

(March 14, 1927)

## Poland

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM CALDWELL, MA., D.SC.

PRESIDENT SEDGEWICK: Gentlemen, we are delighted to have with us as our guest today Professor Caldwell, who is Professor of Philosophy in McGill University and has held that position for a good many years. Now, professors always keep themselves unspotted from the world and some of them keep themselves quite out of touch with the world, but that has not been the case with our guest. During the last few years he has spent his vacation times in studying conditions in Europe, particularly during these last two years in Poland and during the two years before that in Czecho-Slovakia. The services that he rendered to the latter country were such that I think I may say the people as well as the Government of that country conferred on him their most distinguished honor, that of the Order of the White Lion. I have very much pleasure in introducing Professor William Caldwell.

PROFESSOR CALDWELL: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Toronto Canadian Club, I assure you that I appreciate very deeply the honor and I am sure the responsibility of appearing before you today. I can only give you a bit of myself, imperfect as that may be. Your Chairman asked me to come here and speak on my travels in Poland and Czecho-Slovakia. I shall try to do so, and I shall try to single out a few things that are interesting to us in Canada. I am interested in these two countries, and I was welcome in one because I knew something about the other. They have an Entente, called the Little Entente, consisting of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia.

Poland has twenty-eight millions of people and re-constituted Poland is, of course, a wonderful thing in the life

of Europe. Altogether these two countries in the Little Entente represent some eighty to one hundred millions of free peoples from the Baltic to the Black Sea, who have acquired a new freedom for which they fought for centuries; and insofar as in them lies, the old militarism has been stamped out. They are in the world for the social, economic, intellectual, political co-operation of today.

I was fortunate enough to be given a year's leave of absence by my university. I told the authorities of McGill I wanted a year to study the new Europe, and so on. It was given me. I had seventeen months, first in England and Scotland. I was at a meeting in London in 1922 for the reformation of the world's ideals. People talked of the new order, a great many people in England. I met a lot of these men, and they arranged that I should see them in continental Europe when I went there. In talking to one of these men I made up my mind I was going to see this country, Czecho-Slovakia, which fascinated me for several reasons. I wanted to see the new Europe which had grown out of old Austria. I chose Prague, coming up from Italy, from which to commence my study. It was the capital of Bohemia. It is now the capital of Czecho-Slovakia. I chose Prague as the centre of Europe. A great many important things pass through Prague. It connects Paris with Constantinople and north with south. A great many currents of international life cross each other at Prague.

Czecho-Slovakia consists of old Bohemia, old Slovakia which suffered very acutely under Hungary, old Móravia, which was a kind of independent state, and Carpathian Ruthenia. After the declaration of the freedom of the new peoples, Czecho-Slovaks, they came together and proclaimed themselves a state, and thus three countries came together. They comprise some fourteen millions of people, with three million Germans who were in Bohemia, and Czecho-Slovakia undoubtedly had troubles with the ideas of the Germans coming pacifically or not into the new country. Czecho-Slovakia from the beginning had the problem of reconciling these Germans in a new State, and old Slovakia, more Catholic and ignorant. Then Bohemia has been eminently successful in bringing them together. I had the privilege

very early in 1923 of meeting the two great leaders of the country. Masaryk, the President, is in a sense the great old man of Europe. It is very essential that he shall live and continue to be President of the country. He has had a heroic life. He was a Professor of Philosophy, a man of humble birth and a member of the Austrian Legislature who lived for the freedom of his country and in 1915 he left his country and went with Racine, the Minister of Finance, to Vienna. Both were in danger of losing their lives. They had the foresight to see that the war would have to result as it resulted, and that Germany would have to break up, and they began to plan for the future constitution of the country on the theory that Germany would lose the war. They were in England, and the United States, and in London, and Masaryk lived to come back, although a Protestant, although a very great patriot. He came back as the one man whom Protestants, Jews, Catholics and Germans saw as the man to rule over the destinies of the country. He paid me the compliment of a brother professor, and told me of the first ten minutes that he had been in this country. "I had not been ten minutes in Canada," he said, "before I noticed the difference in temperament between Canadians and the people of the United States." He believes in a United States of Europe. "Even you here propose the making of perhaps one great Democracy?" he suggested. I told him that I appreciated what he said, but that in the British Empire we did not practise the melting pot theory, that without the King, our Empire would go to pieces, and while we appreciate the United States it is a good thing we appreciate the two civilizations in North America. And he said, "I think you are right." Then there is Dr. Benes, the most brilliant Foreign Minister in Europe. I have seen him two or three times. He came running to meet me and said, "Come and sit down and I will tell you anything you want to know. I am going to try a very extraordinary thing in the coming ten years of degeneration and difficulty in Europe. I want to see my country between the two extremes of Bolshevism and Mussolini-ism." What those two men said about the free development of their country has come to pass. I know the industries of Bo-

hemia. I have been in all kinds of places in the country, factories, schools, colleges and churches. I saw the educational, social and political progress of that country.

It is a rich country, Czecho-Slovakia. It was the main source of supply of the Austrian Empire. The great life of this country has gone on. It has come to stay, and it has realized two things it set out to do: the conciliation with the three million Germans and the Slovak Catholics. I know these Germans intimately. They have at last come in. Czecho-Slovakia has achieved, last October in the new Government, the co-operation of the two Germans. There are two Germans in the Government, and there are two men from ultra-Catholic Slovakia, and they have come in. I met two priests and they confessed to me that they owed their life to Bohemia. So Czecho-Slovakia has achieved what she has set out to do: unify the German element, placate Slovakia, and unify the life of the country. Three or four years ago it was regarded as one of the bright spots in Europe, and it is now one of the most solid countries in Central Europe. There are a great many political parties, mostly tinged with a kind of socialism. Pamphlets and schools are giving them a political education. The only way to fight Communism and discontent is to attack them. It has accomplished what it set out to do. Now, I was in the Silesian part of Czecho-Slovakia in one of the greatest iron works in the world where they have got mines on the ground actually nine miles across. They have Poles, Austrians and Germans working in these works, and there is social content. They have achieved a social condition in many controversial industrial regions, and Czecho-Slovakia is one of the forces of the world against Communism.

Now I come to Poland for a little while. I came to go to Poland as a natural consequence of being in Czecho-Slovakia. The Polish people gave me the opportunity and made arrangements for me to see the country. In May of 1925 I was going to Poland and I told Masaryk, and he said to me, "I am very glad you are going. We are becoming increasingly friends with Poland and it is essential for Europe that we should have an independent Poland." Frankly, Germany has said, "Why, of course, we cannot

expect to be satisfied with conditions in the Corridor, and so on, and we hope things will be changed." I was in Germany a lot before the war and I believe in the newer freedom and I believe in Czecho-Slovakia and Poland as necessities and just as interested in the treaties on the east guaranteeing the *status quo* as on the west.

I went to Poland in international interests, believing that Poland was necessary to the rest of us. I had not been there many weeks before I saw that Poland, beside being a stopgap, had a great deal to give to the life of Europe. Napoleon once said that one of the greatest mistakes in his life was not to have freed Poland. If he had, there might not have been the reaction in Europe. He partly freed it, as the Kingdom of Warsaw, and made one of his friends the Duke of Dantzig.

I soon saw that Poland had a great deal to give to Europe. Poland for long has been the guardian of Christian, Latin, Greco-Roman ideals against the dynastic militarism of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, in Europe. She has four or five millions of Jews. She has had to be open to all currents of life. She has done a great deal for the freedom of Europe.

One of the good things she has done in Europe was the arresting of Bolshevism in 1920. It is to Poland that we owe the absence of Bolshevism in Germany and France today, and it is a debt that we can never repay. It is because Poland did this that Austria and Germany conspired together to abolish the existence of Poland, and the wicked joke of the Austrian Empire was that they celebrated Holy Communion over the broken body of Poland. It led to the belief that Poland was the crucified of the nations.

There is a heroic and a highly idealistic side to the history of Poland. I feel one of the greatest things Poland did for Europe was to arrest Bolshevism on the eastern front, and she is now fighting it by education of her people. I had a long talk with Grabski about the educational work of Poland and he convinced me that the only way of fighting it was by education. She is doing it well. She insists on a religious and ethical element in modern education. She stands for a spiritual, ethical republic, for co-operation with

other nations, no more bitterness against Germany, and to play her part in the life of the world. It is extremely important to the British Empire that a stable Poland should exist there between the nationalistic Russia in the melting pot and Germany, in view of our holdings in Egypt and Asia Minor, Afghanistan and India.

Poland has a great wealth of timber and agricultural resources. She was not sorry to admit that she profited from the Great Strike in Great Britain, and with the realization she gave a flat rate for the carrying of coal to Sweden and Norway. She has a tremendous export trade.

I repeat, then, that I am interested in these two countries because they constitute practically eighty to one hundred millions of people who have entered into the new life of the world and who desire to contribute to that life. I had the pleasure last summer of an interview with the great Marshal Pilsudski. He had just come from reviewing the legions at Warsaw. I saw then a remarkable man in uniform as I was ushered into his room and was asked even what I had in my attaché case, and finally came to his secretary, the Colonel, who said he did not want me to be hurried. We sat down alone and I told him all I had seen in Poland and he was courteous enough to pay me the compliment first as a Canadian and secondly as a Scotsman. He had been to Canada, he said, fell in love with Victoria, passed through Montreal, and was kind enough to say that he saw the part that Scotsmen were playing in the Empire. I returned it by saying that the northerners were doing a great deal for his own country. He was a northerner. I told him I believed in the Polish peasant. "Do you?" he said, "I am glad you have seen them." In some ways he said many remarkable things. "I am trying to make our people stronger so that they can feel this doctrine of responsibility," he said, "our country is all right." I said, "it is extremely important that if you are going to retain the confidence of Great Britain and America that there should be no more coups. Have you any fear of Bolshevism?" "No," he replied, "we are fighting it in the right way."

It was also my privilege last summer to visit the Corridor. The Corridor is a German term for a certain Polish

district between East and West Prussia. She was tolerated there. It was under the suzerainty of the Polish kings. Of course, afterwards it was under Germany until the recent turn of affairs. I wanted to see that Corridor region and I visited the great city of Dantzic last summer. I regard Dantzic as one of the key cities of Europe. Prussia has expressed the fact that she cannot be expected to be content. I think the people of Germany, on the whole, want democratic progress. She cannot touch anything Polish now. She is in the League of Nations. She would be told by Poland that she could not. Dantzic is a free state under the League of Nations and it has progressed enormously since it became a free state. I asked children there whether the Corridor was Polish or German, and they say it is Polish. And I admit that Dantzic has many of the external appearances of a German city. The Governor of the city is Dr. Hamel, who was brought there. He was a Prussian official. I met everyone in Dantzic. It is a free city governed under the League of Nations, and it has gone ahead by leaps and bounds, even under the handicap of the port being not her own, but being governed by an international commission. The Poles are building, at Gardinia, at tremendous expense, a port where they may have a navy if necessary. An admiral said of it, England need never worry, it will be purely defensive. It is on purely Polish territory. I found after all a body of liberal opinion among the merchants of Dantzic that is favorable to increased commercial relations with Poland because of the present increasing prosperity. It is destined to be one of the great cities of the world. In short, it is important that Germany and Prussia should stay as they are. I talked with a Professor and a millionaire who knows the practical side of Poland, and I asked, "What will you say to your German people when you go back?" "I will tell the Germans," he said, "not to antagonize the Poles. The time has come, God knows, not to fight any more." Poland is doing that. They are increasing the number of trains across the Corridor. I found a body of Liberal opinion in Dantzic that is favorable to giving Poland that free life that has come to her after one hundred and fifty years of oppression to stand for

the peace of Europe. Poland is impressed with the entry of Germany into the League of Nations, and impressed with Stresemann's declaration that Germany is now prepared to enter into and co-operate in the life of Europe. The Polish delegates said to me that they hoped he would keep his word. That is what they want.

Here then, are two countries that have accomplished what they set out to do. Poland is a Catholic country and the nobility is of traditionally Catholic faith, but very liberal Catholics, desiring a national religion for their country, and national co-operation with France and Czecho-Slovakia; and longing to be appreciated by England and America. I do not fear, having been in these two countries and knowing that each one has achieved what it set out to do. The liberation of Poland is a wonderful thing. These three countries have come together, at least, and the work of constituting a government of these three parts, having a government democratic yet strong and solid, is a very very great achievement and I tell you, then, that Poland is going ahead industrially very fast. English people do not know enough about Poland.

Poland is going to be prominent and if the Locarno arrangements subsist, Poland and Czecho-Slovakia will continue to exist indefinitely.

I wanted to see the manufactures of Poland. I visited Lodz. Vilna is a Polish town. It is as Polish as Canterbury is English. I came from Vilna to Lodz. I got out of a car at seven in the morning and was met by a delegate with a hot breakfast and got to Lodz about nine o'clock. The Mayor sent the engineer of the town with a car to take me all over the place. I said to the city engineer in French, "I want to see these great mines that have been supplying Russia for years," and he said, "Oh yes, we will show you those, but the thing we are proud of is our schools. The hope of Poland is her children. Will you come to see some of the schools and children?" It was in Lodz that some of the Poles said to the Germans, "Why, we cannot put these things right for ten or twenty years, but we want them put right if it takes fifty or sixty years. We want to run the place ourselves."

I found the irritation on the part of Poland against Germany is dying down. Prussia and East Poland admit they owe a great deal to Germany, although they are against the Germanization of their children. Czecho-Slovakia admits what they owe to German culture and German philosophy. They want co-operation with Germany and with each other, and the recognition of England and America.

I have always been welcome, not only because I am a Scotsman, which is enough for any man, but because I am a Canadian. That is what they said to me in these two countries.