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“FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS”

By LIEUT-COL. WILLIAM J. DEADMAN, V.D.*

I thank my friend for the warmth of his introduction. I am, it is true, a native Canadian, who, to the best of his limited capacity, has, in war and peace, tried to serve his Canada, Commonwealth and Empire. I have lived through the days when Canadians took pride in their British citizenship. I should not care to live to see official Canada renounce British citizenship, thereby setting up a new generation of United Empire Loyalists. I speak as a “native son” of Canada, who takes his loyalty to his country and his Sovereign seriously and who has tried to render more than lip-service. I have small patience with a type of “little Canadian,” who demands, on occasion, an alien national anthem, and an alien flag, and who feels embarrassed that the Queen’s Own Rifles should be recognized as British troops. With sublime ignorance of the issues involved, or of the lessons of history, the “little Canadian” presumes to sit in judgment on the two mother countries, for taking action, long overdue, when the “bitter cup” had been proffered once too often. Should the philosophy of the “little Canadian” prevail, Canada’s potentially proud position in the Commonwealth would sink into an oblivion which might well usher in a new Dark Age.

Perhaps, I should not presume to discuss with you international problems as they relate to the Middle East. I have not been in the Middle East for forty years. I did, however, spend some four years, around the Eastern end of the Mediterranean during World War I, two of which were spent in Egypt, with eight months in Port Said. At that time, Lawrence of Arabia was doing his work, and the prestige of the West, mainly represented by Britain and France, was high. The

*An address to the members of the Hamilton and District Officers Institute, at Hamilton, December 3, 1956.

knowledge gained of the Arabs and their world and of the workings of the Oriental mind, gave me a continuing interest in events in the Middle East, with perhaps, a clearer insight into their long-term implications. Kipling wrote, "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet." This is still true, if one compares the philosophy and the mental processes of the oriental with those of the Western world. A basic concept of western civilization is the "sacredness of contracts and of treaties." The behaviour of Russia and of the Arab world in this respect amply bears out Kipling's dictum. The tragedy of the situation is that such behaviour has come to be accepted without effective protest by the so-called "United" Nations and by certain units of the English-speaking world, when they, mistakenly, assume that *their* interests are not involved.

Nothing that I may say on this occasion is in any sense based on party politics. I have been a public servant all my professional life and, as such, have eschewed political activity. My political philosophy is known only to my more intimate friends. Any criticism made of the Government of Canada is a criticism of the Government, and not of the Liberal party per se. So far as I am concerned, the criticism would be just the same should a Conservative, C.C.F. or Social Credit Government stand in its place. The present crisis is much too serious in its implications to be treated as a political issue. It must have shocked millions of Canadians, Liberal and Conservative, French-speaking and English-speaking, to note the slurring remarks of Canada's Prime Minister, regarding France and Britain, our two mother countries, who, at long last, on behalf of us all, "took their stand for freedom as in the olden time." I, for one, had hoped that the mantle of that great Canadian leader and patriot, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, had fallen on the shoulders of our present Prime Minister, apparently a vain hope. Only the Canadian people can repair the damage to our prestige, occasioned by the Prime Minister's ill advised remarks, unworthy of any Canadian statesman.

Nor have I any personal prejudice regarding Israelis or Americans. I have many Jewish friends and have had many Jewish students, whose friendship I value highly. I recognize the extraordinary contributions made by Jews to scientific medicine. Too, I have many American friends, belong to many American scientific Societies, and have greatly benefitted from these Associations, but the official United States attitude toward a chain of events which has brought the free world again

to its Munich, a Munich fraught with every whit as much danger to the United States future as to our own, irritates me no less than it irritates millions of American citizens. The vital interests of Britain and France are the immediate vital interests of Canada, and are certainly no less the vital interests of the United States and the western world in general. It was pathetic, if not tragic, at the time of Nassar's rape of the Suez Canal, to hear the United States Secretary for Defense voice the opinion that this was a European affair, of little interest or importance to his country. It was no less tragic to read in the Canadian Press shortly thereafter a statement by our own Minister of Defense expressing a similar sentiment on our behalf, and, by inference, suggesting that what happens to the Commonwealth in other parts of the world, is of little or no concern to this part of it. Even though our neighbor chooses, like Nero, to “fiddle while Rome burns,” Canada cuts a poor figure “playing second fiddle.”

I am told that an increasing number of Jewish citizens of the free world are beginning to question the wisdom of the setting up of a Jewish political entity in the bosom of the Arab world, and entity whose rapidly increasing population inevitably creates pressure for “lebensraum.” The United Nations and the United States, in 1947, committed the Western world to the establishment of Israel, and, by inference, to its support. Adequate support failed and, as a result, some 900,000 refugees in the neighboring Arab states have, for many years, been “on a dole,” from United Nations funds. These displaced persons furnish an ever present source of irritation to the Arab world. They naturally reject the suggestion that they should have either remained as aliens without vote, in a Jewish state, or have become naturalized citizens of Israel. The United Nations “dole” does little to appease either the refugees or their resentful hosts. There is no evidence of any change of heart on the part of Egypt or of the Arab world, either in the matter of the resolve to exterminate Israel, or that of the accentuation of the hatred of the West. The situation reflects no credit on the United Nations but is “made to order” for Russian diplomacy.

The audience tonight is an exceptional one. It is representative of 618,000 Canadians, who fought for King and country in World War I, leaving 60,000 of their number “in Flanders fields;” and of more than a million Canadians, who, in World War II, “took up the torch,” fought, bled and died for Canada, Commonwealth and Empire, leaving some 40,000 of *their* number in “some corner of a foreign land which is forever Canada.”

There must be nearly a million survivors of this mighty host who can have little respect for a Prime Minister capable of such slurring remarks about their two mother countries, at a time, when they, almost alone, sensed the coming of a second Munich and took appropriate action; or for an "abstaining" representative at the United Nations.

On another occasion Churchill said,—“We are in the presence of a disaster of the first Magnitude.” There seems, as yet, to be no adequate realization of this fact south of the border, and, certainly, a very tardy realization of it here. The parallel between the events of the past few years in the Middle East and those of the years preceding the first Munich, is frightening. The “cold war,” in type closely parallels that of Hitler. Today we have a puppet Hitler at Cairo, who has even written his own “Mein Kampf,” and who shows even greater truculence than did Hitler. But Hitler was backed by 80 million thoroughly efficient Germans. Nassar is backed by 200 million equally efficient Russians, for his own 23 million Egyptians are hopelessly incapable of re-establishing an Egyptian Empire comparable to that of 1700 B.C. and after. The 40 million citizens of the Arab world are equally incapable of re-enacting the imperial days of the seventh century A.D., when Islam spread its gospel with fire and sword over much of the then known world. This puppet Hitler bases his truculence on the support of a Russia, which already dominates one-third of the world’s population, and whose clear cut objective appears to be to dominate it all. The futility of the “United” Nations, in the face of this threat, is too terribly reminiscent of the “decline and fall” of the late League of Nations, which collapsed when faced with a real problem. If the activities of the United Nations “Police” Force are to be subject to the direction of the puppet Hitler at Cairo, General Burns and his Nassar-picked troops might well be classified as “expendable.”

Our Minister for External Affairs says that the crisis “nearly split the Commonwealth.” You and I know that the crisis merely revealed, like a flash of lightning in darkness, the extent to which the “splitting process” had progressed over the past twenty-five years, culminating as it did, in Canada’s “abstention” when the call came to “stand up and be counted.” Over that period Canada’s official attitude to the Commonwealth seemed, at times, to be reminiscent of a slogan current during World War II, “The Commonwealth if necessary (to us), but not necessarily a Commonwealth.” An abstaining member of the Commonwealth, at a time of crisis, is a doubtful asset.

I have recently read an address by a rather well-known public figure and his comment seemed to me to fit admirably the present situation. He said, “We are confused. I know of no confusion on the part of the enemy. They pursue their path toward sombre and impressive objections with ruthless consistency and purpose. They know what they want, and *who can deny that they are getting what they want.* When I look back upon the last five or six years, I discern many lost chances when we could have made a stand against the dangers, and when we could have perhaps prevented the evils that have come upon us.” Could one have a clearer picture of the present, situation. The time, however, was January 1938, and the speaker was Winston Churchill, discussing the resignation of Anthony Eden, who, then as now, was surfeited with appeasement. How little we learn from history.

And at Munich, Churchill said,—“We have passed an awful milestone in our history. The terrible words have been pronounced against the Western democracies, ‘Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.’ This is a foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless, by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial valor, we again rise and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time.”

And, at the same time, to our American friends he said, “Far away, happily protected by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, you, the people of the United States, are the spectators, and may I add, the increasingly involved spectators, of these tragedies and crimes. Will you wait until British and French freedom have succumbed and then take up the cause when it is three-quarters ruined, yourselves alone?” How true of today! How history repeats itself! How little we learn from history!

We hear, today, much vapid criticism of imperialism and colonialism. We have to listen in the United Nations assembly to *thunderings* about the imperialism of Britain and France and, at the same time, to *whisperings* about the ruthless imperialism of Russia where her satellites are concerned. The world in general, and the Western world in particular, owes well-nigh everything to the existence, in history, of three great Empires. The Athenian Empire of the fifth century, B.C., set standards of culture, of government and of democracy, which have never been excelled and which have come down to us as the very basis of our civilization. The Roman Empire of the first 200 years of the Christian era, consolidated Greek learning and culture and set standards of legislation, engineer-

ing and military organization and the administration of justice, which gave to the world other things, one of its rare eras of peace, the "Pax Romana." The British Empire of the eighteenth century and after has given the world the British idea of democracy, as the applied form of Christianity, of the dignity and rights of the common citizen, of "British justice" and the principle of the education and development of native races toward self-government and independence. For two centuries, it "took up the white man's burden;" too often, to

"reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better
The hate of those ye guard"

Canada may well be proud to have been a "colony" in such an Empire and to be able now to share in its traditions.

I was intrigued some years ago by the title of a best-selling novel of that day, "For Whom the Bell Tolls." I find that this phrase was taken from the writings of an English poet and essayist of the seventeenth century, John Donne. In one of his essays he wrote, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, just as if a promontory were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind and, therefore, never send to find for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee."

The bell is tolling violently in the Middle East today. It has been tolling there, from time to time, for the past forty years. It has been tolling for Canadians.

It began to toll in 1917, with the Balfour declaration, which stated "His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment of a national home in Palestine for the Jewish people. Nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish peoples." Well-intentioned, it, however, failed to take account of the work of Lawrence of Arabia, or of the reaction of the Arab world. Rightly or wrongly, we accepted a mandate for Palestine, supervising an influx of Jewish people into the heart of the Arab world and incurring, not only the mounting hatred of the Arab world, but as well the truculence and treachery of the Jews themselves, culminating in assassination of British troops and in the murder of the United Nations envoy, Count Bernadotte; and this, by the beneficiaries of the Balfour declaration.

The bell tolled again in 1947, when we gave up the mandate and when the United Nations and the United States set

up the political state of Israel and at the same time created the problem of nearly a million refugees, saddled upon the surrounding Arab states, a problem for which the United Nations finds no solution save “the dole” and which now appears to be a perennial irritation to the whole Arab world. The Arab response was the futile war of 1948, resulting in a humiliating defeat for the Egyptian forces and in an extension of the borders of Israel. The natural outcome was an accentuation of the hatred of the Arab for his erstwhile friends of the West and an avowed determination to exterminate Israel. The bell tolled loudly for the Commonwealth and the West.

It tolled again with the seizure of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by a truculent Mossadegh, whose behaviour was based on something more than the military might of Iran, or even than that of the 40 million citizens of the Arab world. It tolled again, even more loudly, when we were persuaded, certainly against our better judgment, to withdraw from the great base on the Suez canal which we occupied under treaty with Egypt. Antecedent and subsequent events bear witness to the utter untrustworthiness of Egypt’s Nassar, and to the degree of Russian infiltration of the Middle East. Even then, we, on this side of the Atlantic, did not even “send to find for whom the bell tolls.”

The bell tolled again with the disturbances in Cyprus, which had been British for a hundred years, Turkish before that and which has not been Greek since the days of Alexander the Great. There can be little doubt as to who tolls the bell in Cyprus.

Meanwhile, here at home in Canada, the bell has been tolling, giving little apparent concern to our Government. It tolls annually when the Dominion Bureau of Statistics informs us of the mounting deficit in our trade with our southern neighbor, now over a billion dollars for the current year, surely an unhealthy state of affairs suggesting the “wasting of our substance in riotous living.”

It tolls again when defense measures come up for review. God knows we are spending enough money on defense, nearly half of our national income. But, relative to our present wealth, population, and international pretensions, we are little better prepared for World War III, should it come (and this is an ever-present risk) than we were in 1914, or again in 1939. We would still have to depend on “supermen” somewhere to hold the line for a year or two while we made good the deficiency of “too little and too late.” This, it must be admitted, is not a proud position for a “middle power, the “Senior Dominion” or for a member of N.A.T.O.

Finally, the bell tolled violently with the rape of the Suez Canal. A second Munich had come. The "bitter cup" had once again been proffered to the West. Remembering the first Munich, Britain and France took appropriate action. As usual, the United Nations took negative not positive action. The United States decried what it had undertaken in Korea. Canada "abstained" thereby lending support to the Commonwealth's enemies. At long last, it is to be hoped that Canada and the United States will "send to find for whom the bell tolls" only to find that "it tolls for them."

The tolling is not yet over. The bell tolls again in Syria for a Middle East virtually lost to the West. The march of communism, encouraged by a stupid lack of solidarity on the part of the West, appears to be inexorable. Control of the Arab world will extend the Communist Empire over most of Asia and much of Africa. Infiltration of South American countries proceeds apace. Italy, in spite of the Vatican, hovers on the brink of communism. Should Western Europe be added to the satellite belt, France and Britain in the face of a temporizing United Nations and an "abstaining" Canada, must fall. Then Canadian and American isolationists will have achieved a degree and type of isolationism far beyond their most extravagant dreams, and, their countries will be forced to "take up the case when it is (far more than) three-quarters ruined, themselves alone." It will then be too late to "send to find for whom the bell tolls," nor will it be necessary.

There is mounting evidence that the forthright action of Canada's two mother countries has roused the Canadian people, if not their Government, from their apathy. It is high time that the "Senior Dominion" and the "linchpin" of the English-speaking world" began to take stock of its present attitude toward the discharge of the serious responsibilities implied by these terms.

It is time to take stock of our "linchpin" role." This, for the moment at least, seems to have been relegated to Australia. Over the past twenty years, the role has, at times, been rather that of an equestrian trying to ride two horses at the same time and risking the health of his pelvis in the attempt.

It is time to call a halt to farther "splitting" of the Commonwealth. It is time to repudiate the sneering remarks of our Prime Minister. It is time to "stand up and be counted." It is time, if we place any value on our membership in the Commonwealth to practice with the Commonwealth team, so as to be physically fit for the "big game" should it come, as it well

may, with little or no warning. It reflects no credit on a member of the team, to have to be hunted up at game time and then to be a year or two late getting into the game. What the Commonwealth needs more than anything else is team-work.

It is time to take serious note of our billion dollar trade deficit in our trade with our southern neighbor. The complacent answer is that the deficit is covered by American capital being invested in this country. This, to most Canadians, seems like mortgaging "the back fifty acres" to pay the grocery bill. When the mortgage gets too big to handle, the grocer must foreclose. It has turned out that the "back fifty" is full of oil. Unfortunately, little of it can reach Western Europe, except through the grocery store and the grocer has on hand considerable oil of his own to be first considered. Further, as it now turns out, the grocer has something to say about whether or not we shall relieve the hard pressed motherland of the immediate payment of a debt contracted years ago and made necessary by her herculean efforts in the defence of our liberty in World War II holding the line while we prepared for the struggle. So much for our vaunted sovereignty. Perhaps it would have been better if we had not mortgaged the "back fifty" so heavily. We might have been better off had we not dealt so exclusively with one grocer, there being several equally good grocers in the sterling area, who would be glad to do business with us and who might have taken up part of the mortgage on terms more favourable to us.

It is time to give some serious thought to our defense measures. We spend some two billion dollars, nearly half our national income, on defense, mostly on machines which become obsolete in three or four years. It is time to listen more carefully to men like General Simmonds and General Macklin, who certainly know what they are talking about and who have no political "axe to grind." The defense of 16 million Canadians and of a half continent of natural wealth, if, or rather when World War III comes, would certainly call for more than 116,000 troops, most of whom would be needed for training purposes since the reserve forces have been allowed to fall so low in personnel. Our Minister of Defense appears to worship a small professional force rather than a trained citizenry. This philosophy is just a century late. It was the philosophy of the times of Nelson and Wellington but it went out with "Flanders Fields." He scorns conscription or the draft, in spite of the fact that every one of the other 14 nations in N.A.T.O., including Britain, France and the United States, trains its young men. Universal

military service for Canadian youths would train some 100,000 young Canadians annually. At the age of 18, one year's national service would disrupt no one's life and even a partially trained soldier does not become obsolete in three or four years. The contribution to national unity would be great, assuming that Canada's government desires national unity in the real sense of the term.

There is no reason to suppose that Canadians generally would refuse to accept national service at the time for the youth of the country. We have just passed through our second Munich. Preparation to combat the amply evident advance of communism should, and I believe, would, make a special appeal to our French-Canadian fellow citizens who, after all, hate and fear communism no whit less than do the rest of us. The French-Canadian contribution to the 116,000 professional troops is, I believe, above the expected percentage in view of the population ratio. There never was a time in our history when national service would be more acceptable. Military service is no less important to the state than is the payment of income tax; we have yet to learn that the payment of income tax has ever been put on a voluntary basis.

The bell still tolls. It tolls for a Middle East virtually lost to the West. It will toll for an Israel whose very existence is an affront to the Arab world. We of the West established Israel, encouraged its growth, and are now committed to its support for we are not likely to retrace our steps. We must, therefore, face the possibility, even probability, of a third world war in support of Israel against a futile Arab world backed by a not so futile Russia enjoying at least the ideological support of the rest of the Communist world. We have had our Munich.

Surely we must now have been shocked out of our apathy and our smug complacency. Surely, we now, at long last, realize that when the bell tolls in the Middle East, "it tolls for us." Britain and France have never had to "send to find for whom the bell tolls." And surely we will desist from actions which lend to "split" the Commonwealth, refrain from sneering remarks concerning our two mother countries, and when the calls come to "stand up and be counted"—we will, "take our stand for freedom as in the olden time."