. He was gracious enough to give me his appreciation of some of the aspects of the war and his estimate of its duration.

MUNITION FACTORIES.

The great centres of industry, Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinboro and many smaller ones, and the shipyards of the Clyde and Tyne, with mile after mile of ships under construction and millions of working men and women, were inspected and visited. And what a revelation it was to all of us! Let me give you an idea of the prodigious effort of the Mother Country, the intense fervor and activity in these Munition Factories, where work is carried on incessantly night and day, Sunday included, and without any holidays.

At the time of our visit there were about 4,000 of these Munition Factories, under direct government control, in which there were then employed nearly two million men and 400,000 women. I understand that the workers in these factories now number 3,000,000 men and nearly 600,000 women. In order to permit this to be done, the Labor people have set aside, for the time being, their rules and customs relating to such matters, as hours of labour, overtime, entrance to trade, dilution of labor, exclusion of women, juvenile labor, etc., etc.. They have waived their holidays and they have now learned the patriotic lesson of postponing all disputes and squabbles.

The spirit, the wonderful adaptability and the physical endurance of the women especially are beyond praise. Sir William Beardmore, the Chairman of the great industrial works at Fairfield, told me that many of the munition women workers turn over weekly to the Red Cross all their earnings, amounting in most cases to 35 shillings per week.

Before the war, the Government had three Munition Factories of its own. In July last it had 100. Of these ten are national projectile factories, containing many thousands of machine tools, driving many miles of shafting, with a daily output which would fill a train of ordinary box cars more than one mile long. These factories have all been planned, erected and equipped since June or July, 1915. The most of the machinery and tools had to be specially designed and constructed; some of the munitions turned out are of as complicated a mechanism as the finest watch, and all to be blown out at the end of a gun, for the purpose of destroying valuable property and invaluable human lives.

If we marvel at the wondrous ingenuity, skill, patience and energy of the workers, the wonderful mechanical inventions and adaptations, can we escape the sad commentary which all this implies on modern civilization and Christianity? Germany's crime against both can never be forgotten, if ever forgiven.

THE ARMY.

Before the war, Great Britain had an army of less than 300,000 men. In less than two years it created a voluntary army of 3,500,000 men, to which, by conscription, over 1,000,000 have since been added. And the Dominions have, in addition, contributed 1,000,000 men, making a total of 5,500,000.

The great training camps of Aldershot, through which one million men had passed since the war began, and which contained 90,000 men the day I visited it, Shorncliffe, Bramshott, to mention those only in which Canadians are more particularly interested, and many others, had to be enlarged, equipped and organized. Along the northern coast of France, at or near the sand dunes to the south of Boulogne, there were then camped 200,000 British soldiers ready or getting ready for the trenches, on the very spot where, one hundred years ago, Bonaparte had his armies ready to invade England. The ancient deadly enmity of the two greatest nations of the world has been turned into the closest and sincerest friendship; and that will after all most certainly be the greatest compensation for the awful sacrifices which this war will have caused both.

Remember that this vast army had to be mobilized, equipped and trained; new services, such as Army Service, Medical, Ordnance and Motor Corps, Bicycle Corps, Telegraph and Telephone lines, Hospitals with at least 50,000 beds, Hospital Ships, Hospital Trains, Hospital Stations, Ambulances, etc., had also to be established, erected, equipped or transported. Besides, depots had to be planned, erected and furnished with provisions, supplies, arms and munitions of all kinds, and their transportation and distribution arranged. I saw several huge sheds with avenues of bacon, streets of flour bags, biscuits boxes, jars, cans, etc. I also inspected on the British front buildings containing shower baths to which the men, upon returning from the trenches, repair immediately to exchange all their clothing for fresh ones. Such parts of the discarded clothing as are no longer fit to wear are burnt and the rest are steamed, at a very high pressure, in order to relieve them of the vermin which are inevitably carried from the trenches. One of these establishments I inspected in detail and in order to give an idea of what this service alone, which though very important, is very small by comparison, means, I was told that 30,000 pieces of clothing are there daily washed and sterilized. To all this must be added the assistance given, the comforts provided by public and private philanthropy and generosity, such as the Red Cross, the St John Ambulance, Voluntary Aid, Y. M. C. A. and many other kindred societies. You can, in many places along the front, see buildings which have been put up for or turned into clubs, concert halls and places of amusement for the soldiers. Cemeteries have been provided in different parts of France; and it was my sad duty to visit one of these cemeteries, a very large one near Boulogne, beautifully laid out with evergreens and natural and artificial flowers, where lay the bodies of many heroes, some of them, Modern Crusaders, having come thousands and thousand of miles to give their lives for the vindication of liberty and

civilization. Thousands of them also sleep their last sleep on those very fields of Picardie, whence came Peter-the-Hermit, who roused France and the martial nations of Europe in the cause of the Holy Sepulchre.

Along the magnificent roads, those straight, unending and always beautiful roads of France, many times, on both fronts, I saw miles and miles of motor trucks, lorries and busses going to or returning from the front, performing their part in the marvelous transportation and distribution scheme, so promptly devised and set up and so admirably carried out by Great Britain and France, carrying arms, munitions, food and clothing. On one occasion, I was privileged to see brave and gay "Tom-mies" and "Poilus" on their way to the trenches, but a few miles away, carried on Paris busses, still retaining many of their inscriptions and advertisements, decorated with leaves and flowers, the men, French and English, sitting side by side "*un bouquet au fusil, une chanson aux lèvres*"—all lustily singing "*La Marseillaise*". Never shall I forget the deep emotion which this scene stirred up in me and I can now, months afterward, feel my blood tingle at its mere recollection. How I wish you all could have heard the notes of the greatest of martial airs, sung on the soil of great and beautiful France, by English soldiers and French soldiers, with hearts beating in unison, joined in a common cause and a common interest, that of true civilization, and of true humanity, brothers in purpose, sacrifice, achievement and glory, with but the one heroic resolve—to save France and Great Britain from the horrible fate and martyrdom of Belgium and Serbia! How I wish every Canadian, of English or French origin, could have seen that sublime, inspiring and stirring scene, heard that wonderful music and felt the irrepressible emotions they provoked, certain, as I am, that all would have thereby realized how insignificant, how trivial, by comparison at least, are our domestic quarrels and conflicts; that French and English in Canada, as in France, can and should be brothers, real brothers; that if only a thorough union of "pioupiou" and "tommies" can vanquish the Germans, so Canada can live and prosper only by a real union, a cordial entente between English and French, by their sharing fully and constantly a common purpose, a common ambition and a common effort.

THE BRITISH NAVY.

The might of Great Britain and the despair of Germany, it was our privilege to inspect. We first visited the Battle Cruiser Squadron at Rosyth, under the command of Admiral Sir David Beatty, who most kindly entertained us on his Flagship, the "*Lion*", which the Germans, to my certain knowledge, did not, as they still assert, sink in the Jutland battle, and from which they will again hear in loud and lively tones at the first favourable opportunity. We were also the guests of Admiral Sturdee on his Flagship and it was our pleasure to express to him and his doughty officers and men our congratulations for their daring achievement near the Falkland Islands.

And last, but not least, we had the proud and almost unique honor of being welcomed by the Commander in Chief and to dine with him and his staff on the "*Iron Duke*". How inspiring and comforting the modest but resolute speech with which he favoured us; his calm yet convincing assurance that when the time comes the Navy will deal its death blow to the German Navy, bottled up and in hiding at Kiel. Most interesting and memorable this privileged occasion to converse freely and confidentially with those responsible for the spirit and the efficiency of the men and

ships of that unparalleled navy, wherein the best of the Anglo-Saxon and his qualities of mind and heart are probably most in evidence.

We were shown the formidable array of huge battleships with their giant guns, the innumerable battle and armed cruisers, destroyers, submarines, torpedo boats, mine sweepers, trawlers, etc., and the Auxiliary Fleet, loaded with oil, coal, provisions and supplies, hospital ships, transports, etc. We heard the thunder of the big guns, we saw the seaplanes at work and witnessed an awe-inspiring torpedo attack.

Mere words can convey but a very inadequate conception of the stupendous power of the British navy, most of which is now lying in the waters of the North Sea, on the north-east coast of Scotland, in and around the Orkney Islands.

The First Lord of The Admiralty is my authority for the following statements:

Since the war began, more than one million tons have been added to the strength of the navy and its personnel has been more than doubled. The New Navy, constructed since the declaration of war, is equivalent to the entire German navy, and yet construction is still going on. If Great Britain lost one half of her fleet she would still have a larger fleet than she had at the commencement of the war. In the Jutland fight, the navy lost 8 destroyers, but during that same week 15 destroyers, more powerful than any previous ones, were launched.

Great Britain cannot afford to take, and she is not taking any risks, because without her navy she would starve in a few months. It is due solely to the British Navy that ships from Canada, Australia, Argentina, Norway, the United States of America and elsewhere, which are under the constant surveillance of the Admiralty, can bring to England provisions, supplies, war material, as well as the troops which the Dominions have contributed to the great conflict, and transport them across the seas to France and the other theatres of the war.

Without the British navy, Germany, not only could not have been deprived of her Overseas possessions, all of which she has now lost, but could and no doubt would have taken most of the British Dominions. The trident of Neptune is the sceptre of the world, and it is tightly held by Great Britain.

THE FINANCIAL EFFORT.

The main spring, the great lever upon which rests and which puts into action this wonderful and tremendous war organization, is, besides human effort and human courage and human endurance, the mighty dollar. Without it the gigantic scheme could not have been set up and without it it would instantly collapse. Let me mention a few figures showing the incredible amount of money necessitated by this titanic war, which is breaking down principles, overturning axioms, shattering theories in every direction in military, naval and financial matters. Great Britain is spending daily for war purposes \$25,000,000. She has loaned to the Allies two and one half billion dollars. Her national debt in March, 1916, amounted to twelve billion dollars. Many are those in Great Britain and Canada who are anxiously asking themselves how and when can this colossal debt be ever paid off. A look into what Great Britain did in the past and a comparison of her past, with her present wealth and resour-

ces, may furnish us with the answer, certainly will give us hope. After the close of the ten years' war with France, in 1697, the national debt of England was about £15,000,000, which caused William III to utter the grave fear—"May God relieve us from our present embarrassment, for I cannot suppose it is His will to suffer a nation to perish which He has so miraculously saved". In 1749, Lord Bolingbroke wrote: "Our Parliamentary aids from 1740 to 1748 amounted to £55,552,159, a sum that will appear incredible to future generations, and is so, almost to the present. Till we have paid a good part of our debts and restored our country, in some measure, to her former wealth, it will be difficult to maintain our dignity". Yet that sum is less than twelve days of the expenditure of Great Britain alone in the present war! The national wealth of Great Britain was then probably £500,000,000, her debt was £80,000,000, or about one-sixth of her wealth. In 1816, after the Napoleonic wars, the national debt of the United Kingdom amounted to about £1,000,000,000. Now, in 1916, it is about £2,500,000,000, an increase of 150 p.c. In 1816, the income of the people of Great Britain was estimated at £300,000,000; in 1916, the estimate is over £2,500,000,000, an increase of more than 800 p.c. In other words, in 1916 the debt of Great Britain had increased 150 p.c. and her wealth 800 p.c. I cannot guarantee the absolute correctness of these figures, but they are as close as I have been able to ascertain.

The remarkable and almost incredible thing is that Great Britain very largely is providing for the payment of the most of this huge war expenditure by levying enormous taxes from the present generation. The direct taxation in England is 5 shillings on the pound on incomes, with 3 sh. 6 d. special war tax. Let me illustrate this by pointing out that the man in Great Britain who as an income of £5,000 has to pay into the Treasury yearly £2,125, and thus is left with £2,875.

We are told sometimes that we, Canadians, have not yet suffered greatly through this great war, that we have not really begun to feel the burden of it, notwithstanding our war taxes and what we have done in the way of helping the Red Cross, Patriotic Fund and other war aids. Could anything more eloquently prove this statement than the very figures which I have just quoted?

If England was slow in waking up, if there was muddling for a time, she has indeed been moving since at a steady and tremendous pace. Who will now dare say that England is decadent?

FRANCE.

And France, who will dare repeat the Prussian calumny that she was or is now impotent? Who will now repeat the words: "La France légière"?

The effort of beautiful, resourceful, valiant and heroic France and her marvelous successes, which have provoked the unbounded admiration and the burning sympathy of the whole-world, cannot be expressed in words.

I wish it were in my power to describe the cool, calm courage, the self-denial and universal devotion of her people, the resolute and indefeasible determination of every French man, every French woman to vanquish or die, the cheerfulness with which France is bearing the terrible burden of the German invasion, with all its sufferings, losses and brutalities, the resignation with which she is contributing all her best blood and all her treasures in the accomplishment of her gigantic task ; her

unshakable optimism, her absolute certainty in the final triumph. One cannot appreciate the energy, the activity, the thrift, the wonderful industry of the French people until one can see them at work. The whole nation has no other thought, no other preoccupation than the war. All the men capable of bearing arms are in the trenches or making munitions of war; their work in the cities and in the rural parts is being performed by the women, the old men and the children. The old men, the women and the children, millions of them, are working night and day to supply the soldiers with arms and munitions.

I have seen the women doing the men's work in the factories, the stores, the streets; performing all the farm labor up to within half a mile of the German trenches, with shrapnel and shells hissing over their heads or exploding in close proximity.

To prove this wonderful, this incredible earnestness and efficiency, let me tell you that in 1916 only 5 p.c. of the arable lands of France were not under cultivation and that this year's crop is quite up to the average. The crops which we saw right near the very battlefields of Flanders last July were the finest that I ever saw in any part of the world, and the result wholly of the labor of the women, the very old men and the children of France. No wonder Germany's cupidity had been aroused and one cannot help remembering Blücher's typically Prussian exclamation the first time he visited London, after Waterloo—"What a City to sack!" What a prize France would be! The very thought that the Germans came very near snatching it makes my blood run cold.

Another proof of France's industry and thrift is that the vintage of 1916 will produce 25,500,000 hectolitres or 990,000,000 imperial gallons, which is 44,000,000 imperial gallons more than for the year 1913. The returns from the shipping, railway and industries of France speak also most eloquently of her wonderful activity and efficiency.

The war is costing the Republic \$18,000,000 daily, and though the best part of industrial France, with her coal and iron mines and factories, is in the possession of the Germans, who are exploiting them and bleeding them and robbing them, she has put up, equipped and operated the many thousands of munition factories from which are poured out daily the most powerful and perfect guns in the world and huge quantities of arms, shrapnel and shells; she has perfected her railway system and greatly added to it, she has organized and put into operation a magnificent and most complete transportation scheme. France has raised, equipped and trained an army of 6,000,000 men, she has brought 1,000,000 troops from her colonies. She has perfected the most useful and efficient flying machines, which she has made in incredible numbers for herself and her allies. Just as Britain is Mistress of the Seas, France has now become Mistress of the Air over the Battlefields of France. The optimism and irreducible tenacity and heroism of her people are maintained to the highest degree. From the first day of the invasion of Belgium, France put forth her best efforts, energy and efficiency, all of which were so magnificently displayed, as well as the incomparable genius of her military leaders, at the battle of the Marne, when her fate and that of the United Kingdom and all the British Dominions as well, and the fate also of democracy, was clearly at stake. Modern democracy was saved by France on the banks of the Marne.

Verdun, which will ever be remembered as the greatest defensive battle of all ages, showed the culminating point of French military genius, French valor and French efficiency. Verdun is the answer, and how eloquent and conclusive, to the Kaiser, who deluded himself into believing and who dared to proclaim "La France légère"—impotent France

The more recent successes of France on the Somme and at Verdun have clearly demonstrated that her valor and her strength and her genius were not exhausted at Verdun, as the Germans have proclaimed and as a few of her admirers at one time probably feared. France to-day is unconquered and unconquerable. France to-day is conquering the Germans.

PARIS.

Under the immediate surveillance of the Admiralty and the guidance of the War Offices of England and France, our party composed of all the Parliamentary Delegates from the Dominions and of several members of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, was taken over to France, where we spent a week visiting the Capital and the theatre of the war on the Somme and in Picardie.

No words could give an adequate idea of the cordiality and enthusiasm with which we were received by the President of the French Republic and its civil and military leaders, nor of their kindness and magnificent hospitality.

It was my proud privilege, and one which I shall never forget, to be selected to express the fervent thanks of the British Parliamentarians to the illustrious President of the Republic, for the warmth and very apparent sincerity of his cordial welcome; to re-affirm the irreducible resolve of the British Empire and every part of it, to contribute by every means in their power to the common task of crushing forever the mad attempt of German world domination, and to endeavour to convey to him some of the infinite sympathy and unbounded admiration of the British peoples all around the globe for the trials of France and the magnificence of the spirit, efficiency and heroism of her people.

After several large official dinners and receptions, where we had the honour of meeting most of the great men of France, and at one of which I had the pleasure of listening to a most eloquent speech from the Prime Minister of France, and another, also, delivered in French, by one who fought against us in the Boer war and is now a loyal Britisher and member of the Parliament of South Africa; the inspection of hospitals and a visit to the huge and superb aerodrome "Le Bourget", where we saw 120 of the finest flying machines, some of them capable of travelling 140 miles an hour at an elevation of 10,000 feet, we were taken first to Senlis, about 27 miles from Paris. This is, as you will remember, the town nearest Paris which the advance guard of Von Kluck's army reached and the most of which the barbarians burnt, after brutally murdering its Mayor.

ON THE SOMME.

From there we proceeded towards the French front, on the Somme; our first stop being at Compiègne, one of the oldest cities of France and in the neighborhood of which human passions, human cupidity and human ambitions enacted so many wide conflicts, in which Romans, Gauls, Normans, Germans and French participated in turn.

We then crossed the Aisne, on a bridge then recently constructed by French engineers, in the place of one there destroyed by the Germans, and

soon reached a point about two miles opposite Péronne. On the way, just as we were later to experience in proceeding to the British front, we were given many opportunities of judging of the herculean efforts, the marvellous efficiency of the French war machine, of the magnificent organisation behind the lines.

But on the roads the presence of war is everywhere and constantly in evidence, consisting in an almost continuous stream of horses and armed men, uninterrupted lines of motor trucks, grey with dust, busses, gun carriages and guns, waggons and lorries of all sorts loaded with ammunition and supplies, ambulances carrying the wounded, battalions of cavalry, infantry and artillery.

From an observatory, hidden in the Eagle Forest, and with the aid of binoculars, we got our first view, and a very good one, of the battle line opposite Péronne and Soissons; we heard the roar of the guns and saw the explosions of shells and shrapnel all along the line of trenches. We saw many German and French aeroplanes, scouting over the battlefield, and the sky covered with explosions of the shrapnel guns directed against them, some of the shells passing over our heads or uncomfortably close by. In fact, on several occasions, we were ordered to take prompt refuge in the dugouts nearby; one of those made in a huge quarry all cut out below the surface, which affords sleeping and living room for 600 men and is capable of sheltering 2,000. We visited several other very large dugouts made in similar quarries.

All along the actual battle line, in the immediate vicinity of the trenches, the evidences of the terrific and devastating work of the giant guns are numerous and conspicuous, farm houses and buildings are all in ruins or wholly wiped out, trees are torn, broken down or swept away and the soil horribly ploughed and upset. It is a matter for constant wonderment that women and children can find the sublime courage to carry on their farm work in such close proximity to the really immediate theatre of the war. We were told that it is impossible to keep them away from the zone of actual danger and that not even the death of not a few of them has been sufficient to frighten them back to their homes.

The pursuit of enemy scouting aeroplanes by the shrapnel guns makes a most beautiful and exciting spectacle. The days during our visit were beautifully clear and bright, the sky was of that deep blue which it often has in Canada. On several occasions we saw 5 or 6 scouting aeroplanes flying from five to seven thousand feet above our heads; guns from all directions kept up an incessant fire, the shrapnel exploded below and above the machines, all around them, and yet they got away in time and escaped. It is seldom that the flying machines are brought down by the shrapnel from the trenches; they have been destroyed almost together in aerial combats.

It was in close proximity to Péronne that I first saw the famous "75" French gun at real and earnest work, and I was allowed to fire two shots from it into the German trenches; but as these were separated from the French masked battery by a ridge I was not afforded the satisfaction, though I was permitted to entertain the hope, that the shots were well directed and had accomplished what was expected of them.

One of the gunners in this battery, a man over 50 years of age, pointed out with a field glass the ruins of a house among the wrecks of Péronne, and he explained that that was all that remained of his home,

which he had left nearly two years previously to join his battery; with deep emotion he added that he had not since then had any news of his wife or children; he did not know where they were nor if they were still alive, and every day, every hour and every minute of the day, for 15 interminable months, spent in that battery, he could see the ruins of what had been the happy home of those nearest and dearest to him, and anxiously wonder and worry over their fate. And yet not a complaint, not a murmur escaped from his lips. His sense of duty and devotion to his beloved country was as strong and unbroken as ever. His spirit was unalterable. That is the spirit of the whole of the French army.

AT THE BRITISH FRONT.

From the French front we went back to Compiègne and thence to Boulogne, and from there we proceeded, through the Department of Pas-de-Calais, to the British front. On a hill, surmounted by one of those Dutch windmills so familiar to us all, and situated about a mile and a half from the City of Ypres, I was given a full view of the 15 mile sector of which the Ypres salient forms the most conspicuous part. There lay before me the ruins of what were the beautiful cathedral, the Cloth Hall and the remainder of the city, almost wholly destroyed by the heavy German guns and which was then being constantly covered with huge shells. You can imagine, better than I can describe, the feelings of intense sympathy and regret, yet of profound admiration, with which I surveyed there before my eyes, the ground upon which more than 20 000 of the best and bravest Canadian soldiers fell for the sake of civilization and the honour of our flag. Ypres, Poperinghe, Festubert and St. Julien, in ruins and blood-stained, there stretched on our front or nearby, evoking the memory of the tragic and heroic deeds with which Canadians covered Canadian arms and which sent the name and fame of Canada ringing through the world with mingled feelings of sorrow and infinite admiration.

A distinguished Canadian officer from Winnipeg explained with great lucidity the various phases of the first and second battles of Ypres, giving great credit to his brother officers and their brave men, and he related many inspiring or pathetic episodes of the two battles.

The explosion of huge shells all along the 15 mile sector, the constant rattling of machine guns, the deafening roar of the giant guns, the immense columns of smoke darkening the horizon and the hundreds of white spots dotting the skies, the latter produced by the explosion of shrapnel directed against scouting flying machines, amidst the ruined towns, villages and woods, composed a scene which I can never forget and hope to never again witness.

We had the honour and pleasure of meeting nearly all of the superior officers of the Canadian Army, who very hospitably and kindly entertained and informed us; we conversed with the men, answered their inquiries about home and conveyed messages entrusted to us by their friends and relatives. Whilst they could not suppress a longing desire to see their homes and families, there was none who was not prepared and fully determined to do his duty to the end, to give the best account of himself and show the Germans the stuff of which Canadians are built. I was pleased to see that all the men along the battle line were in the best possible physical and moral condition. Nowhere can you find a more robust and healthier looking lot of men and in better spirits, all, conscious of the great task entrusted to them, individually and collectively, imbued with the calm resolve to give up their lives, if necessary, for the sake of Canada,

the Allies and democratic ideals. It was apparent in many ways that every man felt that he individually was playing an important part in the great and tragic drama, the scene of which is laid for 400 miles across beautiful France.

And it is to my mind that very sense of individual duty, individual responsibility and individual resolve which surely gives to the democratic armies of the Allies that superiority over the artificial efficiency, the purely mechanical organization of the German hosts.

Whilst the army is the principal bond of the German peoples, the tie which so closely unites and binds the Allies is the bond of a common sentiment, of common ideals of right and justice. The conflict between these two ideals may yet be long, and I am afraid it is going to be, and the price will be frightfully heavy, it is already so, but in the end the cause which rests on the conscience of man is bound to prevail over the one which depends on mere brutal strength. The mighty and bloody struggle, which is to-day shaking the world, is the struggle of might against right; it is the fate of democracy which is being decided on the battlefields of Europe. And to me it is quite inconceivable that it can be God's will to allow democracy to perish, because the very faith which is common to all the Allies and democracy itself, rests upon common ideals of equal liberty, of common brotherhood. Love is the law of God and love must be the law of God's creation. Brutal force and hate may devastate and blood-soak the world, but they cannot rule it.

The day after the visit to Ypres salient, I had the great pleasure and the patriotic occasion to address the men of the 22nd battalion, which, as you know, is composed entirely of French-Canadians and which at the time had seen its rank almost completely depleted and refilled for the sixth time. I addressed them on parade, they having returned that very day from the first line of trenches, where they had spent 16 consecutive days. The rule, as you may know, is that the troops spend 8 days in the trenches, when they are relieved for another 8 days; but at their special request the 22nd had been allowed to put in an extra 8 days. The reason of the request, I was later on informed by one of the Canadian Generals, was that the battalion had made extensive preparations for outdoor sports and concerts to take place on their next coming out of the trenches; but when the time arrived for this the weather was so bad and was apparently going to be such for many days, these dare-devil French-Canadians preferred to take the chances of another week in the trenches rather than be deprived of the sport and fun elaborately prepared for themselves and their comrades in arms. This was, of course, before the Big Push was begun on the British front some time in July.

May I say here that never was I more proud of my French blood and that my compatriots were represented in the battle line, as they are in many other places, by such brave fellows; that they were taking their full share of the sacrifices and would in good time be entitled to their share in the ultimate triumph. This is the battalion which covered itself with glory at Courcellette quite recently. Out of 20 officers who led their men in taking that village from the Germans, six died on the battlefield and eleven were seriously wounded.

CANADIAN HOSPITALS.

It was also my duty, my sad duty, to visit in detail all the Canadian hospitals at Boulogne, Etaples, Tréport, Cliveden and other places; I con-

versed with the doctors and nurses and wounded from all parts of the British Empire. I saw the wounded lying in their beds or arriving in thousands; I saw the mutilations, the torn and bleeding heads, limbs and flesh, the look of intense suffering caused by the hardships and the cruel wounds. I witnessed the death of one man upon whom the operation of the tracheotomy had been performed and of another from tetanus, whose moans and cries of anguish are even now re-echoed in my ears. I heard the poor fellows' longing desire for home—"Old Blighty" or Canada or Australia—for relatives and friends. And may I confess it, I broke down and could not restrain the tears—, my heart bled at the sight of such suffering and anguish and I uttered the most earnest prayer of my life that this horrible butchery, this devilish slaughter and carnage might then end. My pacifist instincts, my abhorrence for this ceaseless torrent of horrors, got the better of my judgment and I cried for peace, for immediate peace. I felt irresistibly that this gigantic and monstrous holocaust in which the casualties have now probably reached the appalling figures of 18,000,000 men, must stop. And it was only days afterwards that I could realize that peace was not then possible, that only by the complete crushing of the German military machine, can peace be achieved and the world freed from the repetition of such a calamity, by far the greatest that has ever visited mankind.

The Kaiser and his peoples can never even begin to properly atone for the incalculable loss of so many precious lives, for the misery, starvation and despair with which they have covered Europe, for the known and unknown indescribable horrors, anguish and agony which their mad obsession, their wild ambition, their insane cupidity, their devilish lust for power and domination have caused to humanity. Their foul deeds have left a stain on the face of the earth which neither time nor repentance can ever efface, and which mankind will ever remember.

It is utterly far and away beyond my comprehension how anyone, anywhere in the civilized world, can contemplate such an unwarranted, such an unprovoked, such an unprecedented, such an outrageous, such a fiendish violation of all the elementary laws of right, justice and humanity, and not feel all the faculties of his mind and heart rise up in an all compelling, supreme and uncontrollable revolt. I wholly fail to understand for one moment how anyone, with anything like an adequate conception of the rights of man, of human justice, of the solidarity of men and nations to another one, can fail to grasp the supreme duty of the hour, can hesitate to proffer whatever aid or assistance may be in his power, to help avenge outraged humanity and destroy the colossal scourge of Prussian piracy and bloodshed, so long and so elaborately designed and prepared, so wickedly and brutally inflicted on innocent Belgium, Serbia and France.

Neutrality in certain parts of the world may be explainable, but I feel quite sure that there is a certain democratic nation which will ultimately be driven to the inevitable, if tardy, conviction, that mere money making is after all but a very poor, indeed a very miserable compensation or the loss of national prestige, national honour, caused by neglecting or ignoring international modern solidarity, the solidarity of civilized mankind.

"Never again the repetition of the horrible outrage of which humanity is now the victim"—that is the battle cry of the Allies, the battle cry which has rallied their sons from the corners of the earth and the volunteer armies from the Overseas Dominions, which causes them all to

stand shoulder to shoulder against the German brigands and murderers, to continue the struggle whatever may be their sacrifices in blood and treasure, until all possible human reparation for the crime and adequate security for the future are achieved. Canada must be prepared. Canada is prepared to contribute its full share to the accomplishment of this end and thus help to secure the best hopes of humanity.

"For the realization of their hopes", as Mr. Asquith only a few days ago eloquently said, "the Allies have given, are giving, without stint, without regret, as the price by which the World will purchase and surely hold in the years to come, protection for the weak, supremacy of right over force, free development, under equal conditions, and each in accordance with its own genius, of all the states, great or small, which build up the family of civilized mankind".

