

LOYAL TO BRITAIN

There is good reading in the speech of Mr. William G. Washburn.

The German-Canadian Conservative member for North Waterloo, who moved the address in reply to the speech from the throne. The Kaiser and his advisers might read this speech with profit to themselves. It is the proof of one of their chief mistakes, the contradiction of one of their most cherished theories.

The German militarists, misjudging in this as they have done in all other important matters, counted upon the collapse of the British Empire. They had been told, and they believed, that at the outbreak of war against the United Kingdom, the great self-governing dominions would sever their connection with the Empire. The German war party failed to grasp the meaning of the British Empire, an empire of free people, bound together by the will of these peoples, and not by compulsion.

Mr. Weichel's speech throws the spotlight upon this great blunder of the Prussian strategists. A Canadian of German origin, representing a community of German-Canadians, he proclaimed the unswerving loyalty of the German-Canadian to the Empire in which they lived and whose freedom they enjoy.

Mr. Weichel paid special attention to the attitude of the German-Canadians in the present crisis. Speaking of the war, he said:

"Ruthlessly awakened from our long slumber of false security, we are called upon today to desert for a time at least the doctrine of peace that has taken firm root amongst all peace-loving people throughout the world, and to devote our energies to wards the adoption of measures to tide us over the present existing crisis—one that not only affects our own dominion of Canada, but will have a tendency to cement the bonds of imperial unity throughout the whole Empire. Certain measures to meet the existing situation will be introduced in this House by the government this session. We are confronted with a situation that demands the co-operation of every member occupying a seat in this chamber, that demands courage of a high order, a courage born of conviction that we are in the right, and that to falter and hesitate would be fatal to the country's and the Empire's best interests."

"Never," said Mr. Weichel, "has the world witnessed such a catastrophe, such awful carnage, such ruthless disregard of the rights of others."

Mr. Weichel touched upon the loss to the nation in the death of Lord Roberts, the general satisfaction felt when Lord Kitchener was placed in charge of the war office, and to the silent victory of the navy. British subjects throughout the world, he said, had reason to be thankful to those men, who saw that trouble was bound to come and prepared the navy for it.

"This is a war that was not desired by Great Britain. The causes that brought it about are familiar to all of you, and need not be discussed today. But from the evidence produced, we are assured that the statesmen of England tried by every means in their power to avoid an armed conflict. Every art known to diplomacy, to bring about a better understanding and to preserve the peace, was exercised, but to no avail. And now that the die is cast, feeling and knowing that we have a just cause, there will be no hesitation on the part of the people living within the British Empire, with a stern resolve, to once and forever take issue with those who proclaim the doctrine that might is right, who favor military autocracy as against the doctrine of true democracy."

Mr. Weichel declared himself proud of his British citizenship. "Although born in Canada," he said, "I am of German origin, and, needless to say, along with many hundred thousands of other people living here at the present time, I feel very keenly the situation that has developed in Europe."

"For many years you have harbored in your midst a great many people of German origin—thrifty and frugal in their habits — possessed of energies and business abilities that have aroused the admiration of all classes in Canada. They have always been looked upon as desirable citizens. Thousands of them have settled in this fair country, along with immigrants from every other part of the globe, and very few of them would leave Canada today for any other country in the world, should opportunity offer."

Stating that the German element had received fair play in Canada since the war began, Mr. Weichel added:

"I am not here today to make any apology for the German-Canadians in Canada, but this I do say, and am pleased to say it with all the energy I can command, that the people of German origin in this country are loyal to their king and loyal to the Empire and that they have since the outbreak of hostilities, given ample evidence to this effect.

"German-Canadians are proud of the race from which they sprung, proud of German progress in science, art, music, literature and philosophy, but,

sir, they are not proud of the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, of the burning of Louvain, nor of the destruction of the Reims cathedral. German art, German music, German science, is one thing, but Prussian militarism is another, and the reason why so many people of German origin have left their old fatherland, was to escape military domination, and today they are just as eager and anxious as you are for the obliteration of the curse which has been weighing so heavily upon Europe for so many years.

"German-Canadians were answering a call, not of the blood, but of duty and gratitude. Shoulder to shoulder with all other Canadians they will do their duty."