(*February 21st, 1916.*)

Italy's Peculiar Position in the World War.

By Dr. Bruno Roselli.*

AT a regular meeting of the Club held on the 21st February, Dr. Roselli said:

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the Canadian Club,—It is not only with keen pleasure that I come before you to-day to speak upon a subject which is, I am sure, of great interest to you as Canadians; but also with the feeling that His Excellency the Italian Ambassador has committed for the first time in his life a very serious mistake, by calling a person as unworthy as I to present before so distinguished an assemblage the ideas and the ideals of Italy. This privilege,—however wrongly offered, as it seems, to me,—bears upon it the imprint of a new policy, of a new departure, in the spirit of my country; for the attitude of Europe in general, and of Italy in particular, has heretofore shown strong reluctance to entrust delicate tasks of a more or less official capacity to people not well advanced in years. But in these terrible days, which test the true value of a country in an unmistakable manner, Italy has abandoned many of the ultra-conservative ways which she cherished as a part of her glorious past, in order to be freer in her movements to join in the present titanic contest, for the independence of all nations and for the freedom of the entire world. And that is how I, a young and utterly unknown professor in an American college, with no other asset than patriotic zeal, have been entrusted with the task of explaining, to the best of my knowledge and ability, "Italy's Peculiar Position in the World War."

In view of certain criticism which has recently appeared on this side of the Atlantic, I must hasten to explain that the word "peculiar" has nothing to do with Italy's conduct of the war: with her attitude, in other words, towards her Allies on the one hand, and the Central powers on the other. To be more specific, the word peculiar has nothing to do with

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the "vexata quaestio" of the causes why Italy is not openly at war with Germany. I shall speak upon this subject as fully as time will allow, and explain why I hold that she is fighting in the world war just as much by opposing Austria-Hungary as if she were fighting also Germany. (Hear, hear.) But the word peculiar appears at once fully justified, if we consider what was Italy's unique position, political as well as military, when the greed and the lust for power of a certain group of men in the Central Empires sprung this unparalleled disaster upon an unprepared world.

The position of Italy was that of an ally with regard to Autria-Hungary and Germany, and of a friend to England and France: a friend not only in words but in deeds. (Hear, hear.) The facts are too well known to require me to use valuable time to prove them. You will remember that even at the momentous Algiercas conference, Italy stood by England and France and not by Germany, in spite of the recriminations of the Central Powers. But let me turn from international events to a more human incident. Several months before the war started, an Italian naval officer whose name I am not at liberty to mention said to me that in case of a war between the two great combinations of Powers, it would be absolutely idle for him to order his men to open fire upon a British man of war—they would not do it. (Hear, hear and applause.) And anybody who knows the Italian sailor, heir of the glories of the Genoese and Venetian navies, will bear me out when I say that this does not mean that he is lacking in that spirit of military discipline which has made him into a feared enemy and a valiant and trusted friend; it merely means that the entire seacoast of Italy from which Italian sailors are drawn has for generations cherished, in spite of political changes and international combinations, a feeling of friendship and esteem for Great Britain which would have made it impossible for Italy, even if she had wanted, or if her government had wanted, to fight on the side of the Central Empires in this world war.

I was in Italy at the time when the Triple Alliance treaty was renewed for the last time in its sad and increasingly inglorious history, and I shall never forget the attitude of the people at that time. That renewal was looked upon by practically everybody as an unavoidable national calamity. It took place several months before it fell due, in order to forestall popular opposition (which would have been tremendous) with the "fait accompli." Why, then, renew it at all? Because the Government knew no way out of it. The denouncing of this treaty would have meant an almost immediate attack by Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Government had no alternative. The newspapers gave out the official announcement in the briefest form; and refrained from editorial comment. But comments were plentiful on the part of the people in the homes, in offices, in the open air cafés which play such an important rôle in the formation of the composite national conscience of Italy. The Teuton, who had masqueraded as friend, was again the oppressor—his hand, which had been stretched toward the Peninsula as if for a friendly shake, had now closed itself tight—the mailed fist was ready. The Italian people had begun to mistrust, if not actually to hate, the Central Empires. (Hear, hear.)

On June 3rd, in a memorable speech in the Campidoglio which still remains his only war-time political utterance, Premier Salandra acknowledged that the Triple Alliance had, in past days, done some good to all of the contracting parties, including Italy. That cannot be denied in all fairness. But if we look at the history and at the development of this compact, we find that the relative positions of the contracting parties had undergone great changes since May 20, 1882—date of the formal beginning of the Alliance. The Germany of that day was vastly different from the Germany of to-day. Friendly intercourse had lately been supplanted by a veritable reign of terror. If any of you visited the International Exhibition held at Turin in 1911 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the official union of the Italian people under the Crown of Savoy, you will remember that the German exhibit consisted chiefly of a gigantic platform with four huge Krupp guns facing the two entrances, surmounted by a colossal statue of the War Lord in the attitude of a conqueror. That was the exhibit which Germany sent to her "faithful ally." (Laughter.) It was increasingly clear that the Triple Alliance was fast becoming a sort of protectorate, with Germany as the protector and Austria-Hungary as an intermediate power.

Terrible though these conditions were, Italy was in honor bound to observe them, in view of the fact that a few past advantages were to make up for present humiliation; and above all, because it was physically impossible to denounce a treaty which the King must, under compulsion, regularly ratify. There seemed to be no way out of this horrible deadlock; no way, at least, for Italy, while the two other countries were too deeply interested in the success of this exploitation to do anything which might interfere with its continued success. But the impossible happened.

Gentlemen, the terms of the Triple Alliance have only lately, and not as yet completely, come to be known to the rank and

file of the Italian people to which I must humbly claim to belong. The seventh of these articles stated, that whenever any one of the three powers undertook anything which would alter in the least their position in the Balkans, the centre of many a storm, the other parties would be previously approached not only before such change should be brought about, but even before it should be contemplated and planned. I do not know what deity of Olympus was watching over Italy during those fateful days of July, 1914, but the incredible fact remains that when the great conflagration began, Austria-Hungary forgot—in other words, willingly set aside, (once more disregarding international obligations)—that part of the treaty which applied to Italy, and simply said: "We have sent a harmless little ultimatum to Servia. Servia must accept it. When war starts, you. faithful ally, will follow." (Laughter.) If that does not mean a protectorate, I do not know what does.

And a propos of what did this preposterous request come? Was there the sanctity of a noble cause to make up for the incredible irregularity of the proceeding? Some reason, perchance, connected with that *summum bonum*, the preservation of European peace, which was the avowed aim of the Triple Alliance?—No, it was all about the most shameful of ultimatums which an independent country had ever dared address to another: a request that Servia, a virile nation of fighters, acquiesce in the violation of her most elementary rights. If England had acted in such a high-handed and illegal way in her dealings with an insignificant African sultanate, the Teutons would now be shouting to the four corners of the earth their favorite motto, "British Perfidy." But since this time they were the sinners, the shouts, "perfidy" and "treachery" were now applied to Italy, because as soon as the criminally dangerous game became clear, she—not oblivious of her recent struggles for national independence—used every means at her disposal to save Servia from the lowest position of national humiliation. Such interference, prompted to Italy partly by an elementary feeling of human fellowship, and partly by the fact that she clearly forsaw the unavoidable result of European War, was galling to the Central Empires, which were bound on having war and repeated to Italy their request to join in the war on their side. Join the conflict! Did they not realize that Article No. 3 of the Triple Alliance expressly stated that Italy was to cast her lot with the Central Empires only in case Germany and Austria-Hungary were attacked? "But we *are* being attacked," said they. "The world sprang at our throats while we were following

our peaceful pursuits, never dreaming that the British Lion and the Russian Bear were about to attack the harmless and unprepared German Eagle!" What distortion of mind or perversion of thought may have taken place within the Central Empires I do not know, but no sane, ordinary thinking man can claim that the conflagration was begun by any other than the Central Empires. (Hear, hear and applause.) Therefore how could Italy, by any stretch of the imagination, be expected to join the Central Empires? (Hear, hear.) At the beginning of the war, she was legally and automatically freed from taking part against her conscience and instincts, in a conflagration which she had not brought about—which indeed she with England had tried tremendously hard to stifle. (Applause.)

That takes me to the beginning of the general conflagration. Italy did not go to war at that time. It was May 23 when Italy joined the war. Few words are necessary here, since the true position of Italy with regard to her entrance into the fray was made quite clear at the time, in newspaper and magazine articles.

Italy had, indeed, at that time, her full quota of attention in the press of this continent. Those articles, written by disinterested neutrals, and in some cases by people who had heretofore been little in sympathy with Italy, show quite fully what wonderful heroism was displayed by Italy when she refused to accept as graft what Austria was offering; what an example of truly Roman courage she showed in declining to receive as blackmail what she had been looking for, for years and years—what had formed the chief aspirations of all true Italians, who consider all Italian problems second to the one chief aim of national unification. She would only accept it as a matter of right, or not at all. So she fought. (Applause.)

I mention the word heroism. It is a strong word; and since the easily inflammable southerner is credited with using big words when circumstances hardly warrant it, I feel that I must help you to visualize the actual realities which Italy had to face: you will then agree with me that the word is not too strong.

Those of you who have had the pleasure of travelling in other ways than in a comfortable car of the "Compagnie Internationale des Grands Express Européens" through those wonderful masses of quartz and of granite which Nature has put as a boundary between Italy and her neighbors to the north, will realize the tragedies of a winter campaign on the Alps. Covered with snow and ice almost perpetually, if during the brief summer they can be timorously approached by men

trained to the dangers of mountain life, they become forbidden haunts of the eagle and the mountain goat during the wintry days, when no sacrilegious mortal foot dare tread upon ground where Nature in her most menacing form expects to reign supreme. Think of the massing of people sent from Sicily, the island of the sun, and from the sunny slopes of the Vesuvius, in places eight thousand feet up in the air, which they must hold irrespective of odds without a parallel, if they are to protect their homes below, in the fertile valleys! Snow and ice are not temporary drawbacks in most of those places, they are permanent neighbors every day in the year, to be entirely disregarded, if flesh and blood can stand it, by men who probably never laid eye upon either, except as a distant landscape background. What makes such heroes bear those sufferings, is the dream of the final unification of their country; but the thing they dare not say lest their determination be weakened, but which undoubtedly haunts them as the most unworthy, yet the most powerful temptation of their lives, is the knowledge that practically all they are suffering for had been offered as a free gift by their present enemy, only with the stigma of dishonor indelibly impressed upon it. And when they see how necessarily slow their advance is, how can they refrain from comparing what they have been slowly gaining at tremendous cost, with the vastly greater territory which the eleventh-hour Austrian offer included?

Now in speaking of this subject a few days ago, I compared the task of the work of the Italian troops fighting "on the roof of the world" with the work of the giants of old, who undertook the titanic task of scaling the inaccessible Mount Olympus by placing Mounts Ossa and Pelion one above the other. But I was reminded that the comparison, even though it did convey the required impression of grandeur, was not a happy one because the giants did not succeed in carrying out their plan. But it must be remembered that the modern world has devised new methods by which such exhibitions of daring can be rewarded: just as the modern aeroplanes and, alas, Zeppelins can show unsuccessful Icarus that human ingenuity has now overcome problems which were unsurmountable in the days of Daedalus and his ambitious son. (Laughter and applause.) The world has changed: and Italy can look forward now to the realization of dreams which would have looked visionary a few years ago. In a century of self-sacrificing efforts on the part of her enslaved population, Italy has succeeded in lifting herself from a state of comparative unimportance to the position of a World Power. Her hopes and high ideals are based upon the glorious history of Rome, before whose ideas of statemanship the world still bows in reverence. (Applause.) However, speaking of the Romans, I must point out to you that you must by no means believe what is constantly repeated in the Central Empires, that Italy is a country affected by megalomania, trying forcibly to bring under her flag all those lands that once belonged to the Roman Empire. Italy knows that a glorious past must leave unaffected the modern realities of our age, and that she is surrounded by lands which are just as much entitled to expansion as she is. Italy has proved that she has entirely clear ideas of what she wants. She is not merely stretching out her hands in all directions in the vain hope that something may blunder into them from some or any quarter. Her position is altogether different from that of another country with a glorious past, which desires to enter upon some road, but knows not which; which *looks* forward but does not move forward, which waits, but does not accomplish. (Laughter.)

Italy's ideas with regard to expansion have been and are perfectly clear. The question of most vital importance to her, a question in which her interests are at mortal odds with that of her chief enemy, is the question of supremacy in the Adriatic. Far from preceding her present Allies in her desire to make peace, she may be relied upon to hold back from any such definite settlement until Austria has acquiesced to relinquish her present position of unquestioned superiority in the Adriatic sea. It is not only a question of placing again under the same flag as that which floats upon the square of Saint Marks in Venice, those harbors and islands on which the Most Serene Republic left an unmistakable Italian imprint; it is a question also of remedying in a measure the natural inequalities of that coast: for the Western side of it can hardly show a single harbor worthy of the name, whereas the Dalmatian side is second only to the Norwegian coast in the number and splendid quality of its safe, deep, natural harbors.

With regard to Italy's expansion in Northern Africa, the events which led to the Italian campaign in Tripoli show very plainly that Italy has entirely definite ideas as to what she believes is her natural and lawful zone of expansion. These ideas may or may not have been wise, but they have always been such that the accusation that Italy has megalomaniac and imperialistic tendencies can be most easily refuted by facts. Let me explain that in the briefest of ways. In 1882, England offered to Italy a joint occupation of Egypt. Italy was not ready, and refused. She may have been right, and again she may have been wrong; but she did re-

fuse, and a country trying to grab anything within reach does not refuse, unconditionally, what is being offered. Tunis she did want, considering that its prosperity and civilization are the result of the presence of her many laborious sons in that region, and that all European settlers put together, of other than Italian blood, are hardly 25% of the foreign population of that Regency, the Italians supplying the remaining 75%. But the last word as to the political status of Tunisia will only be said at the end of the war, and I will therefore leave much unsaid and turn to touch upon the Tripoli question. With Tunis in French hands, Italian aspirations were concentrated upon Tripoli, and such aspirations were duly recognized by all European Powers, which granted Italy the privilege of "pacific penetration" in Tripoli. When, therefore, Italy found herself confronted in that land by an impossible state of affairs which finally required intervention, you might have expected that Germany—her hands full with recently acquired colonies all over the globe—and Austria, whose annexation of the rich lands of Bosnia and Herzegovina had just taken place, would give Italy, their ally, the full measure of their moral and political support. What they did was to launch a bitter campaign of opposition, which stiffened the resistance of Turkey to the Italian demands, and brought about the Italo-Turkish war. And here comes the preposterous, the incredible thing. As soon as war was declared, the Italian fleet, under the command of His Highness the Duke of the Abruzzi, bombarded some Turkish forts. Within twenty-four hours, Baron Aehrenthal, the Austrian Foreign Minister, addressed to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna the following words: "I cannot permit such operations to continue. Orders should be given for their immediate cessation." On the following day the German Ambassador at Vienna confidentially informed the Italian Ambassador that "if such operations were renewed, the Italian Government would be held to accountability." This, gentlemen, is strong diplomatic language; and its repetition whenever Italy dared, I shall not say *attack* her enemy, but even "signal by means of searchlights in the presence of the enemy," tied Italy's hands to such an extent, that a small colonial undertaking resulted in a costly and bloody war, not very dissimilar in character from the British South African War, draining Italy of all her painfully accumulated economies, and compelling her to knock at the door of those great banks which had lately spread all over the peninsula with marvellous rapidity—those banks, gentlemen, whose support, whose directors, whose policies, were either German, or Germanized, or pro-German. These

are the facts as they were given out for the first time to an astonished world in their unadorned simplicity, by Premier Salandra, in his address from the Roman Capitol.

How does Germany, how does Austria-Hungary, dare, in the light of such facts, hurl the word Traitor at Italy, whom they betrayed and sold, and in vain tried to contaminate? How can the word "Treachery" come from that army of the Dual Monarchy, whose Chief of Staff, General Conrad, said years ago, when Europe was at peace, that "Austria must as soon as possible fight Italy, a country which ought to have been attacked several years ago?" And to whom? To Italy, a country which for nine long months tried to induce Austria to acknowledge her patent breach of the Alliance agreements, until she saw that no love of peace could keep a self-respecting World Power out of this war?

Peace is the great ideal toward which humanity is surely striving. But when peace is preserved merely by a hybrid union of intimidation and blackmail, the only way left to a free people is refuse it contemptuously, and face like men the terrible realities of war. That was the decision of the Italian "Passion" Week, from the 14th to the 21st of May: a heroic decision, which may well be remembered by another noble population which is still trying in vain to preserve, in this supreme test of humanity, peace accompanied by honor. (Hear, hear and loud applause.)

Once more, the Gordian knot had to be cut by the sword. And what has been the behavior of Italy from a military standpoint since that decision was reached? Excellent, both as to the morale of the troops and the equipment provided to them. Why, then, has Italy not succeeded in taking Trentino and Trieste in the six months which elapsed from the declaration of war to the time when weather conditions made large movements of troops an impossibility?

Modern man knows nothing about mountains. He built his cities on the plains, and goes from one of these cities to another by trains which carefully avoid such mountains, or pass under them. But the "strength of the hills" has a terrible meaning to the soldier. He knows that a hillock is worth twenty regiments. One after another these hills have been occupied by the Italians. Was it easy? Let me quote from a letter of a boy in greenish-gray: "When we stormed Mount Freikofel, we had to bind ourselves together by means of ropes tied around our waists, and thus scale the almost perpendicular rock under concentrated fire." On the other hand, not an inch of Italian territory is occupied by the Austrian troops on any part of the front. I believe it has never been,

from the very start, although it may have taken place temporarily during some battle. You may remember that some five months ago Austria announced triumphantly to the world that she had occupied some Italian territory. It has been occupied by troops from Dalmatia, Bosnia, Hungary, Bohemia, Istria! Then the extent of the territory was announced: 450 square meters. I must admit that this speaks very well for the power of concentration of the Austrian army! (Laughter.)

Granting, then, that for a few hours a few feet of Italian territory were in Austrian hands, they did not stay there long, and, on the other hand, Italy has now occupied Austrian territory, which is of a tremendous strategic value and will soon make her free in her movements. (Applause.)

This statement, indeed, brings me to the most vital point of my address: the reasons why Italy is not officially at war with Germany. But let me proceed in order and with clearness on so delicate a subject, for these reasons are many.

I had a friend once, who, when asked why he did or did not do something, used to answer: There are a thousand reasons. Somebody broke him of that habit by asking him point blank: "Give us a perfectly good one, and you may keep the other 999." One excellent reason is sometimes more than sufficient to prove a statement. But I shall do more than that: I shall give three reasons which I consider excellent, and which would be endorsed by the highest authorities in Italy, if they cared to express their views on such subjects.

Of these three reasons one is strategic, one psychologic, and one diplomatic.

First the strategic reason. The Italo-Austrian frontier is not in a straight or almost straight line: it is shaped like a gigantic letter S, placed on the map not vertically but horizontally, with its beginning at Mount Stelvio and its end at Grado, on the lagoons north of Venice. Such a front is a perpetual menace. Curves as accentuated as those require huge masses of men and of guns to protect them. Some of you may have travelled north from Verona, going toward the Tyrol; you will remember that as soon as you pass from the plain and the low hills, blessed with grapevines and olive trees, into real mountains, you cross from Italy into Austria. In other words, Italy was thoroughly unprotected there. And to the left is Lake Garda, whose upper shores are Austrian, and whose lower shores are only about 40 miles from the Adriatic Sea. Does this tell you anything? Can you not see that half a million energetic men, breaking through there by way of the low-lying lands, could at any time have made a

dash to the sea which would have cut off practically the whole of the Italian army which was fighting on the Isonzo and in the Dolomites? Austria never had so large a number of men to spare, but Germany did, and if Italy had been so shortsighted as to make it possible for the two Central Empires to sweep down together upon her in one of those swift drives which seem to be the specialty of the Prussian-led Teuton troops, most of the Italian army would be in some concentration camp, and the Allies' cause would have undergone a disaster of unparalleled magnitude. The further north into the Trentino Italy pushes, the more remote such danger becomes: what half a million men might have accomplished at the start, would now require many more; let the figure come to the million mark, and Italy will feel that she can afford to be at war with Germany also, if necessary. (Applause.)

Now a psychologic reason. The Italians hate the Austrians with an intense instinctive and traditional hatred which has not been one iota modified during the long years of the Triple Alliance. Why, even ten years ago if an Italian had said in public one good thing about Austria or the Austrians, he would have been looked at by everybody with ill-concealed suspicion. It is not so with Germany. Some Italian cities in the north have a population showing a good percentage of German descendants who are good enough Italians to be now fighting Austria with genuine gusto, but who would prefer not to have to fight their uncles and cousins. German gold has found its way by devious methods into the pockets of many people. Italians with German wives—many of them in the Army and the Navy—do not cherish sufficiently unfriendly feelings toward their "in-laws" to make them wish to kill them in battle. Italian scientists and bookworms are dazzled by the German achievements in the chemical world and in that awkward and unagile love for the cataloguing of dry, worthless records, which Germans glorify by the name of "Kultur." Does it mean that, if the King and Government should consider it vital to include Germany in the number of Italy's enemies, these people would refuse to fight and turn traitors? Far from it. But it does mean that, if 100% of the Italians hate Austria, and only 90% hate Germany, the psychological attitude of Italy toward the war, which is always important, but particularly so in the case of a Latin country, is not going to be improved in the least. Would the advantages of a new declaration of war on Italy's part be so great as to offset such tremendous disadvantages? I doubt it. And I am not weighing another psychological question, namely, the effect which a break between Italy and Germany would have upon a certain element of

the entourage of His Holiness, which is said to understand the idea of Catholic neutrality in a way somewhat different from that of the Venerable Primate of Belgium, Cardinal Mercier. But the less said about this the better.

Lastly, a diplomatic reason. Among all neutral countries, the one which has perhaps suffered most is Switzerland, surrounded by war and shut off from the sea. It is perfectly natural that such undeserved suffering should have found a means of expression in criticism of those bordering countries which, being, in some cases, burdened with an unusual weight of cares, dealt with less promptness and neighborliness than might have been expected, with the proud Confederation. And the very word confederation explains what happened. The people of Switzerland, confederated but not racially amalgamated, feeling in spite of their loyalty to their government the powerful call of race and of blood, became inclined to accuse of discrimination and illegality those of the neighboring countries against which their kin were fighting. In other words, German Switzerland sympathizes with the Central Empires, and French and Italian Switzerland sympathize with the Allies. Unfortunately, about seventy per cent. of the Swiss are German Swiss. Therefore France and Italy must use unusual care not to give Switzerland any cause for irritation. What would happen if Italy declared war upon Germany? Some people believe that Switzerland would actually join the latter country; others hold that she would at least allow German troops to cross her territory; either openly or under nominal protest. Do you realize, Gentlemen, what that would mean? There is not an Italian fortress on the Swiss frontier. Milan, the largest and most prosperous city of Italy, is only thirty-five minutes by train from the Swiss frontier. And said frontier is not in any way a strategic one, but crosses at random lakes and fertile plains, where Lombard and Italian Swiss have for centuries fraternized. Is it worth while?

The Government of the Allied Countries know that it is not. But the press and the people of some of those lands do not know most of the things I have just told you, and in view of the fact that Italy is a new recruit, a kind of neophyte, they look at the whole thing with ill-concealed suspicion. They may win out, but I hope they will not. The undeniable fact is that Italy, fighting the Austrians on the Alps, has already two strong enemies, the Austrians and the Alps. They are enough. Indeed, were it only possible to have done so, it would have been an ideal thing from the Allies' standpoint to limit the hostilities instead of extending and ramifying

them, for the Allies are on the outside, and the Central Powers inside can, with but little shifting of troops, attack with combined German, Austrian and Bulgarian forces certain spots of the Allied line which they would never dare attack if only German, or only Austrian, or only Bulgarian troops had to be used. If the Franco-British forces at Gallipoli had been faced by Turk only, those at Salonika by Bulgarians only—the Servians by Austrians only, things would look very different now. The power of the Teutons lies in that the Allied lines must be everywhere strong enough to meet *all* of their foes.

The theory of separate wars has one heel of Achilles; that when one of the warring countries sees that the moment has come when she can make a profitable peace, she will wish to do it. There was the danger to the Allies in Italy's present position. And it was to eliminate this danger and dispel any suspicions, that Italy signed in November last, the Declaration of London by which she pledged herself not to conclude a separate peace. (Applause.) Sydney Somino, the Italian Foreign Minister, announcing the momentous event, concluded by quoting Dante's line: "Let this be a seal to undeceive all men." This is what I also ask of you, Gentlemen of the Canadian Club; let any thought of Italy's double dealing be expelled from your minds. A future soldier of Italy tells you that his country knows the path of suffering, but not that of dishonor! (Applause.)

I think that speakers before the Club are usually entitled to about half an hour. (Cries of "Go on.") I see that my time is about up. Have I any more time? Good! You have spoken! Now it is for me to speak! (Laughter.)

And now I wish to bring before you another matter which is undoubtedly dominant in your minds: Italy's position with regard to the evacuation of Servia and Montenegro. Why did Italy allow that? Is it not vital to Italy to have a foothold on the other side of the Adriatic, if she is to control that sea? American critics have vociferously proclaimed that Italy should have sent into Servia and Montenegro an army large enough to oppose the strong Austro-Bulgaro-German forces which desolated the Balkan peninsula.

History will, we hope, lift soon a veil which covers many of the acts of Montenegro and Servia during the last few months. With the scant information at our disposal now, we must admit that although their armies behaved heroically, there are certain points in the attitude of their political as well as military leaders which appear well-nigh inexplicable. However, let us, for the sake of argument, overlook all this,

and take the stand that Italy was bound to try and protect those two countries. Why did she fail to do so?

Poison pens are plentiful in Europe in these days, and not merely in the Central Empires. These sowers of discord have claimed that Italy was on very bad terms with Servia and Montenegro; that she was directly interested in their downfall, and that she quietly chuckled at the thought of Germany and Austria doing what she would have liked to do herself, but could not do. (Hear, hear.)

We can easily imagine who inspired those articles. Nothing could have been more detrimental to the good-will between allies—and nothing more untrue. The facts are that Italy had looked most leniently upon the attitude of Servia, who (unmindful of the fact that Italy had gone out of her way a few years before in trying to obtain for her an outlet on the Adriatic) had approached the larger members of the Allies' family with a request that she be given, at the end of the war, practically all of the eastern half of the Adriatic, including islands and cities eminently Italian. Italy had overlooked all that, because she knows that the Balkan lands, young and ambitious and unaccustomed to the many sacrifices which must be made by every country for the good of mankind in general, are apt to mistake hopes for actual possibilities.

No, Italy would have liked to be able so effectively to garrison Serbia and Montenegro as to prevent their being invaded; but she could not afford, in view of the attitude of the Balkan States still neutral, but sure to join the winning side some day, to repeat on the western side of the Balkans the inconclusive exploits of the French and English troops which moved north from Salonika. Such expeditions are no child's play. Good Austrian roads through Austrian land led the Teutonic troops into Servia; but Italy would have had to equip an oversea expedition, and send it through territory without roads or local resources through the wildest and most forbidding part of all Europe, where every soldier would have had to carry as much equipment as if he had gone into Afghanistan or New Guinea. You have heard of Servians retreating through mountain paths where only one man at a time could pass. Will you tell me how the large guns which only would oppose the formidable Austrian howitzers of Liége fame, could have been carried by such roads? Only in one case might Italy have attempted the almost impossible task; in case all of the Allies had formulated all together, and put into action all together, a formidable plan of Balkan attack very different from the absurdly inadequate and hap-hazard way in which troops were sent to the Dardanelles or the Vardar River

without a definite and collective plan. These are galling truths, but they must be told. It appeared obvious at once to the Italians (whose knowledge of Balkan conditions ought to be given greater weight than it has been given so far,) that a campaign in the near East could only be successful if directed by a Central Bureau of the Allied Nations, holding regular and frequent meetings in Paris or some other central location. (Hear, hear.) Such a Bureau would co-ordinate all the efforts of the Allies; and I am glad that Italy's insistent voice has now been heard; the Bureau, established in Paris a fortnight ago, has already begun its work. That Bureau will be the salvation of the Allies' cause in the Balkans. (Applause.)

This may seem a sanguine statement to some of you. It is not. Let me insist on this point. I believe most of you are business men. If your business covers a wide territory, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from San Francisco to New York, or from Vancouver to Quebec, your methods of buying and selling may be very different in different places: but you must surely have a central organization, which knows of what is being done by the different offices, and co-ordinates every local effort to a central aim. This main office cannot be satisfied merely by your sending yearly accounts to it; whatever you are doing must be known to—and to a certain extent planned by—the heart, the mind, the soul of your business enterprise. So it is in the case of the Allies. It has been said that Italy and Russia, fighting far from the Franco-German frontier, did not need to know what was being done by England and France. Perhaps this may have been true before the Balkans became an important theatre of the war; but not now such a statement is preposterous, because both the military and the diplomatic efforts of all the Allies meet on that peninsula, always so sorely tried by war. In the operations on that front Italy and Russia have a larger share than many people realize. Diplomacy has been far from idle in that quarter, and it has prevented calamities which seemed imminent some months ago: but its work need not have been only negative, and would not have been so if each of the Allied diplomats had always known as much about the situation as his colleagues knew at the time. The moment has come for every one of us to put every ounce of weight we can give into the common cause, without stopping to ask ourselves whether our neighbor could be made to do more; and, above all, without each trying to improve our own individual position, while the mass of us is slowly but surely moving forward.

It is perhaps wiser not to discuss the reasons why the

expected entrance of Greece and Roumania into the war on the Allies' side did not take place. Indeed, after what I have said it would be idle. But since this event did not materialize, we ought to rejoice over the fact that neither the French and English from Salonika, nor the Italians from Avlona, pushed much forward into the interior. Indeed, the former troops might have come back to the coast without considerable losses: but the latter, if at all attacked by Austro-German troops supported by Albanian irregulars, would have lost more than one-half of their forces. Few people realize just what Epirus, Albania, and the ex-Sanjak of Novibazar are like. Central Africa is known much better: we have pretty good maps of Central Africa, but certain parts of Albania have never been mapped, so that when the Powers decided a few years ago to make Albania into an independent kingdom, they did not know how to describe its boundaries because they did not know where certain mountains were, or even in which direction some rivers were flowing!

In the circumstances, it would have been folly for Italy to try and meet these difficulties, unless this task had been explicitly assigned to her by the will of her Allies, who would in turn guarantee a junction with her troops in Serbia, as well as the co-operation of Balkan countries now still in a position of uncertainty or of secret antagonism. How can you blame Italy, when she did not know what her Allies would do next—indeed, when she knew that her Allies did not know what they would do next? (Hear, hear.)

Now as to the present position of Albania, from the Italian standpoint. Does Italy covet that ex-pseudo-kingdom? Is she, on the contrary, ready to withdraw her troops from it as soon the Austro-Germans appear? We have heard both these theories lately, and a third theory, most malignant, to the effect that both the other theories are true, and that Italy expects her Allies to act as the cat's paw.

Italy does not want any part of Albania except the harbor of Avlona, key to the Adriatic sea. And she will see to it, when the day comes, that its hinterland is made as insignificant as possible. And she will not do so because of generosity, either; but simply because Italian possession of Albania would be as easy and pleasant as American possession of Mexico.

If you look for a proof, let me direct you to the really humorous series of letters, exchanged during the winter of 1915, in which Austria, weeping crocodile tears, invited Italy to possess herself of the barren peaks of the Albanian Alps; and Italy, touched deeply by such generosity, retorted by

declining with thanks the most self-sacrificing offer. You will, however, notice in such letters that Avlona was never offered and refused.

Italy must have Avlona when the war is over, although she does not want the rest of Albania any more than England, mistress of Gibraltar, wants to conquer Spain. But the bay of Avlona has a good harbor, has a population racially similar to that of Albanian settlements in Southern Italy, and above all, is only 25 miles from the Italian coast. In the hands of another power it would be a perpetual menace to Italy, whose Adriatic coasts are unusally exposed to any attack. At the beginning of 1915, Italy had sent a small body of troops to Avlona, more to keep an eye on the situation than for any other reason. There was reason to suspect that the activities of Greece in Epirus needed watching. Greece has played a successful game of bluff in the entire East during the last few years. With money loaned by European countries which dare not stop loaning lest another group of money lenders should come forward; with the easy theory that whatever Alexander the Great occupied is a legitimate portion of Hellas, she watches for parts of the East where the Great Powers have conflicts of interests, then slips in quietly and apologetically. One day she told the world that Italy coveted Northern Epirus: on that suspicion, which facts have disproved, she possessed herself of Southern Epirus. What will she do next?* I hate to use disapproving language in speaking of a land which claims to be neutral in this world contest. But it cannot be denied that the position of Greece has been that of an extremely sensitive person, who sees on all sides possible enemies, and who does not know on which side to turn for friends: while her actions are not such as to encourage prospective friends. We all admire her, we wish her well, but we would like these friendly feelings to be reciprocal. Of Italy in particular she has an ill-concealed fear. The instance I quoted above in typical. Italy might want to take Northern Albania, therefore Greece will proceed to take Southern Albania! Italy has never acted thus toward her. True we have heard of certain submarine commanders, who think they might be attacked by some harmless boat, so they sink it before it has a chance to declare its intentions. But Italy is not a submarine commander, Gentlemen! (Laughter and applause.)

*Since the address was delivered, Greece, knowing full well that the Allies fear her unfavorable attitude in this war, has welcomed into her Chambers of Deputies, representatives of Northern Epirus, a proceeding which virtually spells annexation.

I have now answered the question whether Italy wants to possess Albania. Now comes the other question—Is Italy going to withdraw from there altogether in the near future?

The Italian troops in Northern Albania did withdraw some weeks ago, after entirely fulfilling the purpose for which they had been sent there: a purpose far from selfish, and of which more later. Let me warn you now that if you should hear in the not distant future that Italy has withdrawn her troops from Durazzo also,* you must not draw the conclusion that she is totally withdrawing to the other side of the Adriatic. Bear in mind, Gentlemen, that Albania is a country without roads, and that communication between any two Albanian ports is established by water. The defensive works of each Albanian seaport are not connected: each is an individual undertaking, relying on the support of the fleet, just as if they were hundreds of miles apart. Withdrawal from one port leaves the others unaffected; and the evacuation of Durazzo, if it must take place, does not mean that Italy has withdrawn from Albania and abandoned the Balkans to their fate. Nor is it to the point to ask "Why did she go there at all?" Let the scores of thousands of Servian troops, who found their way to Avlona and the Ionian Islands and Italy and France, answer the question; or let it be answered by the tens of thousands of Austrian prisoners which the retreating Servian Army succeeded in leading with them to the coast, and safely transporting to France in Italian bottoms. No, Italy, maligned by too many, has not been idle in Albania, while her iron-clad censorship prevented all news from leaking out; and now, after accomplishing with remarkable efficiency and with strikingly few losses, in a sea dotted with Austrian submarines, her work of mercy toward two of the countries for whose national independence she strove, is gradually withdrawing her troops until Avlona—the Salonika of the west—will remain her only Balkan possession, waiting for the day when the Central Allied Bureau of Paris will once more draw our attention to the Balkan theatre of hostilities.

In short, Italy's immediate plans are as follows: She will hold Avlona and no more and no less of Albania, until the joint Allied plans in the Balkans have changed: she will endeavor to take Trieste as soon as the weather on the Corso will permit of military operations on a large scale; she will not allow an inch of Italian territory to be permanently occupied by her enemies; and she will push as far north from Verona as humanly possible, in order to be able to meet without fear any political event which may come. (Long applause.)

*The withdrawal took place on the day of my address, and its first (unofficial) announcement was cabled two days later.