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Canada and the War

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CANADA AND THE WAR

Canada is a protected country and the Canadian people have given little thought to the danger of war. On the Atlantic and Pacific coasts she is protected by the sea; on the north there is a wilderness of barren land, a barrier of ice and the Arctic Ocean; on the south there is a good neighbour, with whom she has had no serious trouble for a hundred years. There are no enemies close at hand, and the danger from distant foes has always seemed remote and problematical.

Canada has not thought it worth while to be prepared for war. There are no fortifications, except a few obsolete block-houses, along the southern border. The walled city of Quebec, the "Gibraltar of America," with its noble citadel, its magnificent terrace, its frowning bastions and its ornamental gateways, is a picturesque relic of a glorious past, but not a modern fortress. Even the forts at Levis and Beaumont, commanding the river, are far from modern. There is a strong citadel at Halifax and a well-defended naval station at Esquimalt; but elsewhere both fortifications and equipment are sadly lacking, and could offer but a feeble resistance to an enemy commanding the sea. Before the defeat of the Laurier Government in 1911 plans were being made for the creation of a Canadian navy similar to that of Australia; but since that time the Borden Government has favoured the New Zealand plan of making contributions to the British navy, and because of strong political opposition nothing definite has yet been done. The old cruisers Niobe and Rainbow, with a few gun-boats and ice-breakers, constitute the Canadian navy, and Canadians who give any thought to the question of defence know well that the country is safe from invasion only so long as the British navy commands the sea. As for defence against invasion from the south, no Canadian thinks it necessary to provide for that.

The Canadian army has been much improved in recent years, especially since the passage of the Militia Act of 1905, and numbers about 77,000 men, including 3500 in the permanent force and about 74,000 in the active militia. The permanent force is needed chiefly for garrison duty and is one of the smallest stand-
ing armies in the world. The active militia is a respectable establishment and could be made the nucleus of a formidable force. Some of the units are neither well trained nor well equipped; but in a number of places there are crack regiments, like the Victoria Rifles and the Royal Highlanders of Montreal, the Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto, the 68th Regiment of Halifax, the Fort Garry Horse of Winnipeg, and the 72d Highlanders of Vancouver, that are highly efficient in every way and would give a good account of themselves in time of war. Many of the officers and men, it is true, have scarcely thought of war, and have joined the militia for the sake of exercise, companionship, social prestige, or other unwarlike ends; but whatever their original motives may have been, at the call of duty there was a sudden change in the point of view and thousands of strong-hearted men were ready to play in earnest the game of war.

Before the dispute of Austria with Servia had reached its crisis, the people of Canada, far from the smouldering volcano of the Balkans, were busy with their own affairs and scarcely knew of the growing agitation and tension in the chancelleries of Europe. They were giving some thought to the home-rule controversy in Ireland, the review of the fleet at Portsmouth, the war in Mexico, the question of Hindu immigration, the celebration of the centenary of peace between the Anglo-Saxon nations, the temperance question, the late Ontario elections, the poor harvests in the North-West, the depression in stocks, the high cost of living, bad government in Montreal, political corruption in New Brunswick, silver-fox farming in Prince Edward Island—but most of all they were thinking and talking of the weather and the summer holidays. Summer is brief in Canada, but it is a joyous season, when all who can go for a longer or shorter time to the mountains, the rivers, and the lakes for a change of scene, for fresh air, boating, canoeing, swimming, fishing, and all the delights of country life. Toronto people go to Muskoka and Georgia Bay, Montrealers to the Laurentians and the Lower St. Lawrence, Quebeckers to the Isle of Orleans and the Lake St. John region, Halifax people to Cape Breton and the "Island," Winnipeggers to the Lake of the Woods, Vancouverites to Alaska—for everywhere people go forth to play, and the holiday spirit is in the air. Tourists from the "States" join the gay throngs at hotels, boarding-houses, and camps, and all forget the world of work and strife and wish that Canadian summer days might last forever.
Thus it was at midsummer when the word came after slight warning that England and all the British Empire had been involved in war. It was strange news, foreign to all the thoughts and feelings of the people, especially at that season of the year. They heard the news but did not understand its meaning. They read it in the papers but did not perceive its full significance; they talked about it, but in the quiet, remote manner of people who were not deeply concerned, the current of whose life could not be easily diverted from the accustomed channels. There was some little excitement in country stores and post-offices, at parish churches before and after mass, in the lobbies of hotels, on street corners and where war bulletins were posted; there were also some public meetings and patriotic parades; but otherwise business and pleasure went on much as before, and it was some time before there was a general recognition of the fact that the country was at war.

In certain quarters, however, there was full realization of the situation and instant response to the needs of the hour. Several days before the declaration of war the Cabinet was hastily called to meet at Ottawa and began to plan for the defence of the Empire. The Duke of Connaught, Governor-General of Canada, hastened back from the Rocky Mountains; Sir Robert Borden, the Premier, came from Muskoka; Sir Wilfred Laurier, the Leader of the Opposition, returned from Alberta; and other public men without regard to party or policy hastened to offer their services at this critical moment. A message was sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies assuring him that Canada would put forth every effort and make every sacrifice to insure the integrity and maintain the honour of the Empire. Parliament was called to meet on August 18th to vote funds and to take other measures for imperial defence. Colonel the Hon. Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia, announced that an army division of about 22,000 men would soon be ready for the field, and that 100,000 men would be sent, if required. There was immediately great activity in military circles. In every part of the Dominion the active militia were called to their colours; many thousands of them offered their services for the war; and in some cases whole regiments volunteered. A mobilization camp was established at St. Gabriel de Valcartier, near Quebec, and within ten days the first contingent began to assemble there. The small garrisons at Halifax, Quebec, Esquimalt, and other places near the coast
were reinforced. Troops were sent to guard cable lines, canals, railways, bridges, harbours, and other vulnerable points. Patrol boats ran up and down the St. Lawrence; search-lights played on the river by night from the forts at Levis and Beaumont; a habitant was shot by a sentry while crossing a bridge near Rivière Ouelle; shots were fired across the bows of ships to make them stop for inspection; there were rumours of German cruisers in the Gulf; H. M. S. Essex cleared for action in Halifax Harbour—Canada was at war.

The response of Canada to the unuttered call for help was at first instinctive in its character. The Mother Country, to whom she was attached by many ties of blood and friendship, was going to war, and Canada at once took her rightful place by her side. It was not primarily a question of the justice of the cause, and certainly not a question of Canada's interest in the outcome of the struggle, but rather an outburst of the old clan spirit that has brought kinsmen and allies together, shoulder to shoulder, on many a battlefield. Canadians are proud of their own land; they cherish a spirit of independence and nationality; they are jealous of any encroachment upon their chartered rights; they confess to a slight feeling of antipathy, even, toward a certain type of Englishman; but they have at the same time a growing affection for the Old Country, a feeling of satisfaction with the British connection, and a pride in the thought that Canada is a part, and a notable part, of the Empire upon which the sun never sets. So when the word came that England was at war, it was understood that Canada was at war; that England's quarrel was Canada's quarrel, for England and Canada were not two countries, but one; and that the place of Canada, with the other Dominions of the Empire, was by the side of the great Mother of them all.

It was an instinctive loyalty at first, and the people of Canada were strongly biased in favour of England, but when they were better informed as to the immediate and fundamental causes of the struggle, and understood more fully the significance of the conflict in all its bearings, they were more than ever convinced that England had taken up arms in a just quarrel, and that the British Empire, with all that it stood for of justice, liberty, and opportunity, was fighting for its life. The leaders of public opinion—editors, statesmen, clergymen, teachers, authors, business men,—unanimously agreed, not only in commending the diplomacy of Sir Edward Grey, but in contending that England,
by standing in the path of German militarism and autocracy, had become the champion of democracy and was defending the liberties of all the world.

The Montreal *Weekly Witness*, the most pacific of all Canadian journals, said editorially, on August 4 and 11:

“All the appearances are that the war now in progress was deliberately planned by the German Emperor, and that it is a war of conquest. The episode of Austria's attack upon Servia was only a method of putting the torch to the fuse, with hardly the pretence of an excuse. The Kaiser has indeed plainly announced the purpose of the war. It is so to smite the other nations that Germany will rule. The daring aggressions of the war-lord and the perils of surrounding weak nations are arguments very difficult for the most devout pacificist to answer. The sober thought of England is aghast and horrified at the idea that having travelled so far on the highway of peace, the nations should be found involved in fratricide—in slaying and destroying neighbours as much horrified at the strife as themselves, and this as the result of forces apparently irresistible rising out of the nethermost pit.”

The Toronto *Globe*, the editor of which is a Presbyterian clergymen and one of the foremost public men of Canada, said, on August 3 and 4:

“Of one thing let there be no cavil or question: if it means war for Britain it means war also for Canada. If it means war for Canada it means also the union of all Canadians for the defence of Canada, for the maintenance of the Empire's integrity, and for the preservation in the world of Britain's ideals of democratic government and life. When that issue is raised all differences of party and of race merge into one positive and unwavering unity. Before the world Canadians are not divided. With Britain and with all British Dominions we stand. In the day of testing the voice of Canada will be one voice.”

“It is no longer Austria against Servia. It is not even the far larger struggle of the great Teuton power against the rising Slav power across the dividing leagues from Finland to the Adriatic. At bottom the war now involving all Europe and menacing the world is humanity's own life struggle. The struggle is for freedom, for national integrity, for free citizenship in a free democracy of the nations. It is the old struggle of the spirit of humanity, liberated, impassioned, against arrogant and privileged autocracy based on the assumption of divine right and enforced by the mailed fist of military power. It is a new stage in the world's fight for freedom.”

“And in that fight all the democracies of the British breed stand shoulder to shoulder. Whig and Tory all agree. The Ulsterman and the Nationalist keep step; Royalist and Radical join hands. French-Canadian and English-Canadian and all the other races who feel the throb of freedom in their blood, stand up, some under the Southern Cross, some under other skies, and they too are counted. Even in Germany itself the millions in whose lives stirs the irresistible impulse of social democracy, though to-day they may be led by
evil counsellors, will to-morrow find their true alliance in the world movement that dethrones all despot and establishes free citizenship in the democracy of all nations. Because it is the world's fight for freedom, Britain reluctantly but resolutely speaks the word, and Canada also answers Ay!"

In a letter to a local paper, Professor F. V. Riethdorf, of Woodstock College, expressed views very similar to those above quoted, with which a considerable number of German residents of Canada appear to agree. He said in part:

"We must deeply sympathize with the German people in the sufferings and dangers brought upon them by their ruling classes, by their oligarchic, insane, military government. It is the Germany of the 'clinched fist' and the 'drawn sword,' of the 'shining armour' and the 'sabre rattling in the scabbard' that calls for no sympathy on our part. It is the Germany that has precipitated the monstrous world struggle of the day that fills us all with horror and indignation. It is for the official Germany and her leader and soul, William II, that we have only detestation, not for the peaceable, kind, amiable, and sane German people. We are at war with the system of Germany, not with the German race."

"I am a native German and former German soldier. My own position in the struggle is perfectly clear. My loyalty to the British flag makes me stand against any and all enemies of Britain. If need be I should even fight against Germany, though with a bleeding heart. Furthermore, I desire disaster to the Germany army in this war, for the reason that it will mean restoration of fellowship among the western nations for one of the greatest peoples of Europe. A liberated, free, democratic Germany will start on a new and lasting era of prosperity, of peace, arm in arm with England and France. Germany's defeat will mean the establishment of a German republic and the elimination of William II and all that he stands for. Such things as 'Divine right' and 'mailed fist' are anachronisms, an insult to the intelligence of the people of the twentieth century. William II is the common foe of Europe, and he must be eliminated. Defeat of Germany in this war means ultimate salvation and freedom for her; Germany will be the greatest gainer through defeat. This is my consolation when I think of the terrible affliction which this war will bring upon her. Victory for the German arms would make William II the war-lord of the world. He would rule Europe with an iron hand. The militarism of the future would be far worse than the militarism of the past, and there would be no end to war and bloodshed."

The emergency session of Parliament, called the "Khaki" session was opened at Ottawa on August 18 by the Duke of Connaught, who, in the speech from the throne, stated the purpose for which Parliament had been called, and expressed his satisfaction at the patriotism and loyalty that had been displayed in every part of the Dominion. In reply, eloquent speeches were made by Mr. Donald Sutherland, Mr. D. O. L'Esperance, Sir
Wilfred Laurier, former Premier of Canada, and Sir Robert Borden, the present Premier. The words of Mr. L'Esperance and Sir Wilfred Laurier were of especial significance as indicating the attitude of the French Canadians toward the war. Mr. L'Esperance said, in closing:

"The defeat of England, the dismemberment of the Empire, would involve for the Canadian the speedy loss of his power, his prosperity, the happiness of his home, his beloved language and his holy religion. The descendants of the brave Frenchmen who colonized Canada, with the Cross on their breast, holding in one hand a gun and with the other guiding a plough, have no fear of war when they come to defend the integrity of the vast empire which assures to them the greatest liberty and happiness that any people ever enjoyed."

Sir Wilfred Laurier said:

"It is our duty to let Great Britain know, and to let the friends and foes of Great Britain know, that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart, and that all Canadians stand behind the Mother Country, conscious and proud that she has engaged in this war, not from any selfish motive, for any purpose of aggrandizement, but to maintain untarnished the honour of her name, to fulfil her obligations to her allies, to maintain her treaty obligations, and to save civilization from the unbridled lust of conquest and power. It will be seen by the world that Canada, a daughter of old England, intends to stand by her in this great conflict. When the call comes our answer goes at once, and it goes in the classical language of the British answer to the call of duty: 'Ready, aye ready.'"

The war session of Parliament lasted only five days, but during that time it took important measures for enabling Canada to participate effectively in the war. It clothed the Governor in Council with war powers; provided for an increase in the issue of Dominion notes; granted power to suspend the redemption of Dominion notes in gold and to declare a moratorium; authorized advances of Dominion notes to the banks on deposit of approved securities; made bank notes legal tender and provided for an emergency circulation; passed a bill to incorporate the Canadian Patriotic Fund; and, finally, it voted a war credit of $50,000,000. There was not a murmur of opposition to any of these measures. On the contrary, members of the Opposition expressed their willingness to vote $100,000,000 if it should be required.

That the liberal grant by Parliament by no means exhausted Canadian generosity may be shown by an enumeration of some of the many contributions that poured in from every part of the country. The Canadian government itself sent 1,000,000 bags of
flour for the British army and made a gift of money to the French government for a hospital of fifty beds. The Province of Ontario gave 250,000 bags of flour; Manitoba, 50,000 bags of flour; Quebec, 4,000,000 pounds of cheese; Alberta, 50,000 bushels of potatoes; and the other provinces made similar gifts. The city of Ottawa gave a battery of quick-firing guns. Mr. J. K. Ross gave $500,000 to be used as the government might see fit. Mr. Hamilton Gault raised a regiment, largely composed of veterans of the South African war, to be known as Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry, and gave $100,000 toward their equipment. Lady Strathcona gave $50,000 toward the maintenance of the Strathcona Horse, a regiment that had distinguished itself in South Africa. A band of seventy Manitoulin Indians voted $500 to the war fund. The Daughters of the Empire voted to raise $100,000 for the equipment of a hospital ship given by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The Canadian Red Cross Society called for gifts of various kinds, including knitted caps, socks, and mufflers for sick and wounded soldiers.

The Canadian Patriotic Fund, organized by the Duke of Connaught on August 18 to provide for the dependent wives, children, and relatives of the soldiers, soon enlisted the sympathy of people in every part of the country. Toronto raised $882,000 for this fund in a “whirlwind campaign” of four days amid scenes of great enthusiasm; and when it was announced at the final meeting in Massey Hall that $100,000 had been pledged by the American Aid Society, five thousand people rose to their feet in a tempest of cheers, waving arms, sticks, hats, and handkerchiefs, calling loudly for Mr. Carlos Warfield, the president of the society. Mr. Warfield said:

“I am sure the people of the United States are with you in this fight. Your feelings are our feelings. We can only pledge ourselves to collect $100,000, but I assure you that we have a million dollars’ worth of sentiment to offer. This is a worthy cause and we American citizens resident in Toronto are proud to take part in this business and share the privileges we have of living among you.”

Another interesting episode at this meeting was the selling by auction of a street-car ticket, the gift of a boy through the Salvation Army. Mr. Noel Marshall at once bid $500; Mr. Jack Eaton raised the bid to $800; and Sir William Mulock, the chairman, bought the ticket at $1000. On October 6 it was announced that the Patriotic fund amounted to over $5,000,000,
of which Montreal had given $2,000,000; Toronto, $983,000; Winnipeg, $564,000; Ottawa, $371,000; and so on, including nearly $100,000 from Berlin, Ontario, the chief centre of German influence in Canada.

From the time of the declaration of war, enlistment and mobilization went on actively under the direction of Colonel the Hon. Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia, and before the end of August about 30,000 men were encamped on the slopes of the Laurentians at Valcartier. They were as fine a body of recruits as one could wish to see, not boys, but full-grown men between the ages of twenty and thirty, tall, athletic, clean-looking fellows with pleasant faces and friendly ways. It is said that more than a thousand of them were graduates or students of McGill, Toronto, Quebec, Dalhousie, and other Canadian universities, and all appeared to be alert, intelligent, and well-educated men who would need comparatively little of the training and whipping into shape usually administered to raw recruits. Indeed, they had already received a good deal of training as members of various militia regiments in the United Kingdom or in Canada; many of them had seen service in South Africa; and all could shoot, as was shown at the rifle ranges, where unusually high scores were made. They were gathered from all parts of Canada, from the Lower Provinces, from Quebec and Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and the distant Yukon, all of them volunteers and all eager to go to the front. There were Canadians of various races, but chiefly British, Irish, and French, with some citizens of the United States. The most conspicuous of all, because of their dress and their inimitable swagger, were the Highland regiments; and as they marched along to the skirl of the bagpipes, with their kilts and tartans, their bonnets and bare legs, in all their pride and glory, it was evident that the MacDonals, MacPhersons, MacGregors, MacIntoshes, MacFarlanes, Camerons, Frasers, Campbells, Gordons, and all the rest of the present generation, were worthy descendants of the clansmen who fought at Killiecrankie and Culloden. An amusing outbreak of the ancestral spirit occurred when the men from Nova Scotia, fearing that they were to be distributed among strange regiments, declared that they would go back home if they could not be organized in units of their own and fight shoulder to shoulder with their brother Scots.

There was some delay in getting the contingent ready to sail,
for when the call came Canada was by no means prepared for war, and there was lack of artillery, rifles, ammunition, clothes, and other equipment. Besides, a large fleet of transports and convoys had to be assembled, which for a time were not available, presumably because they were being used for transporting British troops and for the Indian contingent. Then, too, there were rumours of German cruisers in the North Atlantic and even in the Gulf, and doubtless other difficulties were in the way. The Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, commanded by Colonel F. D. Farquhar, sailed from Montreal by the steamer *Megantic* on August 30, expecting to go direct to the front, but when they reached Quebec they were ordered ashore and sent into camp at Levis, and there was almost a mutiny when they heard the news. So the main contingent at Valcartier and "Princess Pat's Pets" at Levis were kept in camp for several weeks, where they got a valuable training in marching, drilling, shooting, digging, and other military duties, became accustomed to sleeping on the ground and all the other hardships of army life short of actual service at the front.

Soon after the middle of September active preparations for transportation were made, and by the end of the month the contingent had embarked at Quebec and sailed down the river to Gaspé Bay, where they were met by a strong fleet of warships under Admiral Wemyss, ready to convoy them across the ocean. On the afternoon of October 3 they sailed out of Gaspé Bay, thirty-one transports carrying 32,000 men and 7,000 horses, besides a complete equipment for the entire contingent. Not the least important part of the freight were a hundred nurses of the Canadian Red Cross Society. The Canadian troop-ships were joined at Gaspé by the steamer *Canada*, with the Lincolnshires, an English regiment from Bermuda, and at sea they were joined by the *Florizel*, with 650 men from Newfoundland. There were in all about forty ships with between 40,000 and 50,000 men on board, including the crews of both transports and warships. It was the largest force that had ever been moved across the ocean in a single convoy. They sailed in three columns a mile and a half apart, with a warship at the head of each column and the transports following in line at intervals of half a mile. Other warships brought up the rear and there were still others scouting in the distance. The greatest possible care was taken to conceal the movements of the fleet. No ships were allowed to pass
near their course. At night all windows were blanketed and only sidelights and sternlights were showing. The weather was magnificent during the whole voyage, and the ships sailed all the way across the ocean without changing their order, except once, when a man fell overboard and there was a slight delay until he was picked up. The fleet was bound for Southampton, but shortly after sighting Eddystone Lighthouse the Admiral received sudden orders to steam full speed ahead to Plymouth. It is said that this order was given because of German submarines which had been seen lurking near the Isle of Wight. However that may be, the Canadian Armada sailed into Plymouth Sound on October 14, and the contingent was landed without the loss of a single man.

The first contingent did not go to the front at once, but went into training in Salisbury Plain under command of Major-General E. A. H. Alderson. Meanwhile, active preparations were being made in Canada for a second contingent of 22,000 men, which should include a regiment exclusively composed of French-Canadians, of whom about 2500 had already gone with the first contingent but had not been organized into units of their own. The proposal was received with great enthusiasm throughout the country. Dr. Arthur Mignault of Montreal made a gift of $50,000 toward the equipment, and offered his services as a surgeon. Enlistment was fairly rapid, and it was presently proposed to raise a brigade of at least 4000 instead of a single regiment. Very soon it was evident that a second contingent comprising an army division would not be the last of Canada's contributions, and that recruiting would be continuously carried on until the end of the war was well in sight. It was therefore decided that a considerable force should be kept in training and that reinforcements of 10,000 or 15,000 at a time should be sent abroad as fast as they were ready. If the war is prolonged for another year, there can be no doubt that Canada will send at least 100,000 men to the front, or even 200,000, if there should be urgent need.

The attachment of Canada to the British Empire, while it may seem extraordinary to outsiders, appears to Canadians to be the simplest and most natural thing in the world, so simple, indeed, as to be hard to explain. It is the same in kind, if not in degree, as the attachment of Californians to the United States or the affection of settlers in Siberia for Holy Russia. The fact that there are two races in Canada makes no essential difference in the
situation. The English Canadians, it is true, have ties of kinship, language, tradition, and religion that bind them to the Mother Country, but the French Canadians have similar relations to France which count for comparatively little. There is absolutely no desire on the part of Canadians for a reunion with France, for it is France of the old régime that they love and the memory of the past which they cherish. While there is a certain sentimental value in the alliance between France and England in the present war, the French Canadians are not fighting for France, and certainly not for Servia, Russia, nor even Belgium; but for England, the protector of their liberties, their language, and their religion, and for the integrity of the British Empire. And the loyalty of the English Canadians even, especially the native-born, is not based chiefly upon ties of kinship and tradition, although these count for something, but upon the solid foundation of liberty and prosperity without which the beautiful superstructure of sentiment which all patriotic souls admire and love could never have been built. To change the figure, the British colonial policy adopted after the American Revolution is the good soil in which grows the full-eared corn of national wealth and independence and the gracious flowers of loyalty and love. In patriotism of this type both French and English share, with Germans also, and strangers from many lands; and they are loyal, not so much to England, Wales, Scotland, or Ireland, or the whole United Kingdom, as to the great Empire of which they are a part. Moreover, they no longer think of Canada as a colony, but as a full-grown member of a family of nations; and they do not think of themselves as colonials, but as Canadians and British citizens. Yet when they try to realize what the British family of nations is, and what British citizenship means, they turn instinctively to the Mother Land, the source and centre of the whole, even as the Jews of old, dispersed among the Gentiles, turned with longing and love to Jerusalem.

Canada is a fortunate country and has every reason to be strongly attached to the Empire. Under the British flag Canadians have enjoyed liberties unknown under the old French régime. Because of the British connection they escaped the horrors of the French Revolution and yet obtained all the benefits which the Revolution brought to France. No attempt was made to abolish the language and religion of the people; on the contrary, they were favoured in every way. The influx of settlers
from the British Isles did much to develop the country, to make a more varied and interesting life, and to create opportunities of advancement for all the people. There was no taxation for imperial purposes, no interference with trade, and after a time such a degree of self-government was granted that Canada became what she is to-day—a republic in all but the name. England is a free-trade country; but Canada has a protective tariff, and imposes duties on goods imported from England and foreign countries alike, except where a slight preference is granted to British goods by favour of the Canadian Parliament. England maintains an army and a great navy at enormous expense; while Canada has made no regular contribution to imperial defence, but only free-will offerings, as during the South African War and at the present time. England has had many serious problems to solve since the fall of Napoleon, and many heavy burdens to bear; but Canada has had a hundred years of peace, has been able to devote all her efforts to the development of her vast resources, and has enjoyed so much of liberty, security, opportunity, and prosperity that it would be hard to find a country more favoured in all the world.

Besides all this there are considerations of sentiment that appeal more strongly to both French and English as the years go by, uniting them in their love for their native land, their pride in the Empire, and their glory in bearing the British name—sentiments which interfere not at all with racial or religious sympathies and are quite consistent with a reasonable amount of local jealousies and factional disputes. French and English may have their racial points of view; Catholics and Protestants their religious differences; Conservatives and Liberals their political quarrels; there may be protectionists and free-traders, single-taxers and socialists, capitalists and labourers; but when the Mother Country is at war and the Empire is in danger there are neither races, sects, parties, nor factions any more, but only loyal Canadians and citizens of the Empire ready to fight to the death for their liberties and their name, in the hope that tyranny may be overthrown, that freedom may be established, and that the Pax Britannica may come again.

It was not the cause of Servia that enlisted Canada in the war. It was not the invasion of Belgium, the destruction of Louvain, or the sufferings of the Belgian people that aroused the fighting spirit of Canada. It was not even the fear that France
would be invaded by German armies, although the thought of that deeply stirred many a Canadian heart. But when it was perceived that England was menaced by a powerful enemy and that the blow long deferred was about to be struck at the heart of the Empire, the thought of that danger passed in a wave of sympathy and indignation from the centre to the remotest bounds, and everywhere the vital forces of the Empire gathered to resist the shock. Fifteen years before, the minor danger of the South African War brought Canada to England’s aid, and six small contingents were sent to the front; but now it was not a question of the loss of a single colony but of the very existence of the Empire, and Canada instinctively felt, not only that England was in peril, but that her own life was at stake.

The fate of Belgium was an object lesson that Canada quickly took to heart. The disaster that had come to Belgium to-day might be the fate of England to-morrow, of Canada the day after. The calamity, so often foretold by prophets of evil, that once seemed remote and improbable, was now very close and threatening. Few dared to look into the black depths of the war cloud, but those who did saw a vision so terrible that their souls were filled with sadness and dismay. They saw England invaded by a hostile army, England, that had scarcely seen the face of an invader for eight hundred and fifty years. They saw her fleet destroyed, her soldiers killed, her cities burned, her temples ruined, her shrines desecrated, her wealth confiscated, her prosperity gone, her Empire broken, her liberties crushed, her name despised, her pride humbled in the dust. And after that; yes, and before the final act of the tragedy they saw Canada with all the British dominions fall to the victor as the spoils of war. A foreign flag was flying over the citadel of Quebec; the warships of a foreign power were riding at anchor in the harbour; foreign garrisons were in all the cities from Halifax to Vancouver; a foreign government was enthroned at Ottawa; a foreign bureaucracy ruled throughout the length and breadth of the land; foreign judges administered a foreign law; a foreign language was taught in the schools; foreign ideals were set up in high places; foreign taxation, conscription, and the curse of militarism were established on Canadian soil. Germany had found her place in the sun, but the light of Canada was extinguished forever.

Even those who saw most clearly the terrible possibilities of the war could not dwell upon them, but set themselves with all
their might to remove the menace by taking up arms against it. But the majority of the people, who give little thought to such questions, were slow to realize the danger and could hardly understand why they were asked to make great sacrifices to avert it. There were those, it must be confessed, who would have had Canada stand aside and let England fight the battle alone, but fortunately these were few in number and had but little influence at the time. What they had in mind as to the probable future of Canada in the case of the defeat of England it is hard to say. Independence, which they had formerly advocated, would not then be possible, and it is a question whether the United States would or could step between the victor and the spoils of war.

It is to the everlasting credit of Canada that there was little of that sort of talk at such a time. If there was any holding back, it was on the part of those who did not understand and could not believe that England and the Empire were in serious danger, or who had such confidence in the wisdom and power of England that they could not imagine that her plans might fail and her defences be broken down. Before the beginning of the conflict they trusted that the superb diplomacy of Sir Edward Grey would avert the war. When England threw her sword into the scales, Belgium would be saved and the enemy driven back. When the little English army reached the battle line at Mons the tide of invasion would begin to ebb. When the Germans were hacking their way toward Paris it was only a question of time when the English would take the offensive and crumple them like a piece of paper. When it seemed that Paris must fall, that would be only a temporary reverse, for England had not yet begun to fight. When the enemy was forced back in the battle of the Marne, that was to be expected with England in the game. And now that winter is over and the end is not yet there are a million men in training in England, and the army that will take the field in the spring of 1915 will sweep all before it. Such faith is magnificent, sublime, if supported by the power and the will to bring strong and immediate aid; but if it implies that England can win without the help of Canada and the other dominions of the Empire it is the height of fatuity and folly.

Canada, like England, is hard to arouse. She is courageous, but not warlike. She has enjoyed so many years of peace that she has well-nigh lost the power to think in terms of war. She is so prosperous that she cannot imagine that her wealth may be
taken away. She is so peaceful in all her ways that she does not know what militarism is. She has such faith in the goodness of humanity that she cannot conceive that any nation should wish to do her harm. In the shade of her oaks and maples, or floating on the placid bosom of her lakes and rivers, she has been dreaming of universal peace, forgetting that there are warlike nations in the world and that the most peaceful and happy country may be trampled by the invaders' feet unless her sons arise to defend their native land. But now these dreams are gone, and Canada, awake to her duty and her danger, is prepared to make the greatest sacrifice and to put forth the utmost effort for the sake of all that she holds most dear and for the sacred cause of peace.

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