

Writers and Artists in the War Effort

Within the past few days, three government spokesmen—Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King, Mr. Elliott M. Little, director of selective service, and Mr. G. H. Lash, director of public information—have expressed concern about the need for rousing the Canadian people to the nature of the war crisis.

The prime minister emphasized the fact that each individual must realize a personal responsibility toward the war and all able-bodied people must help to turn the wheels of production. Mr. Little, in his address to a conference of women, asked for their co-operation in "educating the people to accept the restrictions" which must of necessity be imposed through national selective service. And in an excellent address to the Canadian Club in Winnipeg, Mr. Lash pointed out that the Canadian public must learn the "unvarnished truth" that war means sacrifice, that "now begins the bitter sting and bite of war." He appealed for "a moratorium upon jealousies, racial prejudices and religious differences and all those selfish things which have divided us and still divide us." He warned his audience that unless such a moratorium is achieved, victory cannot be made certain. And he

asked for everyone's co-operation to spread understanding about the war and to develop patriotic zeal for fighting it.

The task of stimulating the growth of patriotic fervor among the people is one which must appeal especially to the writers, broadcasters, artists and all the craftsmen engaged in moulding public opinion. This is a job which cannot, as Mr. Lash acknowledged, be done by a government bureau alone. The U.S. office of war information recently issued an appeal to the artists and writers in that country to co-operate with the government in interpreting the war and increasing the war efforts of the nation. "The American people need their artists now," Mr. Elmer Davis, chief of the war information office, stated, "to charge them with the grave responsibility of spelling out their anger, their grief, their greatness and their justice."

The Canadian Federation of Artists, organized last year, has offered the services of Canadian artists to the government. An association of writers, broadcasters and related crafts is in the process of formation in Toronto and a program of activities is being drafted to arouse public consciousness concerning this world war crisis. The public will watch with interest the development of this promising organization and the government and citizens' patriotic groups will undoubtedly wish to welcome its assistance.

Canada has its share of talented persons. If given an opportunity, they should be able to appeal to the hearts and minds of the people and inspire all to give their utmost to this war until victory has been made certain. There is need for Canadian composers to give us fighting songs, songs which the workmen could sing at their machines and to which our troops could march. This war needs to be interpreted to the nation by the skills of the dramatist, the actor, the singer, the musician. It needs to be interpreted in the clear, simple, moving language of a people determined to win victory over the destructive Nazi hordes.

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