

There has been no finer spectacle in the whole history of civilized government than the splendid unanimity of the British people in this time of crisis and conflict. The war broke upon England in the midst of the bitterest party controversy ever known in the British Isles. From that moment the voice of party controversy was stilled, partisan bickering and recrimination ceased, and Englishman, Scotaman, Welshman and Irishman stood shoulder to shoulder, presenting a nation with "a united front" to its foes. The magnificent solidarity of the people of the United Kingdom has challenged the admiration of the world. Mr. Bonar Law joined with Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Redmond joined with Sir Edward Carson, in proclaiming to the world that, however great their differences were on matters of domestic politics, they stood as one man in defence of Britain's cause and in vindication of Britain's honor.

In Canada, too, there has been a splendid drawing together of the political parties. The moment that the European crisis became acute Sir Wilfrid Laurier hastened back to Ottawa, cancelled all his political meetings, and through the medium of the official Liberal publication, declared a party truce. His Excellency, the Duke of Connaught, expressed his appreciation of the patriotic attitude of the Liberal Leader, by according him the unprecedented distinction of summoning him to a consultation immediately after his return to Ottawa.

The attitude of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, on the whole, has been the attitude of the Canadian people. It is true that a few of the baser sort of Conservative organs have sought to make political capital out of the terrible calamity which threatened the world, and for a day or two the Toronto News, the Toronto Mail and Empire, the Montreal Star and one or two others of that ilk, tried to make the war serve party ends. But, even they soon discovered that public opinion would not tolerate the small change of politics at a time when the Mother Country was in the throes of war. To their credit these organs have desisted from their bitter and partisan attacks and they, in common with every decent, self-respecting and patriotic newspaper in Canada, have recognized that this was no time for the jarring notes of party strife.

So far as The Morning Chronicle is concerned it has scrupulously refrained, from the outset, from introducing into its columns anything of a controversial nature, from a party point of view. It believed that it owed a duty, not only to the country but to itself, to observe the party truce declared by the leader of the Liberal Party, and not a single line was admitted to its pages which was in any way calculated, designed, or likely to provoke partisan controversy or inflame party feeling. It has kept inviolate the truce in the face of the greatest provocation. It warned the Conservative Party that if this truce were broken, the responsibility therefor would not lie with the Liberal Party.

The Halifax Herald stands alone among the newspapers of Canada in pursuing tactics which we have no hesitation in saying, every honorable Canadian, Conservative, as well as Liberal, regards as not only dishonorable, but disgraceful and vicious in the extreme. From the moment of the outbreak of the war, the Herald seized the occasion to manufacture what it vainly hopes will be capital for the party which it supports—for a consideration day after day its columns have been filled with insulting taunts, sneers, and insinuations against the Liberal leader and the Liberal Party. Its whole object, apart from its overweening desire to gather in its "blood money" by commercializing the unspeakable horrors of war, has been to malign and calumniate Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal Party, in a campaign of insolent falsehood. The Morning Chronicle is reluctant to be drawn into a partisan squabble with a newspaper which has so little regard for common decency, at a time, when the whole world is convulsed with the

horrors of war, but there are times when forbearance ceases to be a virtue, and the time has come when the duty which we owe, no less to the Party which we are proud to support, than to the public, compels us to speak plainly.

When leaders of the Tory Party and their unscrupulous organ are chattering about "Laurier's crime" and are resorting to every vicious insinuation to impute disloyalty to the Liberal Party, Liberals would be more than human if they did not strike back in their own defence. The Liberal Party is accused of treason because it opposed the Borden policy of contributing three empty Dreadnoughts to the United Kingdom. It is unnecessary to enter into that question at this time more than to say that if the contribution policy had been adopted by the Parliament of Canada it would not have added a single ship, a single gun or a single man to Great Britain's fleet at this time of crisis. Not one of the proposed ships would be ready for the fighting line. The keels might have been laid, but that would have been all. But, even if they had been completed there would be no officers or men to man and fight them. Great Britain's greatest need, as has been demonstrated time and time again, is not so much more warships as more trained men. The Borden policy would have been worth nothing to Great Britain, for under it not a man would have been added to the fighting line. It was never intended to serve more than a political purpose. It was not believed in by the men who proposed it. It was in direct conflict with the principles which they so strongly and eloquently espoused only three years before. But, we let that pass for the moment.

There was, however, a crime committed, but it was not Laurier's crime. The action of the Borden Government in practically dismantling the cruiser Niobe and abandoning the whole policy of training men for service at sea, in defence of Canada and the Empire, was the greatest political crime ever committed in the history of Canada. Current events are bringing home to the public the criminality of the Government's act, at the bidding of their Nationalist allies in Quebec, who demanded as their "pound of flesh" the abandonment of the "Imperialistic policy of Laurier." What was the first step taken by the Government when the tragic news of war flashed over the wires? Superhuman efforts were put forth to put the Niobe into commission. Macedonian appeals were sent out for volunteers and there was a splendid response, we are glad to say. The need of protecting our own harbors and transatlantic commerce was immediately seen, and yet during the past two years the Niobe lay at the Dockyard pier, her machinery rusting and her bottom covered with barnacles.

Had this fine ship been kept in commission, with an efficient and well-trained crew aboard of her, she would have been invaluable for immediate service. The moment the declaration of war was issued she could have stolen quietly out of the harbor—and the censor would have prevented any intelligence of her movements from going abroad. She could have taken up her station on the transatlantic lanes leading to New York and in the course of a few days could have captured and brought to the port of Halifax, as prizes of war, enough German merchantmen—for there were many valuable steamers of the enemy defenceless on the ocean during the earlier days of the war—to pay for the cost of not one, but several Dreadnoughts. More than that, she would have been of immense service in assisting the British cruisers in running down the enemy's warships which have been harassing British shipping on the high seas during the past fortnight. The very fact that the Government, even at this late hour, is rushing with all speed the preparations to put the Niobe to sea, testifies to the value of even this "tin-pot" ship, which has been sneered at and jeered at from the moment she came to Canada—a ship which, although purchased for training purposes it is now admitted, would have been immensely valuable as an instrument not only of defence but of attack.

But that is not all. Had the Conservative Party not played false to its pledges; had it not repudiated the resolution of the House of Commons to which both parties were committed to a man in 1909; had it loyally and honorably carried out the policy which its leaders so strongly supported at that time, Canada would today have four cruisers of the type of the Bristol, which is now one of the fleet protecting British shipping on the North Atlantic, and a flotilla of torpedo boat destroyers, ready for service on the high seas, to protect our commerce and defend our shores and harbors and coasts. This is not mere speculation. Every Canadian knows that it is true.

from justifying the policy of contribution the present war has already demonstrated, as Admiral Lord Charles Beresford has urged repeatedly, that Canada's duty alike to herself and to the Empire demands that she should have a fleet to protect her own coast and to act as consorts for transatlantic commerce. What have we witnessed during the past few days? Britain has sent a fleet of cruisers to patrol the Atlantic and destroy the cruisers of the enemy, and to provide safe convoy for the British merchant marine. The great Cunard Liner, Mauretania and the White Star liner Cedric, representing with their cargoes probably eight million dollars, were convoyed into Halifax by the little cruiser Essex, a much less formidable man-of-war than even the despised and derided Niobe. Fleets of liners have been tied up in the St. Lawrence and in New York because of the fear of three small German cruisers operating in the North Atlantic.

Had the Borden Government been true to its principles, we should have had on the Atlantic a fleet of cruisers and a flotilla of destroyers which would have provided ample protection for our own shores, would have relieved the Mother Country of the imperative duty of policing the transatlantic lanes and protecting ocean-going commerce, carrying the food supply which is the very life-blood of the British Isles, and would have set free her cruisers to reinforce the great fleet facing the enemy in the North Sea.

Liberals, then, have no occasion to apologize for or be ashamed of their attitude on the naval question. Time and events have more than justified their position. Much less are they open to insulting charges of disloyalty, which come from a newspaper which is ever ready to prostitute the noblest cause and the highest interests of the State to the base end of personal gain and party advantage. The fact that Canada is not able to bring greater strength to Britain on the sea today is due primarily and solely to the base betrayal of its principles by the Party now in power, when it repudiated the unanimous resolution of the Canadian House of Commons, at the instigation and the bidding of a little group of Nationalists in the Province of Quebec, who held Mr. Borden in the hollow of their hands.

It is regrettable that it should be necessary at this time to make these statements, but they have been forced upon us by the utterly indecent attacks and wanton insults of The Halifax Herald. We are glad that we have personal authority for saying that the decent element of the Conservative Party in this Province not only do not approve of, but strongly resent, the character of the infamous campaign, which that newspaper has been waging during the past two weeks. The remedy lies in their hands. The organ which disgraces their party exists simply for what it can get out of the party in the way of financial plunder. The responsible leaders of the Conservative Party can quickly put an end to its unseemly virulence if they will—by cutting off the "source" of supply. We do not doubt that patriotic men among them are grieved beyond measure at the shame and reproach which has been brought upon their party and upon Canada, at this juncture when Canadians of all parties are united for the common cause, by the despicable tactics pursued by the organ which assumes to speak for them. The outcome rests with them. If they want war, war they shall have in full measure. If they want peace, let them call off the curs who are barking at the heels of a great Canadian who in this time of crisis, as at all times, has been ready to do his full duty, not alone to his own country but to the Empire to which we belong.