

SIR ROBERT BORDEN ADDRESSES CROWDED MEETING OF THE HALIFAX CANADIAN CLUB

Public Opinion in Prussia an Unknown Quality — The Prime Minister Gives Succinct History of the War and the Aims and Objects of the Dominions in Rendering Their Aid.

HALIFAX, N.S., Dec. 18.—Sir Robert Borden tonight addressed an overflowing meeting of the Canadian Club. He spoke of Canada in relation to the war and complimented his native province on the splendid showing it has made in regard to recruiting. Sir Robert explained the government's plans for despatching successive contingents to the front, outlined the orders-in-council which by way of precautionary measures had been passed. After reviewing the circumstances which led up to the war, the prime minister said in part:

PRUSSIAN OLIGARCHY.

"The Prussian military oligarchy dominates Germany and the people have become obsessed with the religion of valor and the doctrine that might is the highest and indeed the only right. Public opinion as we understand it is a farce, almost unknown and hardly realized there. There is practically no public opinion other than the government's opinion. Moreover a nation that has been consolidated through war and that has been continuously victorious in its wars for more than fifty years and has astonished the world by its military prowess, a nation whose people have never experienced the horrors of invasion to which they have subjected other countries, probably becomes intoxicated with the idea of continued victory. A salutary lesson will assuredly be learned by the German people before the sword is sheathed in this struggle. A great task has been forced upon our Empire and it has not been lightly undertaken. Canada in common with the other Dominions will do her part in seeing that it is properly and thoroughly performed.

COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED.

"This appalling war could undoubtedly have been avoided if Germany had consented to the mediation which Sir Edward Grey so earnestly urged and in which all the powers except Germany were prepared to participate. At the very outset, Belgium, a small state possessing no considerable military strength, desiring merely to remain unmolested, and having absolutely no interest in the quarrel, was ruthlessly invaded by Germany and forced into war.

POSITION OF BELGIUM.

"There was no possible alternative; if Belgium resisted the German armies which invaded her territories she became involved in war with Germany; if she permitted German armies to pass unhindered through her territories for the purpose of attacking France she necessarily became involved in war with France. The valor and heroism of the Belgian army have excited the admiration of the world, as the undeserved sufferings of the Belgian people have commanded its profound sympathy.

THE SCRAP OF PAPER.

"After Great Britain had asked from Germany the assurance which Prussia and France had given in 1870 and which France gave in 1914, that Belgian neutrality would not be violated inasmuch as it was guaranteed by all the great powers of Europe, contemptuous reference was made by the German Chancellor to the treaty as a "scrap of paper." That cynical and even degenerate conception reverts to standards which are beyond the limits of recorded history. Under such a misconception of public right and international duty how is it possible for nations to deal with each other?

VIOLATE SOLEMN ENGAGEMENTS.

"Three thousand years ago it was considered disgraceful that a nation should violate its solemn engagements. The fundamental principle upon which the internal organization and the external relations of each nation are based is the honorable fulfillment of engagements and pledges and the assurance that they will be so fulfilled. The constitution of many countries is but a "scrap of paper". Its laws are recorded in "scraps of paper". The dealings of mankind are carried on by "scraps of paper". All our commercial fabric is founded on "scraps of paper". From Magna Charta to the British North America Act our rights and liberties have been safeguarded by "scraps of paper". In short, the thought and the achievement of all the centuries is embodied in "scraps of paper". When terms of peace come to be considered the Prussian cynicism touching treaty obligations must not be forgotten.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

"Amid all the horror and welter of this world-wide conflict we may yet discern hope for the future. It will arouse, I hope, the conscience of all the nations to bring about concerted action for the reduction of armaments and for the placing of the whole world upon what one might term a peace footing. Upon this continent there is a boundary line of nearly four thousand miles from this country and the great kindred nation to the South. That boundary is unguarded and unfortified as between the two nations, and we sleep securely without thought of war or invasion. The proposal to commemorate our century of peace has commanded the approval of the people and government of Canada and I trust it will be worthily realized.

AWAKENED NATIONAL SPIRIT.

"And since this struggle began one cannot but perceive an awakened national spirit and consciousness in this Dominion. In a young and rapidly developing country such as this the aspirations of material prosperity are bound to impose themselves very strongly upon the imagination of the people. To those who held aloft the lamp of idealism it sometimes seemed that the clamor of the market place, the din of the factory and the rush of the locomotive had absorbed the minds of the people. But when the day came which searched their spirit, Canadians did not fail to remember that there is something greater than material prosperity and something greater than even life itself. The wonderful and beautiful spirit of mutual helpfulness, of desire to aid, the spirit of self-sacrifice, of patriotism, of devotion, which in these latter months has inspired the Canadian people from ocean to ocean will leave an enduring mark upon our national life. It has dissolved prejudice and curbed discord and dissension. And who of you will not do reverence to the courage, the devotion, and the patriotism of the women of Canada; those who, with undaunted hearts but tear-dimmed eyes have seen husband, son or brother, go forth to battle; those who in a thousand missions of aid and of mercy are unwearily in their infinite labors of love. Who of you

Rockcliffe Teahouse.

The Rockcliffe Teahouse, announcement concerning which appeared in The Citizen on Monday last, will be opened to the public for the season this Saturday afternoon. This novel aid scheme was originated and worked out successfully by Mrs. Kingmill of Rockcliffe and of course will be operated under her personal direction. Tea, coffee and bouillon will be served every afternoon for the benefit of those interested in winter sports in Rockcliffe Park. The proceeds will be donated to the Red Cross and Belgian Relief funds. The teahouse will be in charge of Oliver Aselin, who is generously contributing his services.

will not say with me: God bless the women of Canada.

WHAT HOLDS THE EMPIRE.

"The British Empire as presently constituted is a very recent creation or rather evolution. The British Islands which constitute the metropolitan state of the Empire have no written constitution and the overseas dominions are governed under an apparent confusion of statutes, charters, conventions and understandings. To those who do not comprehend the governing principle which pervades all this seeming confusion, the Empire seems to have no logical right to exist at all, and naturally they regard it as decadent and look for disunion and weakness in the hour of trial. But the principle of autonomous self-government applied wherever conditions permit and to the greatest extent that they would permit has been and is its great cardinal feature. And there has been no weakness and no disunion, because the unity and strength of the Empire are securely founded upon its liberties, wherein alone, enduring strength is found. Thus the Dominions of the Empire united by the tie of a common allegiance and of a common ideal present today an unbroken front. In this country we are a peace-loving people and great tasks lie before us in the peaceful development of our resources.

"We have no lasting quarrel with the German people who have great qualities and whose achievements in every important sphere of human progress are conspicuous but who are temporarily misled by the militarism of Prussia, but we will fight to the death against the vain attempt of an arrogant militarist oligarchy to impose upon the world its ideals of force and violence and to achieve its unworthy purpose of 'blood and iron.'"



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