

(January 22nd, 1912.)

Canada's Foreign Relations.

BY PROFESSOR E. J. KYLIE.*

AT a regular meeting of the Canadian Club, held on January 22nd, 1912, Prof. Kylie said:

Canada was long the Thibet of North America, but of late years her isolation has been rapidly broken down. Our extending trade alone brings us each year into more intimate contact with foreign countries, not merely with Great Britain and the United States, but with China and Japan, with India and Africa, and with the countries of the Mediterranean Sea. This growing trade requires an increased amount of shipping—per head of the population our shipping is greater than that of our neighbours to the south—vessels conveying our merchandise defile through every channel and enter every harbour on the globe. The industrial and commercial activity which finds expression in this increasing foreign trade is in turn fed from outside sources. We must prime our pump with borrowed capital. This comes, of course, largely from Great Britain and the United States, but Turkey takes a place in the ranks of our creditors, and the maid-servants of Belgium are among the most persevering investors in our securities. I am not seeking to alarm you as to the magnitude of our debts. Sheridan was once asked if the thought of his debts kept him awake at nights; he replied that it should keep not him but his creditors awake. But I do ask you to realize that our credit is another link binding us to the outside world. More powerful, however, than these financial ties is the tie of blood holding us united with every community from which our immigrants come, not merely with the United States and Great Britain, but with Sweden, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Portugal, and China, and India, and Japan. In every case but those of India and Japan, we are taking a large tribute each year from these foreign states—the Austro-Hungary immigration last year totalled 16,285; the Italian, 8,350; the European immigration was more than half as large as the British or American; over

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5,000 Chinese came in 1910-1911 to keep us clean, making 11,324 altogether in Canada. The Japanese are forced by their own government to stay at home; there remain, however, some 13,128. The native of India we are holding back. I need scarcely say that by doing so we may stir to the depths multitudes of our fellow-subjects in the East—yet we can scarcely open our gates—we have enough unassimilable elements already. However sympathetic we may be towards the Sikhs, we may well hesitate to create blackmen's or yellowmen's labour here, or to bequeath to future Canadians the poor white and the half-caste. But it is unnecessary to dwell upon this aspect of the matter. I have said enough to prove that we are linked with foreign states by reason either of the citizens we accept or of those we turn aside.

These are some of the forces creating our foreign relations. We have next to inquire what machinery and what powers we possess for dealing with them. We have a foreign office efficient as far as it goes, and capable of safeguarding our interests, as appeared in the recent sealing negotiations. We have an extensive service of Trade Commissioners which, I am told, might be in many ways improved; we receive foreign consuls who discharge semi-diplomatic functions, and lastly, we make our own treaties and agreements affecting commerce or waterways. At this point our facilities and powers come to an end, perhaps I should rather say before this point, for even in the case of commercial negotiations we take overworked ministers from their desks and despatch them abroad to deal with officials and ministers who have a complete foreign and consular service at their command, or we send a Postmaster-General to Japan to secure the restriction of Japanese immigration, a course more suitable to the comic opera stage than to the everyday world. This is not a party matter; we should have to do the same to-day. But in larger matters we have not even this degree of influence, in matters of war and peace. Sir Edward Grey, at the head of the British Foreign Office, determines our foreign policy. He holds our lives and fortunes in the hollow of his hand, and last summer, when most of us were thinking of golf and holidays, he might have plunged us into war. It was to rescue the country from such a situation that some people brought forward the theory of colonial neutrality. I need not point out that the phrase itself is a contradiction in terms—no colony can be neutral—but the idea arose from the distinction between actually engaging in war and being at war.

We may not send troops to the Indian frontier, but we are actually at war when Great Britain is at war and are looked upon as an enemy by any enemy of Great Britain. International law recognizes no alternative. Hence, while we act as an independent state in making commercial treaties, we have no freedom of action where large issues are at stake. We cannot defend the lives and interests of our citizens abroad, as you will have noticed in this morning's papers. We must fall back upon the British Foreign Office, and ultimately upon the British navy. But the flaw in our citizenship is even greater than this. We offer to our new population merely "maimed" rights; the American, the Swede, or Italian, who takes out naturalization papers in Canada, finds his Canadian citizenship limited to our shores—once he leaves Canada he becomes an American, a Swede, or Italian. Probably most of these people remain here, but even then they may hesitate to lay down broad rights and privileges in return for the restricted rights and privileges which we can bestow. As you are aware, the whole matter was taken up at the last Imperial Conference and the basis of an Imperial Act agreed upon. Having framed the measure the Imperial Government submitted it to our Government last summer, but received no answer; it wrote again in November, but received no answer. Nothing can illustrate better our indifference to external affairs even when they penetrate it, if I may use the term, to the very heart of our commonwealth.

These are some of the difficulties in the present situation. No one is to blame for them; they have simply been the result of our growth. Nor can we hope under any system to escape from all difficulties and anomalies. Yet it is good policy when a certain set of anomalies is brought to our attention and is proved to be particularly irksome and inconvenient, to remove them, to push on a stage. In that empirical way British institutions have developed. I am the more convinced that these anomalies must be removed when I consider the reason why we do not remove them. There may be found, on occasion, grounds which justify inaction—they cannot be found in this case. We plead that we are developing our resources. We are, it is true, borrowing capital, and getting rich by a clever use of it, but the fact would serve as an excuse only if we were a thrifty and saving people. We are notoriously wasteful and extravagant; the money sunk in some of our public works would set up a foreign service. And the real danger is always present that those who are stooping constantly to pick up wealth, will become so bent and stooped

that they cannot straighten themselves up to face the world. They will but develop a sort of moral lumbago. There is a certain value in material development, but you can never bring up a virile race on box-cars and canals. The second reason for indifference is more powerful and more interesting; we are jealous of our autonomy, and fear that if, to determine our foreign relations we joined a league of British dominions it might in some way be jeopardized. It is true that we struggled for self-government, but we have secured it; no one wishes to take it from us. Of course, the existence of colonial autonomy is hard to establish—some one here may have wondered if he could choke himself to death—but the only possible proof would have awkward consequences. Still, if Canada wished to assert her independence to-morrow, no one would declare war upon her; there can be no American civil war within the British Empire. The whole situation is unthinkable. I assume, therefore, that we enjoy autonomy, and that as an autonomous state we can decide upon our destiny. We urge as the last plea in our own behalf that we have no interest in these foreign complications and wars, that we wish this continent to stand for peace. But my whole argument has been calculated to prove that we are concerned with things abroad; we are certainly concerned with China and Japan and India when we keep out their people; we need open and safe sea-routes, we need the open door in the East, but these sea-routes and the open door depend upon the European balance of power, so that the silent and bloodless struggle which goes on in the North Sea determines the security and peace of the world; even the Monroe doctrine, and American control of the Panama Canal depend upon the preservation of the equilibrium in Europe. We have been advised to keep out of the vortex of European militarism. Unfortunately the vortex is coming to us. China, Japan and Germany and the United States, are all bringing it upon us. The truth is that as long as certain issues between black and white, white and yellow, races are unsettled, states must remain on their guard. You are devoted to the cause of peace. I never know how much of our love of peace is love of our pockets, but probably a great part of it is genuine; in any event, we must not hide it under a bushel; if we have high ideals, if we have a gospel to preach, we must set our ideals up before men, we must proclaim the gospel to the world. Even to maintain peaceful relations with our neighbours we shall need the full equipment of a civilized nation. I think it may even be contended that the maintenance of peace will require

more delicate and far-reaching international systems than the present order demands. It is not necessary that you should understand the power which you expect to fight—a few prejudices and antipathies are a better preparation—but you must understand its position and politics thoroughly, if you are to keep peace with it.

I have tried to prove that we have foreign relations and that they require adjustment—Canada cannot travel much longer on a child's ticket. I shall be asked at once how they are to be adjusted. My only answer is that they must be studied and understood before any satisfactory scheme for their settlement can be arrived at. Study is what we need at this juncture. I am not here to give tips to statesmen. It is clear, however, that we must either join in an effective league of British dominions or set up as an independent state. You will not go far into the subject without finding yourself at the meeting of these two ways. And in justice to ourselves we should appoint a non-partisan delegation representing mainly the Dominion Parliament, but also other interests in the country, and have it meet similar delegations from the other British states in a convention where the whole matter of defence and foreign relations could be properly settled. The present situation may easily prove expensive and dangerous. That matters least of all—for we can foot the bills—what matters is that it is inconsistent with the dignity and honour of a high-spirited people. We cannot be content with a narrow and stunted existence, we cannot feed on the crumbs from other people's tables, we cannot fail to impress our hopes and ideals upon the world, we cannot turn aside from those burdens and responsibilities which the best races have carried so far on the road.