

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1939.

CANADA HAS DECIDED.

The Canadian Parliament has taken the inevitable step of proclaiming a state of war with relation to the German Reich with a unanimity which will be gratifying to the people and ought to have a meaning to the enemy.

This peaceful country, 3,000 miles distant from the scene of conflict, which desires to live on terms of amity with the whole world, has spoken in its own right for human justice and equity, prepared to defend with life and its full treasure principles more sacred than life or material welfare. The solemn decision reached was the echo of a nation's soul, torn by wholesale murder and brigandage on land and sea and tyranny which it could not in silence see imposed on others wishing to live undisturbed like itself.

But, although acting of its own volition, Canada has entered the war against oppression to support the Mother Country. With one mind it is taking its place in upholding the solidarity of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The insignificant opposition in Parliament made a recorded vote unnecessary. In the Commons Hon. Dr. Manion, Conservative Leader, had carried his following to Britain's side in a speech worthy of a place with Laurier's historic pronouncement as Opposition Leader in 1914. In the Senate Right Hon. Arthur Meighen, Conservative Majority Leader, proscribed criticism and called on all to stand behind the Government. The expected French-Canadian rebellion vanished with Right Hon. Ernest Lapointe's heartfelt appeal for "Canada's honor, Canada's soul, Canada's dignity, Canada's conscience." Only Mr. Wilfrid Lacroix stood up with Mr. Liguori Lacombe for the non-participation amendment, two French-Canadians who gained eternal distinction by an attitude unworthy of their people and country. And there remained the illusions of Mr. J. S. Woodsworth, in marked contrast with his views in militant days, a dissident figure in a party which prefers to fight for the right. The aged C.C.F. socialist alone in Parliament rose to vote against the main motion.

Gratified as the people in general will be that Parliament has ended the uncertainty in a spirit that implied the utmost of deter-

mination there will be many dissatisfied with the measure of activity in the initial stages outlined by the Prime Minister. There can be nothing problematical about what the country will be called upon to do as the war goes on. In view of this the check on preparedness through the halting of mobilization is open to serious question. Conscription is a matter to be left for future consideration. We are undertaking to train and provide air pilots for active service at once, and further to supply munitions and other equipment as well as food for Britain. This equipment apparently is not a Canadian contribution to the war effort but a commercial undertaking. Mr. King's speech stated that Canada would assist Britain with finances. If this is intended there should be an explanation of the nature of help, unless the limit has been defined by the land and Labrador and French possessions off the Canadian coast. Selling supplies to Britain, arms and munitions for the use of British soldiers at a profit is far short of participating in the war for the defense of the country, Empire and democracy. It is not the idea Canadian people have of meeting the challenge to their honor and conscience. We do not believe, however, this is a time for criticism. Proclaiming a state of war imposes obligations which must be observed and citizens can suspend judgment for a period to see how they work out. In the view of Canadian citizens and in the minds of other peoples on this continent and abroad we have taken the courageous, irrevocable step which demands the supreme effort and sacrifice. We are in the war against German aggression for the protection of principles without which life would be worthless, principles subscribed to by all British peoples as well as those of France, the United States and other nations. Canada could not honorably or conscientiously make any other choice, and must not be failure of word or act prejudice the position assumed, no matter what the cost. We are pledged to prepare, that assistance may be forwarded as needed. Here also the obligation is the Government's, for Great Britain will not request the sending of an expeditionary force even were the last hundred men dying on the field behind the last piece of artillery. Our pride in independence within the British Commonwealth is undergoing a test, which loyal Canadians will watch with resolute determination.

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