

To be checked against delivery

Notes for a speech by Mr. E. Thurtle, M.P. Parliamentary Secretary M.o.I. at a luncheon of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, 17th February, 1942, at the Connaught Rooms.

These are days when any Britisher is pleased to come into friendly contact with Canadians or people who are in some way connected with Canada, for we are all deeply conscious of the magnificent part which that great country is playing in the desperate struggle in which we are now engaged. I doubt if at any time the bond between the two countries has been stronger than it is today. There is an old and true saying that it is in times of trouble that you find out who your real friends are. From the moment Britain first got into trouble with Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime there has never been the slightest doubt where Canada stood. She was by our side as soon as the first shot was fired, and there is no doubt that she will be by our side when the last triumphant battle of this war is fought. Moreover, when the full story of the struggle comes to be told it will be seen that Canada's contribution to the conflict has been truly amazing.

Grateful though we in Britain already are for the help we have received from Canada in this war, I doubt if our people yet properly appreciate the magnitude of that help. Your Secretary was good enough to send me the other day a small publication which gave a summary of Canada's part in the war. Of course I am at the M.o.I., and therefore I suppose I ought to know all about such matters, yet I confess that I was astonished when I read this record of what Canada had already done and what she was proposing to do.

You have built up a great army, and we know from the last war the quality of Canadian soldiers - Vimy Ridge and other places taught us that. In the Canadian Army there are 387,000 men ready to go anywhere. Large numbers of these are in this country. In addition more than 160,000 have enlisted for service in Canada.

Then you have a large and ever-growing Navy. It has grown since the beginning of the War from 15 ships to over 300 today, and from 1,800 men to some 27,000. This Navy, as we all know is rendering great service to the Allied cause. Your Air Force is 100,000 strong. Some twenty-five squadrons of the R.C.A.F. are oversea at this moment. Of these men, Air Marshal Sir Philip Joubert said, "They are the finest material the Dominion breeds. Their record of success has been outstanding."

Then there is the vast help which Canada is contributing in the vital matter of shipbuilding, the supply of vehicles, of food, and of raw materials of all kinds. In connection with the supply of materials I should like, in particular, to refer to the question of aluminium. As you are doubtless aware, aeroplanes require enormous quantities of this metal. Fighter planes require from one to two tons, and some of the very heavy bombers require about thirteen tons. On the basis of 1938 output German and occupied territory held a distinctly favourable margin compared with America and Canada. But present output shows a very different picture, and Canada has played an important part in the change which has taken place. Her production in 1938 was 66,000 metric tons. In 1941 it was approximately 225,000 metric tons, and it is estimated that in the current year it will be no less than 350,000 metric tons. The key to the expansion of aluminium production is cheap electric power, and Canada has great hydro electric resources available.

Just one other point in connection with supplies. Tanks, like aeroplanes, are a vital necessity of modern warfare. I see that General McNaughton has recently been talking about the new Canadian heavy tank, known as the "Ram", which is now being produced. He describes the tank as "the best ever" and assures us that it is big enough to deal

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with the heaviest German tanks. Some of these new tanks have, I understand, already reached this country.

All this help, in men, ships, aeroplanes and materials, is being thrown into the scales against Hitlerism and its Allies in no careful, calculating spirit, but with magnificent generosity.

In this connection I cannot help making particular reference to the recent gift - gift, not loan - of raw materials to the value of 1,000 million dollars, approximately, I believe, £225 millions sterling, plus an additional loan of Dominion credit in London of over £150 millions, free of interest, till the close of the war. There is nothing of the sordid, huckstering spirit of the market place in this magnificent gesture of friendship and comradeship. No wonder that the Prime Minister described this as a gift unequalled in its scale in the whole history of the British Empire, no wonder that we as a nation are stirred by this unprecedented generosity, and no wonder that our enemies are puzzled and dismayed by it, for it indicates the existence of a bond between Canada and Britain which is quite beyond the comprehension of Totalitarian dictatorships.

I was talking the other week to a member of a Delegation of British trade unionists and employers who visited Canada some months ago. They visited factories and workshops in widely separated parts of the country, and my friend assured me that he and his colleagues were positively thrilled by the warmth of the reception given them everywhere. Thousands of miles away from their homeland these delegates found an ardent spirit of comradeship in the common struggle that could not be exceeded at home. It was quite evident to this delegation that the people of Canada were not merely willing, but positively eager to give their share of what Mr. Churchill has described as the sacrifice of blood and sweat and tears in order to ensure that freedom, as the English-speaking world has known it for generations, shall not perish from the earth.

And now a few words about your organisation. I understand that your Chamber of Commerce is just coming of age, so to speak, entering the twenty-first year of its existence. The present abnormal conditions must be very trying for you all, but one of these days you will, no doubt, be once again fully occupied in your normal business of promoting trade between the two countries.

Without pretending to be an expert in such matters, I should say that after the war the prospects of great development in our commercial relations are very good.

You may ask what ground I have for saying that. Well, I will admit that one would need to be a prophet of a very high order indeed to forecast with any degree of accuracy what conditions are going to be like when this war finally comes to an end, and I don't pretend to be able to see into the future to that extent. Whatever the condition of the world may be, however, it is reasonable to assume that when peace comes the ties which bind our two countries together will be closer than ever.

Another thing which stands out clearly even now, is that, owing to war conditions and the enormous pressure for large-scale industrial production for War purposes, the industrial development of Canada is being quickened to an enormous extent. Industry in Canada today, under the pressure of war needs, is growing like a plant in a superheated hothouse. As a consequence, it is plain to see that by the time the war ends the industrial resources and productive capacity of Canada will have taken an enormous leap forward. Now, providing there is intelligent adaptation of these productive powers to peace-time needs - and I cannot believe that a virile young country like Canada will be lacking in the necessary intelligence for this - your country should be able to play an important part in the colossal work of

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reconstruction which will be crying out to be done all over the world. Therefore, when victorious peace comes, and the sooner it comes the better we shall all be pleased, I have no doubt that you gentlemen of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in London will find yourselves with plenty to do.

Meantime, while the war is still with us, I understand that you are willingly placing your special knowledge at the disposal of the various government departments in order to help in every possible way.

It is not so long ago that you were good enough to co-operate with our Ministry - the M.o.I - in arranging a very successful luncheon to the delegation of Canadian Members of Parliament then paying us a visit. This function was my first contact with you, and I should like to take this opportunity of expressing thanks for the useful service you rendered on that occasion.

Well, now, I think I have trespassed on your patience long enough. It only remains for me to thank you once again for having invited me to this gathering, to repeat what admiration and gratitude we all feel for Canada and the Canadian people, and to wish you and your Chamber of Commerce all possible success and prosperity.

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