

Speech by G. F. Towers, Chairman of
National War Finance Committee, to
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While I have had the pleasure of speaking to Winnipeg audiences on earlier occasions, this is my first opportunity to do so in the capacity of General Chairman of the National War Finance Committee. Being here to-day as successor to Mr. Spinney reminds me of a scene in a play I saw a few years ago. A newly elected President of the United States was looking up at the portrait of a great ex-President. "I hope", he said to the famous man's granddaughter, "That I shall be able to fill your grandfather's shoes". "I have no doubt you will", she replied, "but that wasn't the end of grandfather that mattered".

As the new Chairman of the National War Finance Committee, I can only hope that I shall be able to replace the end of Mr. Spinney that mattered. We are fortunate in having in National War Finance Committee an organization that is successfully and soundly established - that is agreed by many to be one of the best organizations of its kind in the world to-day. Needless to say, the success of the Victory Loan operations which have been conducted by the Committee depends upon the people themselves - the Committee serves merely to direct and stimulate the desire of Canadians to play their part. The Fifth Victory Loan, which opens next Monday, October 18th, provides another challenge and another opportunity. We have

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every confidence that public support will again rally enthusiastically to the Loan to carry us over the top in this campaign.

There is no new story to tell you about this Victory Loan - no story that you haven't heard before. The plan facts are, first, that Canada needs your money - has to have your money to win a war that isn't news to you because it's been going on for more than four years. Second, that Victory Bonds, for you personally, are a good investment. Third, that it's your duty to lend your money to back up the men who are giving their lives.

If you were saying what you thought, you might get up and shout, "The same old stuff!" - and that's what it is. Nor am I apologizing for it. As Journalist John Kieran explained to his readers: "We know all these things, but occasionally we forget them and it's necessary to keep reminding ourselves. If it sometimes seems that the shouting about it is a little annoying, a little loud, remember that not the loudest shout can wake the dead who went out with our fighting forces."

There are many things about which it is necessary for us Canadians to keep reminding ourselves and shouting about. Although we've known it for so long - perhaps because we've known it for so long - we must keep reminding ourselves that we're at war. We knew it at Dunkirk - we knew it when the Battle of Britain blazed - we, and you in Winnipeg most of all, knew it when Hong Kong fell. Defeat and despair sharpened our minds to it and it was not until the tide turned at Stalingrad and El

Alamein a year ago now that we had any reprieve.

I think it is worth while at this stage of the war to look back at the happenings of the last four years. Perhaps in doing so we can gain a perspective which will give us some help in determining future policy and in recognizing some of the qualities which are essential to success either in war or in peace.

Remember first the period from September, 1939, to April or May of 1940. - the Maginot Line war - the so-called phoney war. We soon discovered there was nothing very phoney about the war so far as the Germans were concerned. On the home front in Canada there was somewhat of a feeling of unreality during the first nine months of the struggle. "Where was the total war?" people asked. "Where the sacrifices?" Almost everything was in plentiful supply, and the standard of living rose. A few controls were introduced, but they did not really affect the man in the street. That was true even of foreign exchange control, which hit us on September 16th, 1939, because at that time exchange control did not involve any prohibition of pleasure travel.

Then the curtain rose in Europe, and suddenly we saw what total war might mean, not only to the Czechoslovaks or to the Poles, but to us. It is hard to believe that only a little over three years ago Mr. Churchill was saying:

"We shall never surrender and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of

it were subjugated and starving, then our empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, will carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World, with all its power and might, sets forth to the liberation and rescue of the Old."

So we had to contemplate the possibility of Britain falling, and the necessity of carrying on the battle from other parts of the Empire. In the midst of other things, we had to try to make some plans for that eventuality. If you had asked the vast majority of Canadians at that time whether we were going to win or lose the war, they would unhesitatingly have answered that we were going to win. But I am sure that none of us knew just how we were going to manage it. Our confidence was an act of faith. The defence of Britain was a sublime act of faith. Hurricanes and Spitfires, and the incomparable few who piloted them, could not have prevailed had they not been supported by the courage and single-mindedness of the people of Britain. Let me add that in my humble opinion the wisest and in its way the most courageous of all acts of faith at that time was the decision to defend Suez and the Middle East at all costs - a decision taken by a country which did not seem to have the wherewithal to defend itself. If Britain had yielded to the temptation of playing safe, of not attempting too much, the war would in all probability have been lost. There is something to be remembered either in war or peace - that it's the courageous policy that brings a country out on top.

In Canada, we really commenced to get busy in the summer of 1940. So far as the Canadian people were concerned, we couldn't do too much. In their opinion, no governmental plan for expansion of our war effort went too far. The public wanted action, and they wanted it fast. Knowing that an all-out war effort must involve shortages for civilians, rationing and controls of all kinds, many people felt irritated - even ashamed in a way - that shortages and controls were so slow in coming. We were ready to think the worst of ourselves and our war effort. Remember the stories we heard at that time. You know the rumours I mean - rumours that no guns were coming off our assembly lines, no ships were being launched, no planes were in the air - in spite of all the sound and fury of our factories. Some of these rumours may have had truth in them. It takes a long time to tool up a factory - to start from rough woods and crude ores and turn out the fine precision instruments of modern warfare. We were impatient with delay - and that was good. We wanted no nonsense, no half measures - and that was right. We established ourselves as a people who were wholeheartedly behind this war, who - once we were in it - wanted to put all we had into the fighting of it to win it. It was that spirit - criticism arising out of eagerness and determination - that has brought Canada's war effort to the peak at which it operates today.

As we made progress in increasing production, the shortages and controls came quickly enough. By the autumn of

1941, general wage and price control came into effect, and what has happened since that time in the field of controls has mainly been an effort to maintain them. All through this period, through 1942 and early 1943, the main worry continued to be whether we were going fast enough and far enough. Controls were irritating, taxation was high - but never mind, the main concern was to increase the strength and improve the equipment of our armed forces, and to provide arms and supplies to our Allies so that the long, unhappy humiliating years of defeats and defensive action could be brought to an end. The various Victory Loan slogans were milestones on that road. "Nothing matters now but Victory", we said in the autumn of 1942. "Back the Attack", was the spirit of the spring of 1943. We have backed the attack, and this time we are out to Speed the Victory.

I think Canadians are not naturally a boastful people - not given to sudden wild enthusiasms. I remember in *THE* early part of this war talking to the editor of a United States publication which had decided to maintain its own representative in Canada, but after some experience had withdrawn him. I asked the editor why he had had this change of heart. His answer was that it seemed impossible to secure enough news of the eye-catching, stirring type which his paper was accustomed to print. "You know," he said, "I have no doubt you Canadians are a very fine people, but you are not an exciting people." Well, we may not be exciting in the way which the editor had in mind, but I think we are entitled to find some excitement and to take some

pride in the accomplishments of the last three and a half years - great pride in the skill and courage of our men in the Forces, and no small satisfaction in the production record of our farms and factories.

When we were faced with the necessity of greatly expanding our production and of devoting a large portion of it to the war effort alone, we knew that there were bound to be shortages of labour, of materials, of many food stuffs and consumers goods. We knew that it would be extraordinarily difficult to organize our affairs so that these shortages would not produce confusion and chaos. Many people thought that it couldn't be done. No one could look ahead and say exactly how it could be accomplished over a period of years. By peace-time standards, as we have known them in the past, there was every legitimate reason for not attempting to do too much. A little here, and a little there, could have been tried, and the inadequate results blamed on circumstances. It could have been said that the public wouldn't stand for controls or real self-denial, that every group in the community would insist on its right to exploit the bargaining power which flows from shortages. Instead of that, Canada took the apparently hard road, chose the more daring approach, and in so doing made it possible for us to play a part in the war immeasurably more effective than anything we could have done if we had been forced to struggle in the whirlpool of inflation. The public supported this policy - otherwise it would have failed.

Now, here we are with this solid record behind us, entering the fifth year of the war - with victory not yet won, not even around the next corner, but on the way. After victory come the problems of peace and reconstruction. This is indeed a testing period. I think myself that the tests we face now are, in their way, infinitely more difficult than any we have faced and overcome in the past. In these past years to which I have been referring, fear of losing the war provided a great stimulus. It helped to bring unity, determination, willingness to shoulder burdens and to forget personal and selfish considerations. We must replace that fear stimulus by something better. We must replace it by the concept of a Canada which has the intestinal fortitude to finish this war on the home front just as unitedly and effectively as our men in the Forces will finish it in the front line. For if we don't, what happens? Think of the present position from Hitler's point of view. Where can his remaining hopes lie? Most obviously in the development of disunity - not only disunity between the United Nations, but also disunity within each nation. And what is there more likely to foment this disunity, and the war weariness and slackening of effort which accompany it, than irritation over personal inconveniences or restraints, or growing concentration on the gains to be won by individuals and groups as distinct from the community as a whole.

More and more we must realize that the war is not the over-simplified tournament of the cartoon, with the three

wicked but rather comic characters of Hitler, Musso and Tojo. In fact, we have just seen how easily one of these gentlemen can slip into oblivion with no earth-shaking crash, with scarcely a squeak. The real war is far deeper and more complex. We know that war means the visible destruction of life and property, and the less visible but cruel starvation and torture of mind and body. But, in addition to these concrete things, war imposes stresses and strains which deeply affect the life of every economy and every society - which aggravate to the breaking point the frictions and conflicts between special groups, and which can even poison men's minds against their fellow citizens. Hitler, from the beginning, has realized that war was not merely a matter of men and materials, but rather that ideas could be sown to weaken his enemies behind their lines. The ^{UNLEASHING} ~~unleashing~~ of these evil forces has been, and still is, Hitler's "secret weapon" - a far deadlier weapon than "flying tanks" or "invisible poisoned gas". This Fifth Column is an enemy which we must guard against not only now in the heat of battle, but even after we have obtained unconditional surrender. For the Fifth Column of disunity goes on fighting when the open enemy has laid down his arms; and in this field, as sure as night follows day, are the seeds of the next war.

When peace comes, we need to have in our minds an image of a post-war Canada which will be as daring, as united, and as unquarrelsome as the fighting Canada of the war period. After the war is over, the present driving stimulus to maximum

employment and production will be removed. If we are to maintain full employment in peace-time, we must substitute other objectives for the current will to win the war. Broadly speaking, our goal should be to achieve a rising standard of living, and to contribute to the establishment of a world economy which will remove the threat of war. A great deal of work and thought is needed to translate such generalities into real facts. But much more than the work and thought of individuals is required. If we are to succeed, I feel that we must have the same broad measure of public support, of daring and progressive policies, that has been back of our efforts to win the war.

I dwell on this because we cannot over-emphasize the necessity of following through with the job in the same spirit we started it. Plain, ordinary staying power is necessary - not only to do our part in bringing the war to a decisive and early finish, but as a token of our will and capacity to build a better Canada after. This Loan is a test of our staying power, and war is a rigorous judge. The Loan gives Canadians another opportunity to show that they can speed the victory as well as they backed the attack. Most of those who are listening are not going to have the chance to do anything spectacular in this war. We civilians have no prospects of reaching Berlin or Tokyo on the Victory march. But we continue to have the duty of providing supplies to the men who are doing the job. Every day that passes, they are being called on to do more. We can't do less. And what we have to do continues to call for the all-out

effort of every Canadian man and woman.

What is an all-out effort? Is subscription to at least \$1,200,000,000 of the Fifth Victory Loan an unreasonable or impossible objective? On the contrary, the resources are ~~there to permit~~ that total, and more than that total, to be reached. The extent to which we should respond to the call is a matter to be decided by each one of us personally. It depends on our own estimate of our responsibility in this war - on our own individual conscience and circumstances. That is the democratic system, and, all dictators to the contrary notwithstanding, the system works. On the occasion of the last Loan it produced subscriptions from well over two million individual Canadians. These individuals, as distinct from corporations, bought \$528,000,000 out of the over-all total of \$1,308,000,000. This time I would like to see a still larger number of individual Canadians buy a still larger amount of bonds.

In Manitoba, you have a noteworthy record. In the Fourth Victory Loan you obtained subscriptions from some 159,000 individuals, amounting to over \$25,500,000 out of your over-all total of nearly \$90,000,000. This represented one subscription for every four and a half persons in the Province, and I understand from Mr. Sellers that you are headed for a substantial increase in the number of subscribers to the Fifth Victory Loan to raise even more than in the last Loan.

When our people are deciding how many bonds they

will buy; I hope they won't be afraid to be sentimental. I hope they will ^{ASK} ~~ask~~ themselves what Canada means to them - as their home, their life, their memories and their future. And they can be practical as well as sentimental if they think of the Victory bonds they buy as equivalent to money in the bank - as something to fall back on in an emergency. For individuals, Victory bonds are many things in disguise. For one, they are a new home after the war; for another, a new car; and for still others, the education of a family. For Canadians as a whole, Victory bonds are equally important - they are a stake in this Dominion. And to Canadian workers and Canadian industries they are a back-log of purchasing power to assist in the days of reestablishment after the war. They combine self-interest and the national interest, and that is a combination which can't be beaten. Those of us who are connected with the Victory Loan organization need feel no hesitation in urging our fellow citizens, whether they are in comfortable circumstances or of limited means, to buy as little as possible of everything - except Victory bonds. Of these, they cannot buy too much for their own and their country's good.

I have avoided the word "sacrifice". It seems to me to be a very distorted use of the word in connection with an opportunity to make a first-class investment, and in relation to what other peoples are enduring. But it does not seem to be unreasonable for the country to ask for some measure of restraint, for some actual foregoing of comfort and amenities.

This is one way in which we on the home front are being tested for our fortitude, for our devotion to our country, and faith in our cause. Surely there can be no doubt that the Canadian people are tough enough to meet the challenge. The Fifth Victory Loan is our opportunity. Pledge your earnings - lend your savings. Let us make this our country's biggest war-time financial effort - let the results give the clearest proof of our national will to victory.