

Warm Praise for Canada From British Prime Minister and Secretary for Colonies

PREMIER AS WITH AND BONAR LAW REFER IN GLOWING TERMS TO WORK OF CANADIANS, AT LONDON MEETING

Memorable Speeches by British Prime Minister and Secretary For Colonies Express Gratitude of Nation For Services Rendered by Dominions—Heroism of Canadians Lauded by Latter, Who Was Born in Canada.

(From the Manchester Guardian.)
The Imperial patriotic meeting which the Prime Minister and Mr. Bonar Law addressed in the Guildhall this afternoon was called, in the words of the resolution, "to record, on behalf of the British people, its abiding gratitude for the unparalleled services rendered by the self-governing Dominions, the Colonies, the Protectorates, and the Indian Empire in the struggle to maintain the ideal of liberty and justice which is the common and sacred cause of the Allies."

The Lord Mayor presided. Lord Crewe and Mr. Harcourt were the other members of the Government present, and there were many distinguished people on the platform. The representatives of the Dominion and Colonial Governments were present. Among the Indians present was the Jam of Nawangar, wearing the uniform of a Staff officer. Mr. Henry James was in the audience. The meeting was representative of the public life of the Empire.

THE PRIME MINISTER.

Mr. Asquith said: The object of our meeting is to acknowledge in the centre of the mother city of the Empire the splendid service which has been and is being rendered to the common cause by the Dominions and dependencies of the Crown. There could be no more fitting place for such a recognition on the part of their fellow-subjects in these islands than this Guildhall, which may be not inaptly called the Prytanæum of our free and united Empire. We are now well on in the tenth month of the greatest war in which we or any people have ever been engaged. We have raised here at home and sent into the field, where they have been steadily and continuously reinforced, armies upon a scale which dwarfs everything in our past annals. It is no exaggeration to say that there are few homes in the country which are not represented directly or indirectly in one manner or another in the units of our fighting force, and there are not many which are not darkened by the shadow either of actual loss or of haunting anxiety.

The call here is still as it was when I addressed in this hall the citizens of London in the first month of the war, for more men to take the place of the fallen, to increase our effective force both for aggression and for defence, to place outside the region of uncertainty or speculation the complete and decisive victory of our cause. We at home have every reason to baste ourselves. Our shores are, geographically, at any rate, within striking distance of the enemy. The main theatre of war, in which for months so much heroic blood has been spilt, is nearer to us here in London than our own northern counties. The wounded pour in a daily stream into our hospitals. We seem sometimes as if we could almost hear the echo of the guns.

It is not so with our fellow-subjects, for whose magnificent comradeship and co-operation we are paying our tribute of gratitude today. (Cheers.) They are far removed in space from the sphere of conflict. They have little reason to fear any attempt to violate the integrity of their shores, and now that the high seas have been cleared of hostile cruisers—(cheers)—their essential commerce pursues its normal course. But they are the sons and daughters of the Empire—what touches us touches them.

THE DOMINIONS' GIFTS.

Let us see, first of all, what they have done, and then ask why they have done it. I shall not apologize for stating a few figures for I believe the people of the United Kingdom and of the world at large have still a very inadequate idea of the extent and variety of the contribution which has been made by the outlying Empire to the conduct of the war and the relief of its victims. I will remind you of the gifts in money or in kind which have been poured in spontaneously from every one of our great daughter states.

Canada.—Almost immediately after the declaration of war the people of Canada offered us a million bags of flour as a gift to the people of the United Kingdom. (Cheers.) The women of Canada subscribed nearly £50,000, which was spent in the provision of motor ambulance cars and in the organisation of hospital buildings, new blocks for nurses at Haslar and Chatham, and the Canadian government allied £20,000 to establish hospitals in France to be managed by the French government. (Cheers.)

After alluding in detail to what had been done by the separate provinces of Canada, Mr. Asquith turned to Australia. At the end of October the Commonwealth parliament granted £100,000 in aid of Belgium. (Cheers.) To this there has since been added by private contributions for Red Cross and relief work, in addition to great quantities of clothing, provisions, and medical appliances, no less than £222,000. The total contributed by Australia as a whole at the end of March in money or in kind was estimated at nearly £1,400,000. (Cheers.) To this is to be added a contribution of £75,000 a month which Australia is now engaged in supplying towards the provision of food for the Belgian people.

The New Zealand government made a special grant of £20,000 for relief in Belgium in the middle of December, and, in private contributions since from New Zealand, £60,000 to Belgium, something like £20,000 for other purposes, and here again what seems a small thing in itself but a very significant one in its meaning a gift of £450 collected in half-crowns to provide extra blankets and comforts for the crew of the battle cruiser New Zealand. (Cheers.)

South Africa (cheers),—which has special calls and claims of her own, has not been behindhand in contributing in money, and, in addition to that, a field ambulance, wine, fruit, eggs, mallee, and clothing. (Cheers.)

MILITARY CONTINGENTS.

I have spoken of gifts. Let me go on to say a word about the military forces which these great Dominions have contributed to our aid. It is

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"In the last few days a Canadian soldier was fighting a machine gun. It was destroyed by a shell. He seized another. He fought it, too. It was destroyed by a shell. He seized a third. It was also destroyed by a shell. No other machine gun was ready. He seized a rifle, and he is dead to-day upon the field of battle."

"It is deeds like these which give so much force to the simple words which I read with a special thrill, uttered by a member of one of the Canadian Universities a few days after the battle of Ypres.—'It means more to be a Canadian to-day than it did a week ago.'"

Mr. Hon. Bonar Law, Secretary for the Colonies in new British Cabinet, at meeting in the London Guildhall.

not desirable to state publicly the exact figure, but I will give you a general idea.

Canada sent to us a complete division, with line of communication units, two regiments of regular cavalry, two batteries of horse artillery, in addition to Princess Patricia's Light Infantry. A second division has been organised and parts of it have already arrived. (Cheers.) Australia has furnished a division of several light horse brigades, and reinforcements and new formations are being organised which will shortly be despatched. New Zealand sent a large contingent, and further reinforcements are due to arrive from her. A contingent of Maoris has been despatched, and on completion of her training will be sent to the front. Newfoundland has furnished a division of her own and further drafts have lately arrived, and she has in addition provided a most valuable body of naval reservists, of whom the Admiralty think very highly. Many offers have been received from South Africa, but it was felt that the Union Government had the first claim on South Africans, and the acceptance of these offers had better be delayed until the campaign there was concluded.

Let me say one word now of the Indians. (Applause.) A White Paper was presented to Parliament last September enumerating the gifts and offers of services from the princes and the peoples of India. As was apparent to anyone who studied that return, they have come from all quarters and upon the most prodigious scale, and even so they have since very largely supplemented and increased.

What shall I say of the Indian forces? India has put in the field in the several theatres of war, including the British troops sent from India, a force equivalent to nine complete infantry divisions with artillery—(applause)—and eight cavalry brigades—(applause)—as well as several smaller bodies of troops aggregating more than an infantry division in minor and outlying spheres. Putting the same thing in another way, India has placed at the disposal of the Empire for service out of India 23 regiments of cavalry, British, Indian, and Imperial, and no less than 124 regiments of infantry, British, Indian, and Imperial. (Applause.) When we look at the actual achievements of a force so spontaneously despatched, so liberally provided for, so magnificently equipped, the battlefields of France and Flanders bear an undying tribute to their bravery. (Applause.) These details teach a concrete form, which is better than rhetoric, the truth that the Empire is of one purpose and one heart. (Cheers.)

THE REASONS WHY.

I come then for a moment to my second question—Why have they, why are they doing all this—giving such a display of generosity and devotion, of willingness to endure hardship, and to face even death itself? It cannot be explained by any calculations of self-interest. (Cheers.) The true reasons lie much deeper, but they are not in the least recondite or obscure. The first is that we are now gathering in the hour of trial the fruits of a wise and far-sighted Imperial policy. (Cheers.) We long ago abandoned the old-fashioned and estorwn fallacy that colonial autonomy was inconsistent with or hostile to Imperial unity. (Cheers.) Irritating and pedagogic interference in the local concerns of the Dominions from here is a thing of the past. By the best statesmanship both here and in the great self-governing communities overseas has for years past in regard to inter-Imperial relations been not merely negative, it has been of a positive and a growingly constructive kind. The Imperial Conference which meets periodically for the discussion and settlement of matters of common interest, and the presence of the Dominion Ministers when they visit this country at the meetings of the committee of Imperial Defence, are but the outward manifestations of an ever-increasing sense of intimacy, of solidarity, of corporate unity. It is not merely that there is not, as I believe, a Dominion of the Crown which would not rather suffer annihilation than exchange for any other sovereignty its

allegiance to the British Crown. It is that they and we alike have become the conscious members of a living partnership which all over the world, under the same flag, in every variety of climate and material condition, upholds the same principles of freedom and justice.

And that brings me to the other reason for this unexampled exhibition of common patriotism. Mr. Watson, the distinguished ex-Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, whom I had the pleasure of meeting here a few weeks ago, made a striking remark. "The Dominions," he said, "are not simply assisting the Mother Country in a European war. They feel, each one of them, that they are also fighting their own battles for their own ideals—ideals of right, of personal and political liberty—against the forces which, if victorious, would inflict a fatal and world-wide blow at those ideals." That view of the matter I believe to be profoundly true.

SPIRIT OF FREEDOM.

Little did our enemy understand or realize when he wantonly opened the gates of war what forces he was unchaining in every quarter of the globe where the English language is spoken and where the free traditions of our race have entered into the lifeblood of the people. He had us never for a moment forgotten, so as he has proceeded, violating every law of God and of man, step by step down the incline of unmeasured infamy, mobilised against himself all the powers and influences which are at the back of the free spirit of mankind.

War we know well is not fought with spiritual weapons. It needs, and never more than with us today, physical strength, an increasing flow of numbers, of equipment; and all the apparatus which science can devise and industry supply. It is more than ever before a question, not of personal prowess or of brilliant surprises, but of the steady and unsleeping organization of the whole of the material resources of a community. Let us never for a moment forget what we are fighting to achieve, and still more what we are fighting to avert. We have noble comrades in arms and, in Wordsworth's phrase, we have also "great allies," none the less potent because to the eye of sense they are invisible, and among them is "man's unconquerable mind." (Cheers.)

MR. BONAR LAW.

Mr. Bonar Law said that this was no time when anyone desired to make speeches. When every morning we read the roll of honor in our papers (he continued), when we think of what is being done and endured by the children of the Empire not only on the fields of Flanders but in so many other quarters of the world, when we think of the heroism which is being displayed every day and every hour to an extent which has never been surpassed in the history of the world—when we think of the carnage and death which is carrying away so many of the flower of our people—are not our feelings best expressed in the words by Lincoln on the field of Gettysburg: "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it will never forget what they did here?" What matters is not what we say but what they do and what we here can do to help them.

When the war began we knew a good deal of the methods of our enemies. We know more today. I will quote a passage from a German historian which accurately describes the latest German outrage: "That they should without warning have fallen upon the feet with armed hands was a folly not less than a barbarity—one of those frightful barbarisms of civilization—where—morality suddenly loses the rudder and naked business stands out before us as if to warn us against the childish belief that civilization can root out the bestiality of man." That is what we are fighting against. But there is no use making speeches about it. There is no use appealing to the civilized world against it. When a venomous reptile is loose there is one thing only to be done—to destroy it. (Great cheering.) This is our task. (Cheers.) It is no easy task. To accomplish it we need to put forth the full strength to the last ounce of the United Kingdom. (Cheers.)

There have been rumors—perhaps I may be permitted to say so much as this—there have been rumors of political changes, of combinations of politicians or statesmen. Such combinations would be useless, perhaps worse than useless, except as a means to an end—as a means to a combination of the nation—(Applause)—a nation from top to bottom organized for the pur-

pose of ending the war. (Great cheers).

But to destroy this monster we need, and, thank Heaven, we have it, the full force not only of the United Kingdom but of the British Empire. Our enemies have singled us out from all the allies as the chief object of their hatred. They are right. As the Prime Minister has pointed out in other words, the British Empire is the antithesis of everything for which German militarism stands. They rely on force, and force alone. They not only despise but they do not understand moral forces, and it is moral forces on which the British Empire rests. (Cheers).

A CANADIAN'S HEROISM.

After referring to the part played by India, Australia, and New Zealand in the war, Mr. Bonar Law said: But what about Canada? The world learned not with surprise but with a thrill of pride which spread from one end of it to another—that men who a few months ago were civilians had stood the severest test of war and had gained a reputation which, as the Prime Minister said, will never die. (Cheers). Perhaps as one born in Canada—(cheers),—and knowing personally some of those who have fallen in the last few weeks, even the representatives of the other Dominions will not be surprised that I think most of what has been done by Canada. (Cheers). I heard only today a story—one of many—which I should like to tell.

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THE WAR AND THE EMPIRE.

This is, as the Prime Minister said, the greatest war in history. It is, I think, the bloodiest and on the part of our enemy it is one of the most savage. We have nothing to do but to set our teeth and see the end of it. (Cheers). I do not wish in anything to look beyond this war. (Cheers). Our enemies said that it was we who organized it. What could we gain by it? What can we gain by it now? Nothing except peace and security for peace in the future. But perhaps in this gathering, with representatives of the Dominion here, I may be permitted to say for myself, for myself alone, not attempting to speak for any party, that I have now the hope that we shall gain something more as the result of this war. The Dominions of the British Empire have not been created by the war. But the conditions have been changed by the war. It is my hope—and if it is taken up in earnest while the metal is glowing red hot from the furnace of war I believe it may be done,—and I believe that as a result of it we may see a Parliament of the British Empire, in which every part of that Empire in proportion to its resources and numbers will share in the duty and in the honor of ruling the British Empire. (Cheers).

SPOKESMEN OF THE DOMINIONS.

Sir G. H. Perley (Acting High Commissioner), in acknowledging the resolution said he appreciated beyond measure the words that had been uttered, but no words were needed to show the consolidation of the Empire. Canada spoke at Ypres. (Applause). The undertaking that the Dominions would be consulted when the terms of peace were under consideration had produced a splendid impression in Canada, and no doubt the people would

have been very much disappointed if such a course had not been followed. He read a message which had been sent to the meeting by the Prime Minister of Canada in the following terms:—"The losses sustained by our Canadian troops in the magnificently gallant stand they made in the recent fighting will serve to strengthen, if possible, the determination of the Canadian people to bring this war to a triumphant conclusion." (Cheers).

Sir George Reid (High Commissioner for the Commonwealth of Australia) said that fifty years of German friendship would have been more fatal than asphyxiating gas—about the last word in diabolical cowardice. Only the last year he was a prominent member of the Anglo-German Friendship Society because he was a lover of peace, but the only peace society he would ever join now, was one pledged by a solemn bond to teach a lesson that would endure to the third and fourth generations of those who repaid chivalry with murder. (Applause).

Mr. Thomas Mackenzie (High Commissioner for the Dominion of New Zealand) read a telegram from the Prime Minister of New Zealand declaring the unfaltering support of the Dominion to the great cause. "All we have," said the message, "is at the Empire's call." (Cheers). Mr. Mackenzie said New Zealand loyalty was more than sentiment. It was passion.