

(December 5, 1914.)

Address

By Rt. Hon. Sir Robert L. Borden, P.C., G.C.M.G.*

At a special meeting under the joint auspices of the Canadian Club of Toronto and the Empire Club of Canada, held on the 5th December, Sir Robert Borden said:

Your Honor, Mr. Mayor, and Gentlemen,—I appreciate very much the opportunity afforded me to-day of speaking to the members of these two Clubs. As the Mayor has pertinently observed, recent months have afforded the opportunity rather for work than for speech-making. It does seem very proper that the first public utterance that I have made since the outbreak of the war, except in the course of the Parliamentary session, should be made in this city of Toronto; and I am very glad, indeed, to acknowledge here at the outset the great feeling of appreciation that is entertained, I am sure, by all the people of Canada for what has been done in Toronto and what will still be done. When the Mayor spoke of the spirit of co-operation and mutual helpfulness which pervades the people of this city, I feel that a like spirit prevails all through this country. (Applause.) I am perhaps a little at a loss for words to describe it. "Faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." I believe that the word "charity" is translated in the New Version as "love." But neither the word "charity" nor "love" expresses precisely the spirit which I feel pervades the people of Canada at the present time. It may be described as a desire to help,—a spirit of sympathy, co-operation, self-sacrifice, a spirit which pervades men and women alike—and God bless the women of Canada for all they have done in these days of trial and stress? (Applause.)

To-day there is but one thought in our hearts, and it is fitting that I should speak to you of the appalling struggle which has been forced upon our Empire. I say forced upon us; because I am convinced that no nation ever desired peace more sincerely than the nations which compose the British

*The Right Hon. R. L. Borden, P.C., G.C.M.G., came to Toronto specially on this date to explain what Canada had done to help the Empire in the mighty struggle in which it is engaged. His address in Toronto was regarded as one of the best he has ever delivered.

Empire; that no statesmen ever wrought more to avoid war than did the statesmen of Great Britain in the weeks which immediately preceded the conflict.

There is not time nor is it necessary that I should dwell upon the occurrences which determined the issue. The great events which brought about the establishment and consolidation of the German Empire under Prussian domination are well known to you. Bismarck foreshadowed in a famous phrase the policy of the future. "The great questions are to be settled," he said in 1862, "not by speeches and majority resolutions but by blood and iron." Then came in quick succession the war against Denmark in 1864; the downfall of Austria in 1866 and the overthrow of France in 1870. The policy of blood and iron seemed to consummate the realization of that which has been the dream of Germany for centuries. Germany became an Empire; the King of Prussia became its Emperor. The military spirit of Prussia dominated German thought and German ideals. The intoxication of victory aided by a propaganda preached to every child and every young man by the foremost thinkers of Germany imposed on its people an ideal and an ambition which included the dominance of Europe and indeed of the world.

The world has only recently come to realize the astonishing teaching to which the German people have listened for the last half century. Among many others Treitschke, a great professor of history, whose influence upon the young men of Germany cannot be over-estimated, and Bernhardi, his disciple, have preached the religion of valour and of might. War has been glorified as a solemn duty for the cause of national development. They proclaimed that the State is not only justified but bound to put aside all obligations and to disregard all treaties insofar as they may conflict with its highest interest. "War," said Bernhardi, "is in itself a good thing. It is a biological necessity of the first importance. . . . War is the greatest factor in the furtherance of culture and power. Efforts to secure peace are extraordinarily detrimental as soon as they influence politics. . . . Efforts directed toward the abolition of war are not only foolish but absolutely immoral and must be stigmatized as unworthy of the human race. . . . Courts of arbitration are a pernicious delusion. The whole idea represents a presumptuous encroachment on natural laws of development which can only lead to the most disastrous consequences for humanity generally. . . . The maintenance of peace never can be or may be the goal of a policy. . . . Efforts for peace would if they attained their goal lead to degeneration. . . .

Huge armaments are in themselves desirable. They are the most necessary precondition of our national health."

The profound influence of this teaching upon the German people may be realized from their unquestioning support of the enormous increase in their military and naval forces. Beyond question Germany is the greatest military power in the world. Without any such need as makes a great fleet imperatively necessary to ensure the safety and even the existence of the British Empire, she has built up in ships, personnel, dockyards and all other essentials, a powerful navy designed to challenge conclusions with that of Great Britain. What ambitions would not be open to Germany, what tribute could she not exact, if dominating Europe with her army she could wage a successful naval campaign against Britain.

Within the past ten years the peace of Europe has been threatened by Germany on no less than three occasions. In 1905 France at her dictation was obliged to dismiss her Foreign Minister. In 1909 Germany shook her mailed fist and compelled Russia to bow to her will. In 1911, as the history of the Agadir incident recalls, she again attempted to coerce and humiliate France, and the situation was saved only by the interposition of Great Britain. Germany receded on that occasion from her first pretensions but only to abide her time which came in 1914.

The military autocracy of Germany have taught their people for more than twenty years that the British Empire stood chiefly in the path of German expansion and that war was inevitable. No one could predict the exact occasion which would be seized, but no one could doubt the intention of the Prussian militarists. There was the lesson of Denmark and Austria and France. In the end the storm broke suddenly and the country was confronted with responsibilities greater than those which it had ever faced. The situation demanded action; it demanded immediate and unhesitating action beyond the authorization of the law as it then stood; it was impossible for the Government to wait; and by Order-in-Council we promulgated necessary measures in advance of the meeting of Parliament. The people of Canada loyally acquiesced in these measures and our course has been ratified by the necessary legislative sanction.

What did we do, and what was our duty? I came back to Ottawa on the first day of August, three days before the war broke out. I had the honor of sending a telegram, at first secret, since made public, telling Great Britain we would co-operate in every endeavor for maintaining the peace of the Empire and of the world (applause), but that if war did un-

fortunately come, the Dominion of Canada stood with Great Britain and all the Dominions of the Empire, to see that the war should be forced to an honorable and victorious conclusion. (Cheers and applause.) And as I said to the officers and men this morning, I am glad to have lived to see the day when the public spirit, the national spirit of Canada, has manifested itself as it has manifested itself in the past four months, and will continue to manifest itself until the issue to which I alluded shall be brought about. (Applause.)

On the first of August I sent to the British Government another secret telegram announcing Canada's desire to send an expeditionary force if war should ensue. The offer was not accepted until the 6th of August, but in the meantime steps in anticipation were taken and the raising and equipment of troops for such a force was authorized. On the 7th August, the suggested composition of the force was received from the British authorities, and was immediately sanctioned by Order-in-Council. Recruiting in the meantime had already commenced, and on the 6th August the preparation of the Valcartier Camp was begun. I visited that Camp for weeks from the day on which work commenced, and I am proud that we possess in Canada the ability to achieve within so limited a period all that was accomplished within that month. A rifle range comprising a line of 1,500 targets and extending more than three and a half miles was completed within about ten days. A complete water supply with necessary piping, pumps, tanks and chlorinating plant with about 200 taps fitted to ablution tables and seventy-five shower baths was constructed. An electric light, power and telephone system was installed. Streets were constructed; buildings and tents erected and an effective sewerage system comprising over 28,000 feet of drain pipe was completed. Railway sidings with necessary loading platforms were constructed. Woods were cleared and elaborate sanitary arrangements prepared. Six large buildings for ordnance stores and for the Army Service Corps, buildings for medical stores, for pay and transport offices, hospital stables for sick horses, fumigating and other buildings were constructed and made ready for use within the same period. Thirty-five thousand men were assembled and put through a most systematic course of training in all branches of the service. Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, Engineers, Army Service Corps, Army Medical Corps, Signallers and Ammunition columns were organized, and all were trained in their respective duties. Sixteen thousand men were trained daily in musketry. The clothing and equipment, the transport and supply for 35,000 men

were a heavy undertaking especially in the urgency of haste. It is difficult for those who did not see the camp and who have not studied all that has been accomplished to realize the tremendous demands made upon the organizing ability of the Canadian people to accomplish all this. I venture the assertion that the organization and arrangements of Valcartier Camp have not been excelled in any part of our Empire since the commencement of this war. It is unnecessary to describe in detail all the equipment, arms, accoutrements and other necessaries furnished. To equip the force sent forward and to make some provision for future contingents 290,000 pairs of boots and shoes have been provided; 100,000 forage caps, 90,000 great coats, 240,000 jackets and sweaters of various types, 235,000 pairs of trousers, 70,000 rifles, 70,000 bayonets, 80,000 oil bottles, 70,000 water bottles, 95,000 sets of valise equipment and so on in like proportion over a list of sixty-six different articles. With the first expeditionary force we sent to Great Britain 21 thirteen-pounder quick-firing guns, 96 eighteen-pounder quick-firing guns, 10 breach-loading sixty pounder guns, a large number of machine guns, motor lorries, transport wagons and vast quantities of ammunition. The force was ready for embarkation within six weeks from the outbreak of war and could have been then despatched if arrangements for escort had been immediately possible. You, perhaps, do not realize how great an undertaking it was for a non-military country to assemble, organize, train, equip and despatch so large a force within that brief period. It is, I believe, the largest military force that ever crossed the Atlantic at one time. In the great Armada, which threatened the shores of Great Britain three centuries ago, there were less than 20,000 soldiers. The force which we have sent across the Atlantic is nearly fifty per cent. greater than the total number of British troops under Wellington's command at Waterloo.

Let me say in passing, that having seen the arrangements which have been made in Toronto for the training of men and sending them to the front, I am delighted with all that has been done, and I take this opportunity publicly to congratulate General Lessard and his staff and all who have helped him (loud cheers and long applause) for the splendid work done in that regard. I took the opportunity to say this morning, and you will permit me to repeat it here, that the men who are making themselves ready for the stern work which they may be called upon to do later on are serving their country and serving the Empire just as truly as if they were at the front to-day. (Applause.)

Earnest men, with whose ideals I most deeply sympathize, from all over Canada, have been asking me, "Why did we not send immediately one hundred thousand men across the Atlantic? why not send 150,000 or 200,000 men?" Do you realize what it would mean to send men untrained to fight against the most highly trained troops in the world? I would not be responsible for it, if all the people in Canada told me to do it! (Hear, hear, and applause.)

It would be not only useless, but unjust and cruel as well, to send untrained men to the front against highly trained and seasoned troops. They must also be hardened by exercise in the duties of a soldier's life until their physical condition will enable them to endure the hardships of active service. Thus our troops are receiving in Great Britain the same tests of training and of exercises which are prescribed for the volunteer army of the Mother Country. That they will acquit themselves worthily no one can doubt who saw them at Valcartier. In physique, in spirit, in courage, and in all qualities that are necessary for the soldier they will be found second to none.

If the training of soldiers is important, the training, the skill, and the experience of the men who command them are even more essential and imperative. The officers of the Canadian Militia have all the necessary qualities that could be desired. They have given ungrudgingly of their time and their energy to fit themselves as far as possible for the duties of active service. But for them even more than for the men the training and experience at Valcartier and on Salisbury Plain are not only invaluable but absolutely essential before they lead their men into action. In this grim struggle our forces will face the most highly organized military machine in the world.

I have spoken of the training of the men. I am afraid—
(Cries of "Go on!")

The Mayor: "We've got all afternoon!"

Sir Robert, continuing: I am afraid the Mayor is impressed with the idea that I intend to make a House of Commons speech. (Laughter.) I have spoken of the training of the men. You know, as I said to the officers this morning, you might as well send a dozen or fifteen men from the street against a professional football club or lacrosse or hockey club, and expect them to succeed, as to send untrained soldiers against highly organized troops.

Now, I know that in the South African war men went perhaps without a great deal of training; but, without professing to understand military affairs as many men here under-

stand them, I think the conditions which have to be faced in this war are very different. (Hear, hear.) I say that with all deference to the opinion of men who are better qualified to judge. With reference to the Civil War in the nation to the south of us, men on both sides learned by experience on the field how to fight and to perform their duties as soldiers. But it would be too costly now to think of sending our men to learn their duties in that way. (Hear, hear.)

I have spoken of what Canada has done. The call of duty has not fallen upon unheeding ears in this country. East and West, every Province and practically every community has responded with an ardor and spirit which emphasizes the strength of the ties that bind together the Dominions of this Empire. When the first contingent sailed from Canada we immediately announced that another would follow. During the delay which ensued before the War Office in the pressure of multitudinous affairs could suggest its composition, it was announced that in addition to the force which had gone abroad and in addition to 8,000 men engaged in garrison and outpost duty, we would enlist and train 30,000 men; and that from these a second contingent would be despatched as soon as the necessary arms and equipment could be provided, and as soon as the War Office would be prepared to receive them. The number under training has recently been increased to 50,000 men, and it is arranged that as soon as each contingent goes forward a corresponding number of men will be enlisted to take its place. This will proceed regularly and continuously until peace is achieved or until we are satisfied that no more men are needed. Our forces under arms in Canada and abroad will soon exceed 100,000 men. That number has frequently been mentioned in the press. In this war which we are waging against the most powerful military organization the world ever knew, I prefer to name no figure. If the preservation of our Empire demands twice or thrice that number, we shall ask for them and I know that Canada will answer the call. But remember that men cannot be sent forward more rapidly than the British authorities are prepared to receive them and to undertake their final training. Moreover, we have not in Canada, as in countries organized on a military basis, great scores of equipment, arms, accoutrements, ammunition and guns. These must be provided, and they are being provided with all possible expedition. Both here and in Great Britain those requisites are lacking upon the tremendous scale which is now necessary. Without thorough training, without arms, equipment and all the essentials of war-

like preparation men sent into this awful maelstrom of war are but an incubus and danger rather than an aid.

There can be but one issue to this war but do not expect that it will be a speedy issue. I have reason to know that the results hitherto attained have been all that were anticipated by the Allies; but so far as can be foreseen, there is a long struggle before us.

The justice of the Allies' cause is generally understood and recognized among our kinsmen in the great neighboring nation, and we are proud of their sympathy. A representative of the German Government in that country has recently thought it necessary to discuss the Monroe Doctrine as it may affect Canada. That doctrine, as you know, does not embody any principle of International law but is a policy proclaimed nearly one hundred years ago by the Government of the United States. For the reason that it is a policy of the United States that country alone has the right to determine its scope and its limitations. As the policy of a great friendly nation the Monroe Doctrine is entitled to every respect, but Canada does not seek shelter behind it in this war. The people of this Dominion are eager and determined to take their part in a struggle which involves the destiny of their Empire, and, indeed, its very existence. They are quite prepared and willing to assume all responsibilities which that action involves, and they have a reasonable confidence in Canada's ability to defend her territory.

Four months of war have elapsed and Canada emerges triumphant from this great test of her unity, her patriotism and her national spirit. It has brought together in co-operation and mutual helpfulness divergent interests, differing beliefs and dissonant ideals. Every Province, every city, town and village, and indeed, every community, has contributed its quota to the magnificent Patriotic Fund, which has been raised to make just provision for those dependent upon the men who have gone to the front. Let us not forget a tribute to the patriotism and generosity of our citizens of German descent, who in proportion to their numbers and their means have made so splendid a contribution to that fund. The women of Canada have provided a great hospital, and all Canada is grateful for their untiring activities in the many missions of mercy which they have undertaken. From the Dominion, from every Province, from cities and towns, from associations of farmers, from the great labor interests of the country and from individuals, aid has come in a generous stream; and you will permit me to say that nowhere in the Dominion has the spirit of patriotism made itself more mani-

fest in generous and effective aid for all purposes than in your own city.

I was reading not long ago General Bernhardt's book, in a translation which appeared in 1913. Speaking of the Dominions of the British Empire he said, "They can be completely ignored so far as concerns any European theatre of war." I want to make this prophecy, that if this war continues as long as we have reason to anticipate at the present moment, the military authorities of Germany will find within that European theatre not less than 250,000 or 300,000 of the best troops in the world from those same negligible Dominions! (Applause.)

For this war has demonstrated the essential unity of the Empire. When the book is closed and the story has been told, we shall at least owe that to the Kaiser. It was to fall asunder as soon as he girded on his shining armor. I sincerely believe the German people did believe the British race was decadent, that this Empire was a sham and deserved to be destroyed, that this Colossus with feet of clay only needed to be attacked to fall prone at their feet. Do the fields of Belgium and France tell you the British race is decadent? The history of the British arms contains no annals more glorious. I have every confidence and belief that the record of Canada will be as worthy as that of the British Isles.

Again, the Empire was to fall apart; India was to revolt; the self-governing Dominions were to stand aside; Ireland was to go into rebellion. But instead, the whole Empire has become tense with unity and instinct, with life and action. That is the answer Canada and the Empire have given to the Kaiser. And that is the answer which they will give him to the end! (Applause.)

In the bitterness of this struggle let us not forget that the world owes much to German thought, endeavor and achievement in science, literature, the arts and every other sphere of useful human activity. I do not doubt that the German people misled as to the supposed designs of Great Britain, impressed for the time being by the Prussian military spirit, and not truly comprehending the real causes of the conflict, are behind their Government in this war. Nevertheless, it is in truth a war waged against the military oligarchy which controls the Government of Germany. The defeat of that military autocracy means much for the world, but it means even more for Germany herself. Freed from its dominance and inspired by truer ideals, the German people will attain a higher national greatness than before.

Let me allude to the German people in our own Dominion. I would like to pay a tribute to what has been done in Canada

by Canadian citizens of German descent. (Applause.) I remember the Mayor of a city in the western part of Ontario, a city whose population is almost altogether composed of citizens of German descent, coming to me in Ottawa and saying that their purpose was to make a contribution in that city to the Patriotic Fund greater per capita than that of any other city in Canada. They have accomplished, or nearly accomplished, what was proposed at that time. (Applause.) And as far as concerns those who have been brought to this country upon the invitation of the people of Canada and the Government, Germans and Austrians who have come to make this country their home, I desire to say, that I have been very closely in touch with them, and they have given every satisfaction; with very few exceptions their conduct has been exemplary and all that could be desired. They will make good citizens of Canada, they and their children. I am sure we realize the trying situation in which they must be placed. One of them was telling me how he almost got into a fight with a neighbor over the question, and he said to his neighbor, "I know I am wrong; forgive me; but there is something in my heart—I have tried to get it out, and I can't get it out." You appreciate what that feeling would be for a man whose relatives are still natives and citizens of Germany or Austria. So I think we owe to these people consideration and fairness. (Hear, hear.)

Canada is united in the strong conviction that our cause is just and in an unflinching determination to make it triumphant. This appalling conflict was not of Britain's seeking. Having entered upon it there is but one duty, to stand firmly united in an inflexible resolve to force it to a victorious and honorable conclusion. Reverses may come but they must only inspire us with a deeper courage and greater determination. Our fortitude and our endurance must equal all demands that the future shall make upon us. All that our fathers fought for and achieved; all that we have inherited and accomplished, our institutions and liberties, our destiny as a nation, the existence of our Empire, all are at stake in this contest. The resolution, the determination, the self-reliance which never failed Canada in the stress and trials of the past will assuredly not fail her now. (Long and hearty applause.)
