

16.)

## bian People

ATOVICH\*

b held on the 6th March,

will allow me first to begin  
a rather disappointed that  
work about my years: I did  
though not a young man,  
later.)

honored to be your guest  
ask to you of my country,  
I am come on a mission to  
delighted to have had the  
We have already,—before  
noticed what great progress  
often with Lord Strathcona,  
ship, I may say, in London,  
Canada had made, and we  
country. But since the war,  
our allies (applause), our  
ed by the glory which your  
fighting bravely and hero-  
a nation can have. (Hear,  
makes us Serbians desire  
er, as much nearer as we  
that a part of my mission  
people of the United States  
r women and children who  
me of them having been  
Montenegro, and so forth;  
on, and of that I am going  
address a few words. But  
y honored, is to thank the  
e done spontaneously, from  
vill for us Serbians. You  
n, you have sent us most  
ped our Red Cross very

ly be described as "The Grand  
is native country in many im-  
minister a few years ago.

materially and very effectively. And so, we thank you on behalf of the Serbian people. Although in no way an official representative of our Government, yet my mission is with the knowledge and approval of the Government, with their recognizance of my program. So let me tell you the Serbian people have very great admiration for your work, feel very great gratitude for what you have already done, and for what you will do in the future, judging from what you have been doing. (Hear, hear and applause.)

But my proper mission, my proper task, is to show the Canadian people that we Serbians are worthy of your support. I mentioned that we are proud and highly honored to be your allies during this war, but we have a higher ambition: just because we believe that we are a progressive nation, which can do greater things than we have done until now, and just because we observe that you are a progressing nation, with a great future, we want your friendship also for the time of peace, to co-operate, and contribute what we can to the general work of the nations, to carry the world forward to truth, to liberty, to true progress, and to true prosperity. (Applause.)

Well now, gentlemen, how can I prove to you that we Serbians are worthy of your friendship? First of all, let me say that we would not be worthy of your present approval or of your friendship in the future if it were true, that our enemies assert, that for this great and terrible war the Serbian people is responsible. But I assure you the Serbian people is not in any way responsible for this war. (Hear, hear and applause.) Germany and Austria had decided a year before to make the war. That can be proved by diplomatic and other means. Of course, not yet is the time to write the true history of what preceded the war; but the time will come, and then you will see what it was. In a word, we have reason to believe that Germany and Austria decided fully a year before to take the first opportunity to declare the war, to impose the war on the world. It happened that a young Serbian school boy, who although by nationality a Serbian was an Austrian subject, went and by the help of another man murdered the Austrian Archduke and his wife at Sarajevo; but, gentlemen, our police in Serbia, in Belgrade, arrested one of all those Austrian murderers, arrested him because they found he was rather suspicious, but the Austrian officials at Belgrade protested that the Serbians arrested an Austrian subject, and insisted that the police should let him free, and they let him free.

ernment having obtained  
ere was something going  
overnment, and implored  
o Sarajevo; but the poor  
We not only disapproved  
urse, now more than ever.  
for the assassination of

wars before that. There  
rks; we fought, and we  
we had in 1913 to fight  
we were fighting, and we  
n, the same year, we had  
our country instigated by  
but we beat them also.

old diplomatist; (Laugh-  
ghts. The true diplomacy  
the use of words to hide  
diplomatists are absolutely  
you! (Laughter, "Hear,  
lemen, we were in these  
n; we have exhausted all  
munitions, and our arms,  
riorated. We wanted to  
ngthen ourselves, to reor-  
King Peter, the King of  
o me this:—this was seven  
—he said to me: "My dear  
reorganize our army and  
now ordered in England  
ch will be ready in three  
will not have three years'  
will come, but I am per-  
ill be imposed upon us; it  
mentioned that to you to  
oke war. We were abso-  
rotest against the imputa-  
s war! (Applause.)  
ou that we are worthy of  
, I would have to mention  
ry, certain deeds which we  
been known in the history  
ople, for many centuries.  
ery likely, those beautiful  
ou read the history of the

Moorish Kings and Caliphate in Spain: well, the Moorish Kings used to send to Serbia for bodyguards for the Caliphs; those brave men defending Granada were Serbians, known for their bravery. And besides that, I might give you many other proofs of how they are known as a brave people, but there was, as you know, a great battle, almost a world battle, at Angora, in 1402, where Timour Tamerlane had hundreds of thousands of Tartars fighting the Ottoman Turks, and destroyed them in a great disaster. At that time we were vassals of the Turkish Empire, at the beginning of the fifteenth century. In almost every war of the Turks we had to contribute five thousand cavalymen, and in the battle of Angora Tamerlane was standing on a big hill watching, when he saw some cavalry madly rushing to stop the Tartars who were advancing, and give time to the Turkish army to withdraw; he asked his entourage, his suite, "Who are those madmen?" "They are Serbians," was the reply. "Well, I am sorry for them," he said, "but what brave men they are!" And we are very proud of what Timour Tamerlane said. (Applause.)

And then, gentlemen,—I will stop here, because you will think I am too vain of the bravery of my people. (Laughter.) We had many tragedies in our past history; and all these tragedies, like the present tragedy, have not come by some viciousness in our national character: we flatter ourselves that we are the Irish of southeast Europe (laughter and applause), we are, absolutely; if you were to know us as a nation, our temperament is absolutely Irish, we have all the virtues of the Irish, and no faults, because the Irish have no faults. (Laughter.) We are absolutely good soldiers, poetical people, splendid fellows, admirers of everything beautiful, very generous, but rather bad business men. (Laughter and applause.) Well, our tragedies have been caused not by any viciousness in our temperament and in our character, but by the very simple geographical fact that our country lies on the road leading from Asia Minor to Central Europe and from Central Europe to Asia Minor. In the Middle Ages when the Mohammedan movement was strongest, in the thirteenth century, the Turks had an idea to come to Europe, to conquer Europe and force Islam upon Christian Europe; they wanted to realize that ambition, that was the great ideal of theirs; but they found us on the road to Europe, and we could not let them pass; and, gentlemen, we, the Serbian nation, we fought from 1315 till 1464, almost incessantly, without stopping, to stem back the Mohammedan invasion of Europe; and then we succumbed in 1464, then the Turks went straight up to the

gone further if they had  
wer. Well, gentlemen, we,  
ve tried honestly to render  
and contributed something  
plan has not succeeded.

re under Turkish rule for  
ie a very energetic Sultan  
der him to Islam, and they  
Ministers; they wanted to  
am. But the poor Serbians  
hristianity and the Christian  
ined faithful, and faithful  
s. And very naturally we  
ful to it up to these days.  
er, however small, claim to  
ized people.

ng of the nineteenth century  
in the Balkans to rise and  
s; indeed, we never ceased  
d guerilla war through all  
ng of the nineteenth century,  
get our liberty. The Turks  
., a great reformer and a  
at the Serbians were rising  
ier, and asked him: "What  
erbians are again in revolt?  
ople constantly in revolt?"  
ays ready to give an answer  
e replied: "It is very simple:  
em restless; they live on a  
er.) The Sultan said, "Oh,  
eard that. Different plants  
that a nation is constantly  
such soil,—I can't believe  
zier had to find an answer,  
Well, send a courier to Serbia  
ie soil of that country, and  
e, and let Your Majesty try  
ultan did so, and presently  
three bags of Serbian soil,  
the Sultan ordered it to be  
rsian carpets spread over it;  
laughter.) He rose at four  
and said to him: "Now I  
sible for the Serbians' rest-

lessness, for I could not sleep myself. I was rebellious my-  
self!" (Laughter.) Well, that is *en passant*. (Laughter.)

Well, gentlemen, we fought, and we beat the Turks almost  
constantly. We beat them even after the Russians had aban-  
doned us. The Russians had to withdraw in 1812; Napoleon  
was coming, and they gave us up, but we won our autonomy  
and our liberty by our own efforts. Whenever I mention  
how we won our liberty, I never can forget what our women  
have done in that great war. (Hear, hear.) I will tell you.  
It was to be a decisive battle, in 1815, the last battle and the  
decisive one. It was known that if we beat the Turks, the  
Turks would capitulate, but if we were beaten, we would  
become Turkish subjects. So everyone knew that it was  
to be a decisive battle. So the Turkish army collected its best  
soldiers, and we—our business was to wait under arms. The  
great battle was going on, while on a hill overlooking the  
plain on which the battle was going on, the women from  
the neighboring villages, amongst them the wife of the Com-  
mander-in-Chief of the Serbian army, were taking position to  
watch the victory of their men, their husbands and fathers  
and brothers. The Serbian women have the habit of always  
being busy at something, they never stand idle, they are always  
working at something; when they go on visits they bring their  
distaffs and spin wool. And so they were doing at this time.  
To their horror they noticed that the Serbians were being  
beaten, and were running back, flying, leaving the battle field,  
running away, regularly beaten! They were shocked. The  
wife of the Commander-in-Chief said to the other women:  
"Women, do you see? these cohorts are leaving the battle and  
running away! Let us meet them!" The women stepped  
in front of the flying soldiers, and said: "Stop a moment!  
Stop! Listen! If you are not able to beat the Turks, it must be  
that you are tired out. Please take these distaffs and spin,  
and let us meet them!" (Laughter and applause.) They were  
all ashamed, those Serbian men. They were ashamed, and  
said, "Surely we are not going to spin wool!" They made a  
new storm upon the ranks of the Turks, and won the victory.  
(Applause.)

Well, gentlemen, I could keep you for a long time telling you  
all that I have to say to you on Serbia. But now I am coming  
rather to the present time. Just as in the Middle Ages  
we were defending, and trying to stem the Mohammedan  
invasion from the east to the west of Europe, we were in  
the way of the German invasion of the east through our  
country. The Germans, even when I was quite a young man  
fifty years ago—I studied in German universities, but the

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different from the people  
ar),—but I remember every  
desirable at the end of the  
impress upon the German  
too small for the genius of  
e, more air, more sunshine—  
“sunshine” then, that is a  
e sun” (laughter)—but that  
eadway, must broaden out,  
grow. This “Drang nach  
t, was constantly preached  
elieved that it was calling  
l to go to the east, but then  
ir way. They tried in the  
ugh; we got several times  
before the invasion by Ger-  
think for a moment of that  
s, we want to be loyal and  
ear and applause.) I must  
ining in any way—the Ser-  
y would refute me and con-  
we sent word to our warring  
ming; we shall not be able  
e come to our help!” We  
the invasion came; but of  
iderations,—they were very  
oing on in the Dardanelles.  
n to help us, but their help  
rench and the British. We  
ree hundred thousand men,  
y the Austro-Hungarians to  
at them. We cleaned them  
ed in three places at once,  
n the north by the Austrians  
garians unfortunately from  
to seven hundred and fifty  
hundred and fifty thousand  
—we could not stop them,  
een beaten at all; our army  
ly to fight. (Hear, hear and

at, making our enemies pay  
ory. Now every foot of our  
my, we retired our army to  
000 men are reorganized and  
rder of our Allies, whether

British or French, to go either to Avlona to help the Italians keep a footing, or to Albania against the Germans, Austrians and Bulgars, or to Salonika to help the French and British to resist a probable attack.

Now, gentlemen, although we have lost all our territory, we are not downcast at all. (Hear, hear and applause.) We are not downcast; we not only feel and believe—we *know*—this is only a temporary incident of a great war (hear, hear and applause), and that it cannot remain so. We know very well that that will be all soon changed. Having lost the territory of our country, we have not lost faith in ourselves, and we have not lost faith in our great Allies, in their loyalty and in their power to beat the enemy, and we have not lost faith, gentlemen, in God. (Applause.) We know that God will bless the armies of our Allies, because our Allies with us represent and fight for the great cause which is dear to the heart of each of us. It is not blasphemy to say it is great in the eyes of God himself, because it is the cause of liberty, of humanity, of true justice in the world. So that cause must win sooner or later. We know our Allies will co-operate, and will get the victory. When the victory is won, the task will be to make peace, to make a basis of a permanent peace, because that is the great thing, gentlemen (hear, hear),—we want a permanent peace, not only peace, but the world quiet, so we shall be able to dedicate all our energy to the great task, the important task, of bringing things back, of spreading fraternity.

We know the first article in that new peace must be—Belgium must get her independent territory. (Applause.) And the second,—Serbia and Montenegro must get their territory. (Applause.) And of course, if that victory is a decisive victory, then our Allies may help us also to accomplish our national ideals: these are, to unite with us in a free, an independent and progressive State all the Serbian and Slavonic Provinces, the South Slavonic Provinces of Austria. Our ideal is this: Bosnia, which is peopled by Serbians, Herzegovina, Croatia and Slavonia, which are now Provinces of Austria, should be united with Serbia into one great new independent State, very likely to be called South Slavia, because the people are South Slavs. And we shall then form a State of four million people, who are a very gifted people, very intelligent, very brave, loving liberty and loving progress,—in short, another Irish, as I said. (Laughter and applause.)

Well, of course, gentlemen, there is only one element of sadness in our people, that is the suffering of our women and

children, who have left the country. We are a very happy country ordinarily. Our democracy is based on the fact that every man is the owner of his property. We have no millionaires in our country, and no poor people at all. (Applause.) Everybody is accustomed to a certain average of comfort. And while our poor women and children are starving in Albania and Greece and Italy, they have been accustomed to some moderate comfort.

Now, gentlemen, I have no more time. I could have spoken to you of our economic organization, which is extremely interesting. Our first law introducing education is obligatory—every child must go to school. (Hear, hear and applause.) Secondly, every man from eighteen years has a duty to serve his country as a soldier. (Hear, hear and applause.) We have compulsory service; that has made us, though a small nation of three and a half millions, that we have been able to bring four hundred thousand fighting men into the field. (Applause.) The third law our democracy brought in is that there is a certain minimum of landed property which never can be sold for debt: if a peasant is owing a debt, the State can sell him out if he owns more than five acres; but if he does not own more than five acres, it can't sell his land, his implements, his oxen or his cottage; in that way, we have provided that our country has no poor.—I hope that by and by, if God grant, that we shall get wealth too. (Laughter.) But at present I am proud to say Serbia has no poor. (Applause.)

Now, gentlemen, I shall have very likely an opportunity here in your beautiful town next Monday to have a large number—I have been told so—to address at another meeting, at which also I shall have the privilege of appearing on the platform with that most eloquent and really great woman, Mrs. Pankhurst, a most patriotic woman, who has put her suffragette hatchet away somewhere (laughter), and who dedicates all her energy, all her giftedness of soul and heart, to the cause of victory of her own country. At the same time, I am very proud and very grateful to her, for she loves my country, and pledged herself to come with me to help me speak to the people of the United States and Canada, to tell you that we are the sort of people who deserve your friendship.

Thank you very much, gentlemen, for the patience with which you have listened to me. Thank you, gentlemen. (Long applause, followed by cheers for Serbia.)