

# **LET'S FACE THE FACTS**

**No. 10**

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

**BY**

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**over a national network of  
the Canadian Broadcasting  
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tion of the Director of Public  
Information for Canada**

*Text of Matthew Halton's address over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation national network Sunday night follows:*

Grimly and gaily, to quote the great Winston Churchill, the people of the British islands are marching together through the valley of the shadow, unafraid of the worst that Hitler can do. An English poet named John Freeman has just written that "There is not anything more wonderful than a great people moving toward the deep of an unguessed and unfearred future." There has been no greater episode on the stage of history, and as it moves to its climax we in the safety of this continent can only sit with bated breath, waiting, praying, as the fateful hours tick away.

I find the time goes slow. I keep thinking of the pleasing old nursery rhyme about the bells of the churches of London town, "Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St. Clemens." "The centuries go slow, cry the great bells of Bow." History itself may be moving with giant strides, but the minutes seem to go slow, and the old rhyme keeps singing through my mind. In this series we are supposed to face the facts, but just now there seems to be only one fact in the world — the battle which is silencing some of the famous bells. I have been in many situations in which the clock of destiny could almost be heard ticking, but there has been none like this. It was so in Czechoslovakia during the crisis of 1938. It was like that the last time I heard the lying Hitler raving in the Sports Palace in Berlin. It was the same in the House of Commons in London on the night of September the second last year, when, with a noble anxiety, the people in the streets were wondering why we hadn't yet declared war, and when, as Mr. Arthur Greenwood rose in the House to voice this feeling, a Conservative M.P. shouted the immortal words, "Speak for England!" It was so as we waited in England last June for the French counter-attack which never came. But there has never been suspense like this.

I think of England, the island I know so well, and of the ordinary men and women who are writing this shining new chapter for the book of human courage. For two years I lived in London as a student, and for the next eight years the great city was my headquarters as European correspondent for the Toronto Star. I

know and love nearly every street in that most urbane and mellow of all the great towns of the world. I have heard the bells of Bow and St. Clemens and St. Giles Cripplegate and the rest, and it is heart-breaking, yet inspiring, to think of them now, and of all the gallant company of the Britons, and of my friends there who still listen for the bells.

#### ENGLAND'S FINEST HOUR

When I left, a short time ago, many of my friends saw me off at the station, and they were sorry for me, not I for them. I was going to safety, but they "were finding safety with all things undying." They were staying to take part in the battle of civilization and the "finest hour" of our race. They were saying, as Rupert Brooke said, "Now God be thanked who has matched us with His hour." In words quoted by an Englishwoman in a letter I have just received, "Whatever before was dear is dearer now. There is not a bird singing upon his bough but sings the sweeter in our English ears."

At the station there was an American girl who said she wouldn't leave England for anything. There was an American man, expelled from Germany in 1933 for describing atrocities he had seen, and now staying to see the beginning of mankind's revenge. There were Canadians, pitying my wife and me that we had to go. There were two Germans, a refugee and his wife. The German had fought through the last war against us, had bombed London more than a dozen times, had been a German patriot, but had fled from the loathsomeness of Hitlerism. For years my wife and I spent Christmas Eve in London with this German couple, climbing seven flights of stairs in a tenement behind Euston Station to eat roast goose and potato cakes on the German Weihnachtsabend, holy night, and to talk of the day when sanity would come to Germany. And now I think of them all, the gallant company, the white company, facing the foe and the shattering bombs with matchless courage.

I read to-day, here in New York, that the beautiful Middle Temple just off Fleet Street in London has been bombed. In happier days you could step off the roaring Strand into the Temple and find yourself at once in an ageless peace, in surroundings where you could almost hear the heartbeat of time. You could

go and sit in a great hall where Shakespeare played before Queen Elizabeth in the first performance of Twelfth Night, and you could dine from a table made of planks from Drake's ship, the Golden Hind. So I think of another friend who saw us off that day, a barrister whose office is in the Temple, a kind and gentle man who was a hero in the last war. This man used to run for Parliament in the Epping division against Mr. Winston Churchill. But one night soon after Munich he came to my house late, as was his custom, and he said, "From now on I shall never run against Winston. He is the bravest and the greatest man in the world."

#### ADVICE OF CHURCHILL

In 1935 I went to see Winston Churchill with news from Germany. "What's the use of writing about these things?" I asked him bitterly, "Nobody believes it. What can I do?" Mr. Churchill replied, "Keep cool and keep working."

In England now they keep cool and they keep working, and we must do the same. If they can, as the mothers of their dead children look at the sky with screaming eyes, so can we. There is lots for us to do. The condition in which Britain will face the spring depends largely on us, on this Canadian nation which has sprung like a tiger to Britain's aid, and so to greatness. The islanders have brave hearts and cool heads, and make no mistake, before the war is over we shall need them too. But right now we need resolution and the utmost speed. The old bells of London are crying urgently to the new world for speed, because victory depends on machines as well as on human courage. On machines as well as on pilots. We can beat the Germans in courage and we can beat them in machines—if we have time. The Germans are not supermen. They had a seven-years' start, that's all, while we in our fat slothfulness and our blindness slept—or worse.

Just before the war began, in that Indian summer of an era, when the stormcloud was clearly rushing down on a doomed Europe, and when the beating of the wings was audible even to the slothful and the deaf, the Chinese Ambassador in London remarked sardonically, "The skies are dark with chickens coming home to roost." And so they were. We had made frightful mistakes. We had wasted the first World War. We had wasted the peace. We had not been great enough to make

the League of Nations live. Many were thinking of dividends and privileges rather than of our honor and our greatness or even our safety, not seeing that a nation and a commonwealth must always grow greater or grow less—which is a law of nature. But then the war came, and the “cataract of disaster” as Churchill put it, and strength and truth came at last. The British people purged themselves of the ditherers, the Cagoulards and the Municheers, high and low, from the titled and coroneted poltroons of the Anglo-German Fellowship—known incidentally in its place of origin as the Deutsche-Englische Gesellschaft—to the black-shirted street-corner louts bullying the Jews in Whitechapel and the East India road. With this purging complete, and British courage and fortitude being what it is, we must now darken the skies with warplanes to take the place of the chickens which came home to roost. We've got to do it, and we've got to hurry. Countrymen, it would be a monstrous thing for the memory of mankind if decency went under because it didn't have enough machines.

#### WHAT DEFEAT MEANS

If decency were to go under in Europe, the road for every man, woman and child on this continent would become very hard. That is a fact every North American must face. Gone for our time would be the American dream, gone would be the Canadian dream. This is not rhetoric, it is the simplest of facts. If decency were to go under in Europe, this continent would have to become an armed camp, prepared to fight for its place in a strident and hostile world. Conscription, crippling taxation and colossal armaments would become as commonplace here as they are in Europe. Canada, the fifth greatest trading nation on earth, would lose her best markets overnight. Who would buy our wheat? Who would buy our motor cars? Not Britain, because she would be impoverished. Not the United States, because she has enough of her own, and would be trying to buy South American goods in an effort to keep the sister continent out of the conqueror's orbit. We would have to arm to the teeth, and we should have less wealth with which to arm. There is no doubt whatever that the issue being fought out by the British people with such glittering splendour is not only for decency and safety

but for the daily bread and ordinary happiness of Canadians and Americans in every province and state and class.

It is not for us to lecture to the United States, but the same is true for her. Colonel Henry Breckinridge said when he spoke in this series that “Self-interest, courage and intelligence all dictate that the United States give unstinted aid to Britain.” Most Americans feel that way, and of course it is just ordinary horse-sense that they should. A British victory frees the United States from the ghastly world dream and world menace of the Nazis. A British defeat brings the ghost right out of the cupboard, and the American way of life becomes arduous indeed. It would seem axiomatic, then, to aid Britain fully now. But every nation must see its own light and choose its own road in its own time. Distinguished Americans have said to me repeatedly, “Just wait until after the election! We'll help you then!—but don't quote me!” You see, there is an election campaign on.

#### THE COURSE OF DEMOCRACY

But while facing the facts, and trying to avoid baseless optimism, I must say that it seems inconceivable to me that the great republic from whose mightiest city I speak tonight will not take the road which is not only the noblest, but also the safest. I think it cannot be otherwise. Only small-souled nations have ever tried to walk backward up the stream of history instead of sweeping boldly along on the flood, and the United States of America is not small-souled, or mean. And fortunately, enlightened self-interest will dictate her course.

One of the saddest things of our times, and perhaps of all time, is the failure of men to see that true self-interest goes hand in hand with morality, that the decent thing is always the wise thing. I remember talking to Mr. Mackenzie King one night at Geneva, and speaking of the nations that were dropping away cravenly from the League of Nations. Mr. King said quietly, “Never mind, they'll be glad to come back some day, when they see where their interests lie.” Yet to this day we hear scoffers talking about “wifey-washy League of Nations idealists.” As if idealism were not the only realism! Surely if the last ten years have taught us anything it is that

idealism is the only realism! If the nations of the earth are not to go down to red ruin and complete anarchy, some day they must devise a reign of law. Thank God, I think we will see it in our time. When the Nazi poison has been defeated—by the idealism and courage of the British peoples—we will see the reign of law in our time.

One of the first steps toward defeating the poison, as other speakers in this series have said, is to realize that it can be defeated. The Nazis, I repeat, are not supermen. When have gangsters ever been supermen? It has been proved a thousand times in the skies over England that a British youth in a British machine is more than a match for a Nazi youth in a German machine. Yet you still hear people say with grudging admiration that dictatorship is more efficient than democracy. This is nonsense, and dangerous nonsense. An inspired democracy is just as efficient and far more enduring than the slogan-doped automata of fascism. Britain, since Churchill became Prime Minister and called in the country's best men, has been just as efficient as Germany.

#### SOME WISE WORDS

Some wise words on this subject were said by Mr. Harold Ickes, United States Secretary of the Interior, in an Independence Day speech, and some of them are worth repeating. He addressed himself to those who were impressed by the achievements of the gangster powers, and who said to themselves reluctantly, “Those people look vigorous and virile. Maybe they've got something there. Let's have a look.”

“So you have a look,” said Mr. Ickes, “and what do you see? You see a people so vigorous, so virile, so energetic, so young, so strong, that they have surrendered their wills, their bodies and their minds into the absolute control of a boss who tells them what to do!

“They are so fresh and so forceful and so determined that they do whatever they are told to do—speak when they are told to speak—listen when they are told to listen—say what they are told to say—shut up when they are told to shut up—eat when they are told to eat—go hungry when they are told to go hungry—marry when they are told to marry—beget children when they are told to beget children—and die when they are told to die.”

Mr. Ickes is right, and it is no

wonder that he says, "Americans, when are you going to laugh?" Nazism is decay, not virility. As long ago as 1933, in Germany, I realized that in some ways Nazism was actually decadent. "Think with your blood!" Hitler would scream, and the people would do it—though I don't quite know how people "think with their blood." "Think with your blood!" howl the Nazis. "Believe, Obey, Fight!" scream the Italian Fascists. I have seen this slave man's credo plastered on banners across the streets of Naples, Milan and Rome—Rome which we called the eternal city because of the laws and examples she gave mankind, and which has now sunk to being the capital of all the jackals. Was there anything virile about the way the Duce of Fascism sneaked in on fallen France with his stiletto?

#### NAZI YOUTH VIEWPOINT

When I was a student in Europe ten years ago I used to go to Germany and go wandering up the golden Rhine and through the Black Forest in company with young Germans of the youth movement. "Wandervogel," they called themselves, wanderbirds, and they all had such fine, brave things to say. They were full of internationalist and liberal ideas—or seemed to be. But even then they were always whining, and calling themselves "the lost generation," and saying earnestly, "We are seeking an ideal." "What kind of an ideal?" I would ask, and they would say, "Oh, just an ideal, a star to follow." Well, they got one, an evil star, and they worship him.

When I went back in 1933 and each succeeding year to study Germany under Hitler, I would look up old friends of the youth movement and find that they were the most fanatical Nazis of all—thinking with their blood, torturing the innocent, and shaking the heavens with regimented, enrap-

tured cries of "Sieg heil! Sieg heil!" in response to the frenzied but cunning words of a little man who murdered his best friends on the "night of the long knives," deliberately encouraged the most unspeakable sadism as an instrument of policy, and boasted that he would shut the gates of mercy on mankind. I was sick at heart to see these young Germans loving it, swooning in rapture every time Hitler cried, "Meine Deutsche, meine Hitler Jugend!" And I was sick at heart to see Hitler and his camarilla of dirty gangsters getting away with it in Europe time after time, year after year. But thank God, they're not getting away with it now!

#### NOT BETRAYED BY OLD MEN

It was once the fashion of some of us Anglo-Saxon young men to wail about "our generation being betrayed by the old men." We know now that this isn't a war of old men against young men. I don't know what we'd do without some of the old men. Even in Britain I knew rich young men who used to talk about "after us the deluge," while a valiant old man, Churchill, was fighting a dauntless uphill fight to rouse the land. He is now 66, but he is young and indomitable. Tiger Clemenceau was 76 when he was called to save France in the wasted old war. It is mere chance that the men of Vichy are old men. Laval and Flandin, who have been sabotaging the heart out of France for years, were not old men. Oswald Mosley is young, Churchill is old. Hitler is young, Einstein is old. The men I saw baiting a Jew in Munich one day were young men, while the people who looked on in utter shame were old. The woman I knew in Germany who received her husband's ashes in a paper bag is old, the Nazi who handed it to her is young.

No, age is not the answer. This awful war is old men against old

men, youth against youth, women and children against women and children. Happy are we that England, whom Hitler called decadent, is well-served by her young men. Like Sagittarius rising, these young Britons—Englishmen, Scotsmen, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders and the rest—take off daily and several times daily into the skies of death, and smash "grimly and gaily" at a foe who outnumbers them three to one. They know it is not youth against age, but ideas against ideas.

#### THE REAL WAR ISSUES.

It is Churchill against Hitler. It is some measure of the truth against the lie. It is England's green and pleasant land against the darkness of the German forests where the tribes are gathering again and chanting their gibberish. It is quiet humour against the loud Nazi laugh. It is the clean freshness of Annie Laurie against the morbid song of the Lorelei. It is the sane, homely philosophy of the English soil against the wild polysyllabic bellowing of Hitler and his medicine men. It is courage against frenzy—the courage of the Devon boy who knows fear, yet sets it gallantly aside, against the frenzy of the doped and slave-minded Prussian youth thinking with his blood. It is the law against the pogrom. It is the hope of the world against the call of the wild.

The call of the wild must not prevail. Canada is doing her part, but she must do more. No small nation has ever had a proportionately larger role to play in the drama of history since the Greeks beat the Persians at Marathon. There are only 11,000,000 of us in Canada, but the issue is largely up to us. We must see to it, if we can, for our own sake and for our children's sake and for our glory, that the words "not enough machines" do not go calling and calling into history.

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