

(January 12, 1931)

Public Spirit in Public Affairs

BY HON. ALFRED DURANLEAU, K.C.

THE PRESIDENT:—Gentlemen, it is the privilege of the Canadian Club today to have as their guest the Hon. Alfred Duranleau, K.C., of Montreal. Mr. Duranleau during the last seven years has given a great deal of his time and a great deal of his vast wisdom to help the Quebec Legislature and when the general election came along this summer Mr. Duranleau saw fit to run for Dominion Parliament and, as we know, the people in his constituency grasped the opportunity of sending a man of his outstanding qualities to represent them in the House of Parliament of Canada. The Hon. Mr. Bennett, in his great wisdom, saw fit to ask Mr. Duranleau if he would help form a Cabinet for the Dominion of Canada. On his acceptance of his important job Mr. Bennett gave him the very important task of Minister of Marine. During Mr. Duranleau's short term of office he has already had time to get out to the Pacific Coast and size up the situation out there so that he will be better able to handle the difficult tasks of his department. Mr. Duranleau's speech today will be on "Public Spirit in Public Affairs," and I know we are all very anxious to hear from him and it gives me very great pleasure to introduce to you Hon. Alfred Duranleau, K.C., Minister of Marine.

HON. MR. DURANLEAU:—Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, let me first express to you and to the officials of your club my best thanks for the honor you have conferred on me in asking me to come and address this gathering. Let me also present my best congratulations to our friend Justice Sedgewick who has just been appointed to the bench of the Supreme Court of Ontario. I am sure with the past of

that great lawyer you will have one of the best judges you could have on the bench of that court, and let me wish to our new judge the best career, the best health, and I hope he will always enjoy his job. And I congratulate also the people of Ontario upon having such a man on the high court of this province.

Gentlemen, I appreciate above all expression the privilege and honor of addressing your splendid Canadian Club. Besides affording me the opportunity of paying a second visit to your great City of Toronto, it gives me the occasion of contributing my share, humble as it is, in the patriotic work so wisely and so successfully pursued by your organization. I cannot forget the too kind reception I had about three months ago when I represented our government at the Canadian Chambers of Commerce banquet in this city of Toronto. Let me also add that it gives also to a man coming from that old province of Quebec the opportunity of adding my voice to the many which are preaching for the better *entente* between the two races in Canada. I do not say *bonne entente*, I say better *entente* purposely. *Bonne entente* is a well accepted fact today in all the provinces of Canada, but we must emphasize it to a better *entente*, in all things Canadian, in all patriotic ideals and sentiments. For, as Viscount Bryce said in Montreal as early as 1913, the Canadian Clubs seem to express that public spirit which realizes that there is a great deal in life besides business and politics, and that an organization is needed which will give people that place and the opportunity of meeting, apart from business and politics, where only two things are recognized, the acquisition of knowledge and the interest of Canada as a whole.

Opposing interests, divergent opinions, in business, in politics, are as varied as they are numerous. They are at times so far beyond the control of the statesman or the Cabinet minister, if the term could be applied without appearing too pretentious, that he would be tempted to say, in the words of Will Rogers, in that scene in his talkie when he has just mended a Ford: "I have fixed over a thousand of them things and I ain't never found the same thing the matter with no two of 'em."

This looks like distributing patronage, or political favors, But it shows the necessity of giving to our public life, through the medium of a wide organization, the tone, the significance, of all endeavors in the building up of the country. A Roman orator and philosopher, Cicero, said that he liked to see a youth with something of the youth. Or, as Justice Shallow put it, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," speaking to a younger man, "Though we are justices and doctors and churchmen Master Page, we have some salt of your youth in us."*

Salt, another right word amongst the thousands contributed by Shakespeare to human thought. Salt, *le sel, le piquant*, that will determine the nature of otherwise tasteless undertakings. And it is all the more so with the Canadian Clubs, since they have centralized their efforts into an Association whose aim, in addition to fostering Imperial relations and Canada's position among the nations of the world, was to improve the relations between the French and English races in Canada and to assist new Canadians in becoming part of the life of the Dominion and to encourage them to become acquainted with the Canadian institutions and to contribute to the common wealth their particular racial culture. Very few of the thousands of immigrants who have passed through the railway stations of Montreal en route for the west or other parts of Canada, have realized, at the time, that they were going through the very heart of Canada. They were pursuing their course towards a new world which had been described to them in glowing terms; the past history of this their new country they were to learn after they had settled their homes, after they had tasted the fruits of their promised land. But, in many cases, the worries of a new venture, the abounding success crowning persistent efforts, have kept their minds, if not their hearts, for a long time away from the initial knowledge that could help in the shaping, in extending to all corners of the land a true and exclusive Canadian spirit. Quebec for its part, without mentioning the parallel history of the other provinces, is replete with lessons of a patriotic nature, with romance letting bare the soul of its people,

*Act II, Sc. 3.

with examples of heroism whose memories are cropping from almost every street corner of its cities, from almost every river, plain or mountain of the continent.

With a population amounting to 26,187 per cent of the total population of Canada, which is itself French-speaking by thirty per cent, with its natural resources almost inexhaustible, with its educational system a model of freedom, with its agriculture, its public enterprises, all testifying to progress realized by over three hundred years of efforts and sacrifices, the Province of Québec should, indeed, draw the attention of the newcomers. Nevertheless, of all the provinces, Quebec is the one which receives the smallest number of settlers each year. The increase of its population is due entirely to what the economists describe as natural increase. To be sure, it is the land of cradles. If we were to court politics and talk of its government, I would be content with the statement that it is scandalously old, and at that, without any salt of its youth having been preserved.

But do not believe, I pray, that I have stressed at a greater length this point of the greatness of the history of Quebec. The sentiment indeed would be quite excusable, knowing as you do, the origin of your guest and the city from which he came, the old city of Montreal. I want to go further and point out the unique destiny which has brought our two races together, after a long conflict which terminated in the common glory of Wolfe and Montcalm, and which made of the Plains of Abraham the cradle of the Canadian nation as we know it today. From that date we rejoice in a common origin and, when all ideas of a conflicting nature are forgotten, we point out with fraternal and patriotic pride that the French have blazed the trail over which the Simcoes were to travel, that the City of Kingston was built on the site of the old Fort Frontenac, and that we are gathered on the very spot where formerly stood Fort Rouillé, the humble ancestor of the city of Toronto.

True, those were times of hardships. But the history of Canada is a tale of courage. It is also a tale of wisdom and good will, which are the forerunners of that public spirit which binds the citizens of a country to the common

cause of national unity and progress. At no other time in history, in no other country, has the world seen a greater example of public spirit than that shown by great men who are still near us, John A. Macdonald, Georges Étienne Cartier, George Brown, Tache, Howe, the Fathers of Canadian Confederation. They were Empire builders. Theirs was the pioneer spirit, the public spirit which should animate at this time more than ever, as suggested by your excellent ex-Premier, Mr. Ferguson, Canadian industrialists and legislators, Canadian public men and financiers, Canadian men and women in all walks of our National life. And they have lived a very strenuous life. At one time, even, they were not content to follow Macbeth's advice and talk daggers but use none. Those great men, gentlemen, were all Empire builders, and I am glad to see here today the grandson of the first Minister of Marine since Confederation.* Some of those great men resorted to arms. Their sincerity of purpose was soon to be vindicated by the triumph of their cause which was that of constitutional autonomy and Canadian liberty. Nations, like individuals, gentlemen, are born in pain.

The country was then, as in our days, experiencing the restlessness of growth, or, if you like it better, it was cutting its teeth with the accompanying disturbances which manifest themselves in so many peculiar ways. And we have gone along that way for seventy-five years, each day adding fresh proof of the soundness of the public spirit which inspired the founders of the nation and those who followed in their footsteps. But time has brought to our day new problems to solve, and new difficulties to face. With time conditions of life will arise which are different, as different as a different climate. Our generation has inherited the old homestead with all its possibilities, its dangers; and should solve its problems with the same spirit that has inspired the fathers. We too have our troubles mostly due to outside causes, but troubles that must be met and conquered. Hence the absolute necessity for our people of that public spirit which will bring every Canadian to a realization of his duty to take an interest in the public

*Mr. A. H. C. Bairsto, a grandson of the Hon. J. C. Pope.

affairs and contribute his share, no matter how small, to the National development and progress.

I would not go so far as to say with Lenin, the great Red Russian, that "every cook must learn how to run the government." Taken to the letter, the advice might create too wide a competition for those already engaged in the business. But the spirit is there, gentlemen. Applied to our political life it could be expressed in the simple statement that Canada's business is every Canadian's business. This, allow me to say, has become more apparent since a new and better conception of public affairs, of Canadian affairs, has brought to the fore the vital policy of "Canada First."

Our population today as you know is not quite ten millions. Nevertheless, Canada is at the head of the countries of the world for her agriculture; it is second among the manufacturing countries of the British Empire; it is first for its exports of wheat, newsprint, nickel and asbestos. We manufacture six thousand five hundred groups of articles and more than one thousand six hundred Canadian commercial houses are engaged in the export trade. Our railway system, with two transcontinentals, with forty-two thousand miles of steel has carried last year forty million and one-half of passengers and one hundred and forty-one million tons of merchandise. Our maritime organizations cover more than fifty thousand miles of inland lake, river and sea coast. Sea-going vessels can navigate in the interior of Canada for a distance of more than two thousand miles between the St. Lawrence and the head of the Great Lakes. Increase of population, agriculture, commerce, industry, everything has gone at a pace which could be slowed down only by events that have shaken the world.

As Minister of Marine, gentlemen, you will allow me to give you a few details about the Department of Marine. A great number of Canadians do not realize the importance of that department which is subdivided into many departments: an engineer's branch; lands, buoys and signals, fog alarms; and let me tell you that today we have the best equipment in signals, buoys and fog alarms you can wish. I am told that one of my alarms can be heard at least forty-

five miles and I am told the Father Point alarm is one of the most powerful in the whole world. We have also other departments, as the radio department; lights, hydrographic. Very few, gentlemen, know what is the importance of the hydrographic department in the Marine Department. I was in the west during October last, as you were told a minute ago by your chairman. I saw on the Pacific Coast what was the importance of that hydrographic department. Do you know that today they are making draft plans of both the oceans, many miles on the ocean, showing the islands, the inlets, the depths of the sea from the shore for many miles up to one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet of water? Do you know that today they are preparing a plan showing everything in the ocean, the reefs, the shoals and everything? I was told by the officials of the large shipping companies that our department was giving the best aid to navigation. Any navigator goes to our department today and gets a chart or a map of the coast and on that map is marked every island, every dent; every place where there is a danger is marked in the most careful way; and today we are giving the best aid to navigation; and we have had to work years to get it. I can tell you this, that our officials and myself, as head of the Marine Department tell shippers to do everything possible to give the best aids to navigation, because we consider that there will be an increase in the volume of trade, inland trade or business, when outsiders realise our ports and our facilities for navigation are developed in conjunction with the development of our trade and business, inside and outside business.

You know, of course, that radio is also under my jurisdiction and is today a very effective aid to navigation. Do you know we have today some fifty stations of radio on the Pacific Coast, the Atlantic Coast, on the St. Lawrence River, on the Lakes, and even in Hudson Bay: about fifty stations, which are the best help to inbound or outbound ships? Do you know today any outbound and any inbound ship can go in or go out of any part in Canada through the aid given by my radio stations at any time during any fog or any snow? Our stations are so perfect that you take a boat from about two hundred and fifty to three hundred

miles from the coast and you direct it going out or coming in, as you would bring a child to church by hand, and we hope in a short time we will be able to call a boat perhaps three hundred and fifty to four hundred miles and bring it in or out of the port.

That shows you, gentlemen, that my department is very very important. Let me thank your chairman for the too kind words he has said about what I have done since I have been at the head of that department. True it is that I have tried to keep in touch with every part of navigation in Canada, that I have tried to study every sub-department of the Marine department. I have been west. I have examined all the ports there. I gathered all the information I could, and I know that all our ports, Victoria port, Vancouver, New Westminster, and North Fraser River ports, all those ports today are pretty well equipped and ready to receive any navigation from the antipodes or China or any countries on the Pacific ocean. I have not had time to go and visit the ports on the eastern coast. But I intend to go very soon and I can tell you gentlemen that my aim and the aim of my officials in the Marine Department is to develop as much as we can, taking into consideration the means of our young and powerful country, taking also into consideration the depression in business that we are facing at the present time.

We are going through a business depression. Every effort is now made to alleviate it in the hope that, as Byron said, "a better Spring will perhaps bring less bitter fruits." What the country needs is men of action, in politics as well as in business. They alone can put a stop to the trade depression which this country, in fact all countries, have suffered for the last two years; they alone can bring us back to the sound conception of life, to the practical methods which have led to the foundation of Canada. What the country needs, and you will allow me to terminate by that, is that spirit of national responsibility which will inspire every and each Canadian into doing his bit toward the building of a greater and more prosperous Canada.

It has been said that "whenever an Englishman migrates he brings the whole of England with him." There is a part

of truth in every exaggerated expression of sentiment. Applied to Canada the sentiment just expressed can be translated in one single word, "Faith, faith in Canada and its future." It is, I venture to say, the very spirit which the Canadian Clubs have endeavored to cultivate in every section of Canada. It is that work for which I want to congratulate your organization in the words of Sir Robert Borden, which you will allow me to make mine.

"The official organs of Government are not the only instruments of Government in this or any other democracy, and in congratulating the Canadian Clubs, I make bold to assure them that they are giving to our country real national service."

THE PRESIDENT:—I am sure our speaker of today will allow me a few moments before thanking him for his address to pay our respects to another past-president of this Club. The speaker has already referred to our new Judge, Justice Sedgewick. He did not know and did not refer to the fact that he was a past-president of the Canadian Club of Toronto. Another honor has been conferred on another past-president, namely Major Norsworthy, who goes to Montreal to be assistant general manager of the Bank of Montreal. We congratulate the Bank and the City of Montreal on getting a right type of citizen.