

Willkie Speaks of Britain As 'Our Mother Country'

(By KENNETH CRAGG.)

(Staff Writer, The Globe and Mail.)

Wendell L. Willkie, avowed friend of Britain and champion of the democratic way of life, yesterday in a history-making session of the Ontario Legislature pulled tighter the bonds linking his nation and the Empire with a brief and unaffected reference to the United Kingdom as "our Mother Country."

The impact of the reference, with its frank implication of unity of purpose in the struggle against oppression, stirred the House as it has seldom been stirred before, and injected into the ovation a strong note of affection awakened by the new sense of kinship.

Mr. Willkie warned the members that they, together with all the other legislators in the Empire and in the United States, were charged with the task of meeting the totalitarian challenge.

"I thank you for the wonderful reception and it may seem impertinent, but I call on you men to save

democracy by rising above yourselves in political leadership," he told the crowded House.

Aside from the words of the Republican leader, the unity of the two countries was symbolized further by the precedent-shattering act of flanking the Union Jack with the Stars and Stripes over the throne. That there be left no doubt as to the importance of the occasion, the House, on the motion of Premier Hepburn, passed a formal resolution, to be entered in the Journals of the Legislature, paying tribute to Mr. Willkie's contribution to Britain's war cause.

One week before, to the day, an earlier precedent was broken when Senator Claude Pepper, persistent backer of the lease-lend bill in the United States Congress, addressed the House from the Cabinet row. In one point there was a similarity in his address and that of Mr. Willkie, in that both called upon elected representatives to give a higher type of service.

"Where is the man who will deny that political leaders have not failed during the past twenty years?" asked Mr. Willkie.

He spoke with force and in his speaking his great mane of dark hair jerked across his head at intervals, as if in emphasis of his points. In his sterner moods, his lower lip jutted out and his face assumed an air of near-ferocity, which in a moment would break in a smile that warmed the furthest gallery.

"As I said to the British Cabinet, when I had the great privilege of lunching with them, the leaders of democracy carry two flags. You men carry the flag which is to stop totalitarian oppression, but the other flag is to carry on the functioning of the democratic system by the proper functioning of its legislative bodies," he said.

Applause Like Thunder.

Mr. and Mrs. Willkie entered the Parliament Buildings by the main door and, in advance of their party, proceeded to the Premier's office through lanes of applauding civil servants. Shortly before the House opened, Mrs. Willkie paid her respects to Mrs. Albert Matthews in the Lieutenant-Governor's suite, and by the time Mr. Willkie was brought into the House the corridor was jammed seven deep on both sides by civil servants and visitors.

Their approach to the Chamber was heralded by deep-throated cheering. The noted visitor was accompanied by the Premier, with the rest of the entourage following. As Mr. Willkie was led to his seat in Cabinet row at the left of the Premier, a seat vacated for the occasion by Attorney-General Conant, there broke out the first of a series of ovations which never before has been equalled in the House.

Patient watchers outside in the driveway heard the roll of desk-thumping as distant thunder, which was heard again as Mrs. Willkie took her place beneath the gallery. In the ceremony that followed there was a deep hush and it was noted that Mr. Willkie watched intently as Sergeant-at-Arms Robson placed the mace, symbol of authority which links the Legislature to the Mother Country, on the table.