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## THE WORLD CRISIS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ENGLISH SPEAKING PEOPLE

### British and French Governments Are Working to Bridge the Gap Between Dictatorships and Democracies

Address delivered under the auspices of the League of Nations Society in Canada at Montreal on September 4, 1936, by Dr. Raymond Leslie Buell, President, Foreign Policy Association, New York.

At the outset I wish to express thanks to the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission and the League of Nations Society in Canada for this privilege of speaking to the people of Canada. I shall make use of this privilege to explore the present international situation in order to determine whether we who live in North America can do anything about it. Whatever I shall say this evening I hope you will regard as purely tentative and provisional. I speak with no official knowledge and I have no cut-and-dried solutions. But obviously the time has come when all of us should concern ourselves with the prospect of a new war.

The world situation today is depressing. There can be no doubt of that. Social revolution has swept across Russia, Germany, and Italy; social revolution today is sweeping over Spain. The international consequences of such revolutions are serious. The Fascist states tell us that they are saving the world from communism. On the other hand, liberals state that the issue is between the liberalism of the democracies, represented by France, Britain and America, and the brutal and militaristic policies of Germany and Italy. Already the Fascist dictatorships have proceeded to fight wars and take territory. Japan has seized Manchuria and Italy has seized Ethiopia. Germany is building up its armaments for the purpose, it is feared, of dominating Central Europe and striking at Russia. So far the pacific democracies have rallied to meet the challenge. It is a striking fact that 19 per cent of the national income of dictatorial Russia and of dictatorial Germany is expended upon armaments, in contrast to six per cent of the income of Britain and the eight per cent of France. Here is a vivid contrast between two ways of life—the dictatorships, although poor in resources, are willing to make far greater sacrifices for militarism than are the democracies, whose peoples as yet have not been aroused by shrill propagandist appeals. Will the superior sacrifices of the dictatorships overcome the superior resources of the democracies?

Today the British and French governments are quietly working to bridge the gap between the dictatorships and the democracies—between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany. A

good many people, particularly on this side of the Atlantic, believe that the task is hopeless and that a new European war is inevitable. Everywhere the question is being asked, will the United States and Canada again be drawn in. For the moment, the people of my country are almost unanimous in answering no. Disillusioned by such slogans as "making the world safe for democracy," and remembering the eleven billion dollars loaned to the Allies, which has now gone into default, many Americans today say, never again. From conversations with Canadians, I have noticed a similar sentiment upon this side of the border, despite Canada's membership in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Yet the task of keeping North America out of a European war is far more difficult than it seems. Despite the present wave of isolationism and pacifism, there are at least three reasons why the United States will find it difficult to keep out of such a war if and when it comes.

First, the debates in our last Congress demonstrate that the United States is not willing to abandon its old doctrine of freedom of the seas. We are not willing to give up all of our neutral rights or our foreign trade—which is necessary if we really hope to insulate ourselves against war.

Secondly, the American belief in democracy and liberty, and the hatred of Fascism in many circles will give rise to a strong demand in favor of America's entrance into a war on the side of the democratic powers, should they reach the point of being overwhelmed in a war of Fascist opponents.

Third, an even larger number of Americans will probably come to believe that if the Fascist states and Japan succeed in dominating Europe and the Orient these states will inevitably turn greedy eyes upon the Western Hemisphere—Latin America, the Caribbean, and even Canada—and thus injure the vital interests of the United States. From this standpoint, the British Empire and, to a lesser extent, France, constitute the first line of defense of North America. Should this line begin to crumble, many Americans who now oppose war in the abstract would demand entry into the war as a measure of self defense. Some calculating individuals may insist that even if Britain goes down to defeat, there is little possibility that the victor would seize Canada and that the United States should do nothing until Canada is threatened by invasion. But an emotional public is more likely to demand action to prevent such a danger from coming into existence.

Perhaps I should hesitate to raise the question whether Canada will succeed in keeping out of war any more easily than the United States. Some of your lawyers tell me that under the Statute of Westminster, it is perfectly possible for Canada to remain neutral while Britain is at war. I suppose also that belligerents would be willing to respect your neutrality if you promised not to send any men or goods to Britain but even though you fail to adopt conscription, are you willing to give such a promise? Unlike the United States, Canada is a member not only of the British Commonwealth but also of the League of Nations. As a League member it is under obligation to impose sanctions against an aggressor which may prove to be inconsistent with neutrality. Again unlike the United States, you will have to make a decision as to whether you will join Britain during the first few weeks of the war. I imagine that decision will be controlled less by legal than political considerations. I sympathize wholeheartedly with the desire of North America to stand aloof from any European conflict; but no student or statesman should delude himself that it will be easy for us to keep out.

If there is real danger that North America will be drawn into war, then it follows that we should do everything in our power to relieve the tensions which today are driving nations toward war. Together the British Empire and the United States have it within their power to bring about a peaceful and orderly world. Our economic interests are closely intertwined. Canada and Britain are the two largest customers of the United States. My country buys more goods from Britain and Canada than from Japan, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and Soviet Russia combined. Canada alone buys 57 per cent of its imports in the United States; and we buy nearly 33 per cent of Canada's exports. Together the British Empire and the United States control two-thirds of the raw materials of the world; their two navies

could dominate the seas in both hemispheres. The Anglo-Saxon peoples have many defects, of course. They have frequently been guilty of cant and hypocrisy; but they continue to have a passion for individual justice, a concern for social wellbeing and peace which means much for the world. The British Commonwealth and the United States have kindred institutions and the same general outlook on life. It is a tragedy that they have not yet learned to work together for common ends.

For at least a century after America won its independence from Britain the relations between the two peoples were strained. About 1820 John Adams went so far as to say that "Britain will never be our friend until we are her master." Many Americans inveighed against the trappings of British monarchy. For their part, British reviews printed countless articles attacking American life which they criticized as barbarian and vulgar. So unfair did these criticisms become that such Anglophiles as Timothy Dwight and Washington Irving felt obliged to make public replies. Later the Irish question arose to plague the relationship between the two countries. And there have been other causes of friction.

Within recent years, however, a vast improvement has taken place. The recriminations of the past are seldom heard. The acute naval rivalry which caused strained relations until 1930 has disappeared; few people in the United States today care how many cruisers there are in the British navy. The establishment of the Irish Free State has reduced the bitterness of our Irish population toward Britain. The death of King George V last January was universally mourned in the United States. The House of Representatives adjourned as a tribute to his memory; many of my friends, ranging from humble farmers to people of high social standing, rose early in the morning to listen to the funeral service over the radio.

Likewise relations between the United States and Canada have long been on a friendly basis. There was a time when many Americans wished to annex Canada. This demand was advanced at the peace conference of 1782 by Benjamin Franklin. It was one of the hidden causes of the war of 1812. After our civil war Senator Sumner and others demanded the cession of Canada in return for the indirect damages done the United States by the illegal construction of the Alabama in Britain. Today these sentiments have long since disappeared. America knows that Canada is an orderly and friendly neighbor. Unless it should fail to protect its neutrality in the event of war in the Pacific to which the United States is a party, Canadian statehood is safe so long as the federal union continues to exist. The unfortified frontier the St. Lawrence waterways agreements, unhappily defeated by the United States Senate, and the reciprocity agreement which entered into force last January, all are indications that it is possible for two countries to live side by side in cordial relationships, adjusting their differences by fairminded compromise.

But despite the vast improvement in Anglo-American relations, a number of obstructions to complete understanding remain. It is customary for many Englishmen and Canadians to deplore the fact that the United States should have returned to a policy of isolation, after having intervened in the World War and taken the initiative in organizing the League of Nations. There has been a tendency in Britain (if not elsewhere) to justify a policy of inaction by attempting to shift responsibility to the United States. Now, I am one of many Americans who keenly regret that a minority of the Senate made it impossible for the United States to adopt a policy of constructive co-operation at the end of the World War. In addition, I believe that the post-war economic and financial policy of the United States was a major cause of the world depression. Nevertheless, I wish to point out that in several instances, where the United States has perhaps haltingly endeavored to co-operate with the League it has not received the support from Britain which it feels should have been forthcoming. Moreover today America seems willing to go further than Britain in a policy of international economic reconstruction.

In 1931 the United States took a strong stand against the invasion of Manchuria by Japan. We do not be-

lieve that the British government supported our stand or displayed nearly the same interest in upholding peace machinery that it did later in the case of Italy. Had Britain and America stood firmly together in the Orient in 1931 the course of history might have been changed.

Secondly, the Roosevelt administration went far beyond a literal interpretation of its powers, in discouraging the export of American oil to Italy during its campaign against Ethiopia. But, you remember, it was in the midst of these efforts that the terms of the Hoare-Laval deal were announced. These terms had a most unfortunate effect in America. Those working for an oil embargo felt that the ground had been cut from under their feet, and that it was useless to attempt to find a basis of collaboration between the United States and Europe.

Today the United States cannot be expected to intervene in the settlement of the acute political differences which divide the European nations. The initiative in this task falls upon the British government, by virtue of its traditional position in Europe, and by virtue of the fact that it is the only major power which is not torn by dissension between Right and Left forces. Nevertheless, the United States is willing to make a contribution to world economic improvement, which is necessary if political tension is to be reduced. For two years Secretary of State Cordell Hull has been steadfastly and courageously working to bring about tariff reduction through the conclusion of reciprocity agreements. These agreements are not based upon the principle of exclusive bargaining; but they contain the most-favoured-nation clause, which means that the benefits of the tariffs reduced by the agreement should be automatically extended to other nations. One of the most important agreements is that concluded with Canada. If this programme succeeds, many of the trade barriers which are responsible for a lowering standard of living in many countries, should be gradually removed.

Despite the fact that the British government has paid lip service to Mr. Hull's programme, I regret to say that it has not given this programme its support. There are cases where the exclusive commercial policy of the British government has prevented the United States from reaching commercial agreements of benefit to the world as a whole. Although the United States has concluded a tariff agreement with France, it has not been able to do so with Britain. Here is an instance where America is apparently willing to go further than Britain toward removing one of the underlying economic causes of war.

Secondly, the American government once the present political campaign is concluded, is willing to discuss the question of currency stabilization. Today the world is showing a number of signs of recovery, which has been aided by the depreciation of currencies. But so far recovery has been confined to domestic economics; international trade which is of much more vital importance to Britain and Canada than to the United States, continues to languish. The resumption of such trade depends upon the removal of trade barriers, but such barriers cannot be removed until currencies are stabilized. No business man is willing to sign a contract in regard to foreign trade when he does not know what the future value of money will be.

Nevertheless British circles seem to oppose any form of currency stabilization on the ground that it will endanger their cheap money policy and otherwise place the British economy under the tyranny of the old gold standard. One may sympathize with the opposition to the gold standard; but this does not mean that some form of stable international currency is not a necessity, not only from the standpoint of immediate British interests, but from the standpoint of international peace.

It is obvious that if Germany cannot obtain markets in the free field of world competition, it will be driven into a programme of exclusive and militaristic expansion whether in Central Europe or elsewhere. But I am even more concerned with the future of France. The only great power in continental Europe today which clings to the democratic process, this country is governed by a left government under a socialist prime minister, Leon Blum. The Blum government is endeavoring to follow a mid-

dle-of-the-road policy, and it has already adopted a number of much needed reforms. But it is threatened from the Communists on the left and the Fascists on the right. If the Blum government is able to resist these attacks, democracy in France will continue to exist. If it fails, some form of extremist reaction will probably follow. The question whether Blum stands or falls depends partly upon his ability to devalue the franc and solve France's financial problem. So far he has failed to make progress in this direction, because of the opposition of the Communists, who oppose devaluation on the ground that it will injure the workers, and of others who fear that unilateral devaluation would be followed by further depreciation of the British and American currencies. These obstacles undoubtedly would be overcome, however, and the French financial problems solved if Britain and America would reach an agreement tentatively to stabilize the pound and the dollar. In such a case, the Blum government would feel strong enough simultaneously to realign the franc. Both Britain and America have expressed their concern over the preservation of democratic institutions and peace throughout the world. If this concern is genuine, our countries should take concerted action to relieve these economic and financial maladjustments now working toward social convulsion and war.

Moreover, may I suggest that Canada itself is in a position to wield a greater influence in international affairs than many Canadians realize. In the first place, you may be aware that Canada already has set an example to the United States by solving your immigration difficulties with Japan, on an equitable basis. In 1924 the American Congress rudely injured the sensibilities of Japan by passing a Japanese exclusion law. Canada accomplished the same end of limiting immigration, but by means which satisfied Japanese sense of racial equality, when in 1928 it made an informal agreement with Japan, under which only 150 Japanese immigrants enter Canada annually—a provision enforced by Canadian authorities. If Canada could find similarly an equitable solution for the problem of Chinese immigration it would set another example which would have a great effect upon the United States, which continues to antagonize the great nations of the Orient by its method of handling limited immigration.

Secondly, I should like to suggest the possibility of an extension of the present reciprocity agreement between Canada and the United States. The present agreement is under fire in our political campaign; but I imagine it will emerge unscathed. It is also under fire I notice from certain Canadian circles. Nevertheless, I could never understand why Canada should impose high tariff duties to

(Continued on Page Seven)

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