

(August 7, 1934)

Address

BY ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET, SIR REGINALD TYRWHITT.

CHAIRMAN C. P. FELL:—Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt, guests of honor, members of the Canadian Club, may I at the outset express our sincere regret that Field Marshall Viscount Allenby, who was to have been one of our guest speakers today, is unable to be with us owing to illness? Eight rather eventful years have passed since we were thrilled by the narration of his Palestine campaign address at our Massey Hall meeting. We welcome him to Toronto as a great soldier; we express the hope, that before long he will be entirely restored to his robust health.

The year 1934 will always be regarded as a memorable one in the history of Toronto. Not only is Toronto celebrating its Centenary but as part of the proceedings held here during the past week the first reunion of the Canadian Corps and Veterans of British Expeditionary Forces was held. To those of you who were not in the city over the week-end may I say, both in private convention and on the streets of Toronto, the pages of the calendar were very successfully turned back some twenty years.

The outstanding fact of this celebration was undoubtedly the presence in this city of two distinguished guests. We are privileged to have with us today the Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt. It is in these days, I think, always a source of inspiration and pleasure to meet distinguished men from the British Isles. If there is one country in the world where probably to a greater extent than elsewhere conditions have shown consistent improvement, where public budgets are balanced, and sound methods of finance continue to be regarded as a great heritage,

where business abounds and confidence abounds, I think it is the British Isles.

When we Canadians survey the international scene I think we should indeed be remiss if we failed to acknowledge the moral as well as the financial and commercial stimulus which Canada, particularly during the recent months, has received from the old land. Therefore through your presence here, Sir Reginald, and may I add also that of Lord Allenby and, in the Maritime province, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, we Canadians are able to catch a bit of that English hope and optimism which has prevailed in the old land and which is so needful to us. And all too infrequently does Canada have the opportunity of entertaining those in position of high command in the British Navy. This is certainly true in Ontario and, shall I say in such centres of population as Toronto, and it is only one of many reasons why the occasion of the presence of Sir Reginald is an exceptional one.

I am not sure, Sir Reginald, whether or not it is more than a coincidence that your presence in these parts after a lapse of some forty years should so closely coincide with the presence in these waters of the United States cruiser *Wilmington*. If so, sir, may I hasten to allay any qualms or misgivings you may have by assuring you, His Worship Mayor Stewart and Col. Alley, took all necessary precautions to see that the vessel of war was not armed.

Sir Reginald has had a spectacular and rapid rise in his chosen calling. He was in command of the destroyer *Flotillas* of the British Fleet in 1913. He commanded the destroyer *Flotillas* in action in Heligoland Bight in August and December, 1914 and off the Dogger Banks in 1915, for which he was mentioned in despatches and decorated. At the time of his elevation to Rear Admiral in 1919 the fact was acclaimed universally not only by all ranks of the service but by the public at large. Since the war he has held commissions successively in the Mediterranean, the coast of Scotland, and the China station. In 1929 he was made an admiral and only recently during the past few days since his departure from the old land, comes word of his elevation to the highest command in the British navy, namely, Admiral of the Fleet.

In calling upon you, sir, to address us, may I welcome you most heartily and express the very great privilege and pleasure which we now have in thus publicly and at this early date congratulating you upon this most recent honor bestowed upon you.

ADMIRAL TYRWHITT:—Mr. President and gentlemen, I want first of all to thank you all on behalf of myself and my wife for the most extraordinary delightful visit you have given us in your city. The invitation came as a great surprise to us both and I think I can safely say, we have taken great advantage of it and I am going home in due course with the very pleasantest recollections of this delightful city and with magnificent impressions which shall remain with me.

Yesterday I was invited to speak at the Civic Club and I spoke about the fleet. To be quite honest I did not know I was going to speak to this Club again today and I am afraid I shall have to repeat some of what I said yesterday because I have not got two speeches on hand. Just before lunch I met a relation of mine and, as you know, relations are generally fairly candid with one another and I rather apologized yesterday for speaking indistinctly and I also said I never could make a speech. He said, "Oh, don't mind that, old fellow, because none of our relations ever could speak."

I mentioned yesterday the extraordinary value of this country and the value of her exports and I am going to quote Mr. Ferguson who said in one of the leading papers the other day that this country would surely be one of the most important mineral countries in the world. And I believe it is true. Also this country feeds about half the world. But what disturbs me is supposing that another war comes, and I pray God it will not, who is going to protect all the exports of this country? To put it in as few words as possible, at the present moment I do not believe that our navy is capable of doing its own work, let alone protecting our trade routes. Incidentally I mentioned that we have eighty thousand miles of trade routes to protect. In 1914, at the beginning of the great war, the state of affairs was quite different. We then had a very

powerful navy and I think I can say quite truthfully we were quite capable of protecting our trade routes. I refer to the trade routes particularly because the trade routes are the pulse of this country. If our trade routes fail the old country will starve in about three weeks and we may as well back up. Well, at the beginning of the war the navy was a very strong force and I think I can say without exaggeration we did protect our trade routes. We did sweep the seas of our enemies and we did confine the German fleet to their ports. I am not trying to blow my own horn. I am just speaking facts. We were strong enough to do it and we did it. We swept the seas and our commerce was free to roam over the whole world wherever it pleased, with perhaps the exception of two raiders which escaped from Germany and got through our lines of defence in the north of Scotland and they did a good deal of damage to trade, but beyond that our commerce was perfectly safe; and I would point out that when you sent over great forces to England they arrived in England without the loss of a ship or a man.

To put it quite plainly, we cannot do it now. I do not think we have the forces to send. I believe it is inferred from my speech that perhaps Canada would help and assist the old country. But I am not a politician; that has nothing to do with me; I am trying to point out to you pure facts, and the main fact is that at present, if we go to war, we cannot protect our trade routes. We cannot protect your expeditionary force, which I am perfectly certain, from what I have seen in the last few days, will be the first to arrive in England.

At the present moment we have fifty cruisers. I will talk to you about battleships afterwards. The cruisers are the ships on which our trade routes depend. Before the war we had roughly one hundred and twenty or thereabouts. At the beginning of the war Admiral Jellicoe had more cruisers attached to the Grand Fleet than we possess at the present moment. You can see the plight. Our main duty is to be able to protect with cruisers our trade routes. Cruisers have many duties. One of most important of all is that when the Commander-in-Chief comes

to sea with his battle fleet he spreads his cruisers out sometimes twenty or thirty miles ahead of the fleet and they inform him of the enemy's fleet or whatever they might see, giving him time for forming up for any manoeuvre he wishes. I must also add, besides the grand fleet, there is a Mediterranean fleet which have their cruisers. The fact remains that now we have no cruisers in reserve when in ordinary course of events at least fifteen per cent. of the ships in commission are in refitting, or being docked or repaired, so that if war is declared suddenly you can at least knock off fifteen to twenty per cent. from the total number.

I am afraid that I have not made out my case very clearly but what I do want to point out is that I feel sure that the old country wants help in the way of ships and any help coming from Canada, I am quite certain we shall be very glad to have.

I am going to tell you a story of an incident which happened to me in the latter part of the great war. You know I was in command of the destroyers during the whole war and I am sorry to say I had very few Canadian officers or men serving under me. But I did have one Canadian officer and I saw a good many things done during the war, but this particular officer did the grandest and bravest thing that I have ever seen. We were constantly troubled by German aircraft and particularly with a Zeppelin. Zeppelins were looked upon as very inquisitive people; they always watched what we were doing and always kept out of range. The last year of the war the German Zeppelins and aircraft were practically the only enemy aircraft which were to be seen and they were fairly active. But they were extremely difficult to get at, particularly one Zeppelin which we knew quite well by sight.

Well, we laid for this particular Zeppelin, which used to operate about three hundred miles from our base a long way off. We had no aircraft at the time which had the radius of action of going to Germany and back without refueling, so we had to devise a scheme to allow the aircraft to operate with plenty in reserve, that is to get an aircraft to the scene of action with plenty of fuel. They

designed a lighter, which is a sort of floating raft, that could be towed at very high speed, thirty-two knots, and thus enable the aeroplane to rise into the wind and possibly to get off the sea. We took the force into the German coast and we made wireless signals, which always had the effect of bringing out a large quantity of aircraft, including our Zeppelin, and in due course out they came. We stationed a destroyer towing this lighter with the aeroplane about twenty miles to the west. When we dragged the aircraft as near as possible, we made a signal to the destroyer towing this lighter to let loose its aeroplane. And then we watched the result.

This aeroplane was known as a camel, very small, with a span of twenty-five feet, and was commanded by a boy, aged eighteen and a half, who had just left school. His name was Tulley. I have forgotten his Christian name. He is now a Major in the R.A.F. and he hailed from this country. He had no opportunity of practising getting off the sea being towed by a lighter, but he said he was quite prepared to try without practise. In due course he went up and we watched him attack this Zeppelin. The Zeppelin was at a height of about eighteen thousand feet at the time and we watched this tiny aircraft circling up and it was a great effort on its part to get that height, which was a great height in those days for a small aircraft. But he gradually got up there and I think from what we saw the Zeppelin gathered there was a certain amount of danger because he steered due east with speed.

We watched these incidents with great interest for fifty-eight minutes and by that time we were almost out of sight. We then saw the Zeppelin suddenly point its nose high up in the air and we realized he had seen this aircraft almost on the point of being attacked. We then lost sight of him. We might have been submarined for all the notice we took of what was going on outside, with everybody watching this event. Then after a pause of about five minutes we saw the tiny black speck rapidly open out into a large balloon and we realized the Zeppelin was down. And this was done by a boy of eighteen and a half and he hailed from Canada. Gentlemen, I think

without exaggeration that is the bravest thing I have ever seen done, because it entailed every quality necessary for a brave man.

I must apologize for breaking the thread of my address in trying to tell you how weak our present state of affairs is but there are rumors, or were just before I left, that they were talking of increasing the number of cruisers, and I sincerely hope that in a short time they will do so.

THE CHAIRMAN:—Sir Reginald, I am sure by the fact of our large audience and the applause that I am voicing the sentiments of all present when we thank you most sincerely for the honor you have done us today by your presence. So far as naval expenditures are concerned I think there is no doubt that we in Canada can stand a lot of education and as far as the money matter goes we are fortunate in having with us today the Minister of National Revenue from Ottawa, Hon. R. C. Matthews.

Now gentlemen, you will notice by the time it is yet early and you will probably wonder what the significance is, and the fact is the chairman has a surprise packet up his sleeve. We are very pleased indeed to have Canada's High Commissioner in London, Hon. Mr. Ferguson, back with us. I realize how much a Toronto audience enjoys meeting Mr. Ferguson and the executive of the Club were very pleased when they learned he had accepted an invitation to the head table today. Just before the meeting I asked him if he would be kind enough to say a few words to you and I have much pleasure in calling upon him now.

HON. G. HOWARD FERGUSON:—Mr. President, Sir Reginald and gentlemen, I like always to make my position perfectly clear. I want you to understand I am not deputizing or substituting for Lord Allenby. Just before we came into the dining room your president came to me and said, "Now we regret the Field Marshall cannot be here today. We have arranged our time for two speakers and Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt is the only speaker. We need somebody to fill up." So my function is to fill up. I suppose fill up the audience.

However, it is always a very great pleasure to me when I come back from England to have an opportunity

of meeting Canadian people amongst whom I have a goodly number of friends, and, when opportunity offers to say something to them as to what I think of the situation generally, and particularly our relations between this country and the United Kingdom. I am sure Sir Reginald and Lord Allenby will go back impressed with the idea that these service clubs such as the Canadian and Empire Club perform a great and useful service in this country. They give us an opportunity of meeting and hearing from men who have made history, through talks such as Sir Reginald and old soldiers such as Lord Allenby and a host of others have given us. Men who have been prominent not only in directing the course of British affairs and British history, but in stabilizing and safeguarding British ideals. These contacts are the life blood of the Empire. What we need more than anything else is more intercourse between ourselves and the people of the United Kingdom, and I never cease in my goings about in the Old Country to preach to them the advisability of coming to Canada, meeting our people, seeing our conditions, estimating for themselves the possibilities and outlook here, because from my knowledge of this country I am perfectly sure that they all go back with changed ideas, with a firmer conviction that Canada is playing and will play in the future an even greater part in consolidation of Imperial forces and strength.

It is not only the development of the sentimental side that is important. I am a great believer in sentiment. I think it lies at the very basis of all human contact and progress. But there is a material side to it that supplements all our patriotic feelings and all our sentimental relationships. There is the development of commercial intercourse. That is tremendously important to us and we should never forget in Canada that we have open to us free the greatest market in the world. All the Dominions have. And everything we can do to strengthen the United Kingdom and the other sections of the Empire we are adding to buying power that will redound to our advantage. The richer we can make the United Kingdom the more she is able to buy from us, and we must not allow

ourselves with narrow, selfish motives to think we can sell all we choose over there and buy nothing or very little. And remember, the British people respond to every gesture and overture of that kind and respond magnificently. You have only to look at our trade returns for the last two or three years to see how increased buying, which means increased international or inter-Empire intercourse, has improved our situation.

This Old Country of which we are so proud — sometimes we say phlegmatic; sometimes, I think personally, stupid over certain things — but if we have patience and give them an opportunity they always come to the surface and they are always on top. Because they think things through. They have a great international outlook and a world vision such as no other people in the world, and behind it all they have a genius for organization and character for setness of purpose that is unequalled anywhere in the world. That accounts for these little islands in the North Sea today being so far ahead of all other nations in their recovery. They went about it slowly, analyzed the situation. They arranged first things first. They said the important thing is (as it is in all business and even in domestic life) to have a sound, balanced budget. Otherwise you cannot keep up your household expenditure. You cannot get your credit at your grocer unless you are in a good financial condition. And these Britishers lay the foundation so solidly and well by seeing to it. We re-established our credit in the world and then the question of unemployment and wages and hours will follow in due course inevitably.

What has been the result? When the Chancellor was able to balance his budget it was proclaimed to the world everywhere and the monies flowing to great organizations, and individuals in various parts of the world, where conditions were unstable and uncertain, began to find their way to London. Because there was safety and insurance against loss over there, and the result is that London is full of money today. The banks are overflowing with money. Large amounts of it come from other parts of the world. In fact they have so much money there they

won't pay you interest on a deposit. You cannot get anything. They say, "We will take your money and take care of it for you but we do not need it. The result is that money has been so cheap that people who have it begin to look for investments. It enables reconstruction; helps expand business. Great Britain is going ahead because of that as no other country in the world, and it is due to the foresight, to the astuteness, to the business constructive capacity of these people who are sometimes called "stupid Englishmen." One has only to live there a little while and even obtuse as I am, I have got saturated with it, because you see it everywhere.

Just think, this little old country, these little islands in the North Sea, have speeded up business in the past year until they have absorbed nine hundred thousand unemployed men. And it is going on. Just think what that means—three hundred men going back to work every day.

Now the hope of Canada—and I am not going to talk politics; I have no politics—the assurance of our recovery is the fact that we have pursued exactly the same principles on the same lines. We are seeking to make the foundation of our future safe and secure, and having done that, the rest of it will inevitably and undoubtedly follow.

I should like to see more people coming to Great Britain from Canada. There are more people from Canada in London today than from any other country in the world. I do not know where they get the money, but it is an indication that there is money somewhere in this country. I have been living there three and a half years, closely in touch with all Canadian movements and visitors, and I have been going there all my life visiting for long periods, and it is a matter of universal comment that you cannot walk half a block that you do not meet a couple of Canadians. That is the best thing can happen us. True, a lot of them are school-girls and boys that are coming on. But when they get proper perspective and knowledge and the wealth of inspiration that is all about you in the old country, it promises great things for the future of this country. But I would like to see more business men come. Napoleon said these chaps were a nation of shopkeepers. And so

they are. They are the hardest bargainers in the world. Because they know business and business methods. But they will reason with you and talk with you and when they give you an undertaking they live up to it. If we had more business men making contacts with business men over there, learning their methods, becoming personally acquainted with the firm with which you are doing business; why, isn't it more satisfactory to write a letter to a man you have talked to and you know than it is to shoot one off in the dark to one whose name you only know. And so it is with the British people.

One example. I am reminded of it because of the presence of Mr. Matthews, Minister of National Revenue. In Great Britain it is nearly ninety years, almost a century since they had tariffs. They were regarded as obstructions to business and there was a good deal of feeling and criticism. And, of course, the officials who had to enforce these things did it with meticulous care to the point of irritation. The Minister says, "I'll say so." During the past year we were able to make direct personal contacts with the actual men who administer the law. The staff in my office and the staff in the customs office got to know one another. They lunched together, talked over their difficulties. When a complaint comes to my office now, one of the officials whose duty it is goes to the customs officer and talks to him. We don't write any more letters to him and we get things adjusted. And to supplement that this new energetic minister sends over several members of his staff. They went to Manchester and Dundee and Aberdeen—all over the place—Belfast, everywhere, and talked with the officials. Every business of every type is organized in that country and when you meet a group of men they represent a trade or an enterprise national in character, and nothing has happened in the three and a half years I have been there that has done so much to improve relationships by smoothing out little irritating pin-pricking difficulties as the contacts made by the chief officials from Canada with the chief officials of the administration over in Great Britain. That is the way to do business; personal contact.

I am through, only to say I am sure we are all most grateful to Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt and Lord Allenby for coming here. I keep telling people in England if they would only realize not only how welcome they are in this country, but what inspiration they give us, they would come here in greater numbers and we would be the better off for it.

THE CHAIRMAN:—I apologize to the High Commissioner for trespassing on his holiday. We are glad to hear him and to have him with us and we thank him for his remarks.

We have on our program for the Fall meetings some very eminent men from the British Isles—Lord Tomlin, an eminent jurist, and another eminent man from the British Navy, Sir Roger Keyes. Notices will be sent you in due course.

May I conclude by expressing our thanks and the thanks of the Canadian Club to Admiral Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt and the High Commissioner.