

(November 19, 1934)

Our Imperial Sanity

BY RIGHT HON. LORD DORCHESTER.

PRESIDENT JAMES:—Today the Canadian Club is honored in having as its guest a British peer in the person of Lord Dorchester. A veteran of South Africa, at the outbreak of war a commander of yeomanry, he immediately took active service in France and was one of those who took part in the historic retreat from Mons. He saw service in the Balkans and was present at the occupation of Constantinople. For his military service he received the Croix de Guerre from France; two orders from Russia, the Eagle from Serbia and from Great Britain the Order of the British Empire.

It is, however, as being the direct descendant of Sir Guy Carleton, first Baron Dorchester, that his visit here is so exceptionally welcome and interesting. Sir Guy Carleton was governor-general of Canada from 1768 to 1778. He commanded the British forces at Quebec during the revolution. To quote: "It is due to Sir Guy Carleton that Canada today is a country itself and its people an independent nation."

May I ask His Lordship to convey our hearty welcome to Lady Dorchester. The University of Toronto plays a big part in the life of this city and it is particularly interesting to us to note that her Ladyship is the grand daughter of Chancellor de Blaquière, whose portrait hangs in Hart House.

In civil life our guest is an enthusiastic sportsman. That is borne out by the fact that he is here in Toronto at this time as judge of the Winter Fair. Nothing more than that need be said. It gives me very great pleasure to call on Lord Dorchester to address you on the subject of "Our Imperial Sanity."

LORD DORCHESTER:—Mr. President and members of the Canadian Club, the President very kindly referred to the retreat from Mons and I am afraid I cannot emulate that now. I am afraid I would like to run away. But here I am and I have to go on. I was flattered when I received your invitation to this luncheon but this feeling of gratification was greatly subdued when your High Commissioner in London, the Hon. Mr. Ferguson, intimated I would be expected to address your great Club. I protested, but in vain. He said, "Oh you can do it easily enough; tell them anything you like." Well, I know you are not all as gullible as that. And he said, "At any rate, you won't be allowed to speak for more than forty-five minutes." Because, as he told me, the members of the Canadian Club were very busy people and did not have the time to listen to speeches at greater length.

Well, gentlemen, it was no use objecting. I realized no speech meant no luncheon. And so I decided I would have a shot at it and also I was not going to forego the honor of meeting the members of the Canadian Club. You might wonder why anybody would hesitate to address your organization and I think it is comprehensible, when you consider what it stands for in the life of this country. We have hundreds of clubs identified with every objective in the field of literature, art, and so forth—their name is legion. But your Club stands in an entirely different category. So far as I know, it is identified with no particular party; its only aim is loyalty to Canada. Now a club of this sort could not help but attract visitors from overseas and, with proverbial Canadian hospitality, those visitors, great or humble as the case may be, have found themselves your guests. And, therefore, you are accustomed to very good speaking. I came up on the train yesterday with a man who said, "You are going to speak to the Canadian Club? Why Ramsay Macdonald addressed them some time ago." And he thought Smuts was another speaker before you. And so on. It was an awful thing for a poor fellow to be let in for. It sent my temperature up several degrees. You have listened to royalty, to pro-consuls of every kind, to Prime Ministers, to gov-

ernor-generals and viceroys; great scientists have explained their latest inventions and theories in scientific language, which probably none of you understood; you have listened to commercial heads who have attempted to give you the secrets of their successes, or as many of them as they thought it expedient to disclose; to great soldiers, shipping and railway magnates, and I understand you have been the target of great admirals and field marshalls even have called you to attention. And I dare say from time to time subtle politicians have endeavored to persuade members of this organization to regard things through a politician's glasses. But I am told you are not political so they did not succeed. And I assure you of my great humility in following such a galaxy of talent and oratory, standing before you as I do, with nothing of greater prominence about me than being a retired Colonel of the British Army, whose public interests are a few House of Lords Committees, and whose private activities are confined to raising dairy cattle and pigs. How can you expect an oration from a man like that? And I dare say you wonder, as I have wondered myself, that I should have the effrontery to come here and address you and take as the subject for my speech the resounding title of "Imperial Sanity."

Well, I dare say that phrase puzzles you, but I do not know how to express what I consider to be the most outstanding characteristic of this Anglo-Saxon race of which the Empire is composed. As I translate national sanity I define it as combined qualities of common sense, tolerance of others, determination—or as our enemies say, obstinacy; and apropos of that, two such widely apart mentalities as the Kaiser and Napoleon both complained about our obstinacy and with very good reason. And also, I think, we have the ability to face facts, however unpleasant. I think you have it. And then the whole of this combined is leavened by that saving sense of humor, which enables us to laugh when extremely uncomfortable and very frightened.

It just happens to be our luck to possess these qualities. We don't deserve them, probably, but we do possess them, and it is a combination of qualities that has enabled the

British Empire to fairly weather the storms that have been wracking this unfortunate world since 1914. I may be quite wrong in my contention, but facts are stubborn things and the fact remains that the British Empire is beginning to forge ahead and find her own level again, while the rest of the world is still living in political crises, revolutions, political assassinations, tyranny, dictatorships — things which we cannot stand for because we are so sane. And, gentlemen, I can assure you, and I think again as a result of our sanity, that England is absolutely now going ahead. She really is. I hear the same from Australia and Africa and New Zealand — I think she is rounding the corner. And you yourselves are best able to judge what the situation is in Canada. I know this, gentlemen, that our prestige stands very high in the world today. I am not going to say higher than anybody else's, but just as high. I am going to visit another country after this.

Now, gentlemen, having ascertained that we are extremely sane and all the rest of it, we have a few qualities in addition; I won't touch on them; it is not necessary. I do not suppose there is really a good man in this room, not even myself. Be that as it may, as a nation, I think we really are rather good.

And now I come to my reasons for thinking so. When I first joined the British Army thirty-eight years ago His Majesty's service offered us very few financial inducements. In fact a young officer without private means could not afford to live in England, which I think was a good thing, because it drove him abroad. And if we did not have very much inducement to join, at any rate foreign service enabled us, with the extra pay allowance we got, not only to live but to live fairly well. Also it gave me enormous opportunities for pursuing my hobby. One of my hobbies has been to try to get into the minds of other people, wherever I may be. I am inquisitive. I like to know even what they eat, how they cook it, where they get it; how they earn a living. I like to know about the interior economy, foreign policy; how law is administered whether they are just to "the stranger within the gates." I can tell you I know of several countries in Europe I

should be very sorry to have a lawsuit in, because I know, unless I could afford a bribe, I could not win my case. You cannot say that about any country in the Empire. Therefore you might call my study not so much a scientific as a domestic study. And His Majesty's service enabled me to pursue these inquiries. I think the army was a better channel for this collecting than either the navy or the mercantile marine. The naval man or sailor of any sort touches hundreds of ports. He only touches the fringes of these countries. After all, the great ports of the world, Kiel, Portsmouth, Malta, Toulon, Trieste, are all much the same, except for local conditions which may vary according to climate and people. The same thing applies to Montreal, Quebec, Southampton, Liverpool, Hamburg—wharfs and cranes and docks and customs sheds and a background of public houses. You cannot know a country when you just know that.

A soldier lives cheek by jowl with the inhabitants. They may be friends or enemies and if he is ordinarily observant he can study them at close hand and understand their ways; and after all, a soldier remains in a country, it may be months or years. Just think, too, of the opportunities the British army used to offer us. If you didn't want to serve too far from home, you could start with the Channel Islands and learn about the French, work south to Gibraltar and study the Spaniards—and further, to Malta and Egypt and, if you were adventurous-minded, you went into the Sudan and learned about the Dervishes. Eastward, there was Somaliland and India, with three hundred million inhabitants, with every kind of religion; that was a country you could spend your life in and not learn all about it. Eastward we go still to Burmah, Singapore, Hong Kong, Peking, and to the great ports of China, many of which are 1,300 miles inland, as far as Montreal is from the Atlantic. With regard to myself I did not visit all these countries.

I only touched a fraction of them. I spent a few years in South Africa in peace and war; also in Egypt; I had a spell of India and I put in about three years on the west coast of Africa in regions that lie between Timbuc-

too and Lake Chad. After that owing to malaria I retired and went into business and fortunately they had connections all over Europe and for the next seven years, I spent all my time travelling between great capitals and commercial centers—Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy and so on. I think with the exception of Spain Portugal and Norway and Sweden I know fairly well every country in Europe, or did up to that time. Then came the war and my education continued, because in the beginning of it I found myself after three years in the Balkans, with its mixture of nations between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, which cause us trouble yet. You remember somebody wrote to St. Paul asking him to come over into Macedonia and help them. That appeal would be applicable today. Where there are Serbians, Greeks, Turks, the children of these various racial divisions will not talk to each other, which shows you they are not reconciled to each other yet.

After the war came the armistice and I found myself in Constantinople, living with the Turk, and after that I was sent on a mission to Batum to the great oil fields, across the Caspian and to the great steppe plains of Russian Turkestan. After this I came home.

All I am trying to do is to prove I have had some opportunity of getting into the minds of other people and it is based on that that I say Thank God for our National Imperial Sanity.

I desire to thank you, Mr. President, for your kind allusion to my ancestors; the sins of the fathers are visited on the children and here is a case in point. Thank you very much for listening.

PRESIDENT JAMES:—Your Lordship, may I on behalf of the members of the Club express the thanks of the members for your address. May I also say we hope the visit of Her Ladyship and yourself will be most enjoyable.