

(October 27, 1919.)

## The Common Cause

BY MR. LOUIS TRACY, O.B.E.

*Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—my friends and fellow countrymen:—*I must confess that before coming here I was tempted greatly to do that which I have never done before; namely, write my speech. I knew I was coming before a distinguished audience. There is an old phrase, "show me your company and I will tell you what you are." I only had to look back through the list of statesmen, scientists, leading men who have addressed this club to realize I was following in distinguished footsteps. But I resisted the temptation. It would have been a pleasant thing for an author to have thrust some trick of his literary phrase in the published transactions of your society. I might have turned out, perhaps, an epigram or two. Had I done that, there would have been something artificial and something insincere about my remarks. I prefer rather to come among you as one of yourselves, as a man who has passed through the inferno as you have done, who is perhaps chastened in his views, chastened in his own self esteem, and to talk to you from the heart as I would talk from my own fireside, rather than depend upon the written word.

And before reaching the main part of my program to-day I wish to indulge in a few remarks, a few little reminiscences. It is slightly over twenty-three years ago, in the summer of that year, that my wife and I crossed the beautiful lake from Lewiston and first set foot in Toronto. So, I suppose, in that sense I am an older Torontonion than a good many men here. I saw your city under its past conditions. We arrived on a summer's evening, as I told you, and as we entered the harbor, beside the pier we saw a steamer crowded with school children who had been out on a picnic, and as a finale they sang, "God Save the King." I tell you, it brought tears to

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our eyes. We had been upon a long tour to the United States, met with consideration and friendliness, but to be met in this great country by the joyous singing of the National Anthem, we felt sure we were at home 3,000 miles from home.

And, coming here to-day, I have been struck by another fact; and that is, your singular modesty as a community. That may surprise you. Twenty-three years ago you had a city of over 100,000 inhabitants. To-day, I understand, you exceed half a million. Now, I know the world as it is pretty well, and I cannot recall any city which had over 100,000 inhabitants twenty-three years ago which has to-day quintupled its population as Toronto has done. Many other towns have grown where towns there were none, but there has been no such progress as that, in any settled community that I know of. If your record has been exceeded, it can only be in rare instances. Why don't you tell the world more about it? Had you been an American city it would have been published in *choctaw*.

I see, too, on all sides signs of great progress, great industrial activity. I saw new cities springing up as I came here on the train from Niagara Falls; and it seems to me that the old mistaken notion of Canada is passing from the minds of the English-speaking people. I am sure that in the insular environment of England, the parochial environment of our country, the prominent impression of Canada for half a century was a wrong one. Our people pictured you always as a country covered with ice and snow. Your climate was supposed to be unsustainable. I am sure that was a factor in determining the flow of immigration. I am sure, that if Canada had been known fifty years ago as it is known to-day, your far west would not have had to wait so long for its recent great era of development. That has passed. Our people, and bear in mind our people now is the British army, our people have seen your splendid youth come across to France and other parts of the continent. They have fought side by side and they have seen your magnificent manhood respond freely and spontaneously. They know of your deeds and fine soldiers and they argue that it must be a fine land that produces such fine men. Have no fear, Canada will not be misunderstood in the future. In the United Kingdom you have written your lesson deep in our hearts.

Well, talking as I know I am, to many veterans of the great war, it would be absurd for me to attempt to review any

of the war's military phases. I am not going to do that. I am going to try to give you what seems to me to be the lesson that it has taught us as individuals and as a people. At the beginning, in 1914, our Empire was apparently more prosperous, more settled, more contented, than it had ever been. Our people were making money. Labor was quiet, a little disturbed it is true, but progressing to a higher level. The people were better off, better housed, better fed, better educated, and had more amusements than they ever had. The world was contented and settled.

And I am afraid that that contentment brought about a certain individualism. Personally, to use a phrase familiar to all of us after the war, I had "dug in" in a little town on the north coast of England, Whitby, and I had settled down from the roving life. I thought, for the rest of my days I would be content to turn out two or three books a year; and with a pleasant, not large, but comfortable income, I could see my boy started in life in University and afterwards in a career. In other words, I was fixed. Then the rude awakening of August, 1914, when Germany challenged the world; and for a time I, like others, resented the burden placed upon us. It seemed hard that my pleasant and enjoyable life should be broken up, that I should be torn up by the roots from the place I had secured. It seemed hard that my boy, instead of going to university, should have to give—as I then thought—at least a year of his life to military service.

But that phase soon passed, self was soon forgotten; all that was before us was to sacrifice ourselves to the common good. If I lost my fortune, which I have done; if I lost my boy, which I have done; if I lost my home and my family,—my poor wife will never again know that her boy is dead; if all those things have come upon me as an individual, what did it matter that for the few years I am living that I have to suffer? The great thing was that that which our nation was built upon, the principles which made us great, should be maintained.

And I have no fear for the future. I heard a man say the other day here that he was neither a pessimist nor an optimist. I rather disagree with him. I am distinctly an optimist. I believe in the future of the British Empire, in the future of the race. I believe in my soul that the nation that produced the million dead who lie on the Western front and elsewhere, the nation that produced the two and a half millions of maimed

and crippled men who are still with us can produce, if necessary, more millions for the same high purpose. I have no fear whatever. We have struck out in a new road, a finer and a grander road than ever, and we will continue to tread it for many a century.

"Self-sacrifice" was the motto of a man, who perhaps, is not given his due. I refer to the late Sir Cecil Spring Rice, British Ambassador at Washington. There was a man, student, scholar, most charming character, who conducted negotiations of great importance with very great skill; and who died only in harness. But because he was of a retiring disposition, because he never advertised, I am afraid that many millions of his countrymen do not know of his greatness who ought to know. That, then, is the text of my few words to-day, the necessity of self-sacrifice. It faces us now just as much as it faced us on August 4, 1914. We have got to sink ourselves in the common lot. That is what I had in my thought when I said I would speak about "The Common Cause." That, I think, is our future. We must endeavor to get away from narrow sectarianism, from narrow feelings of parties; we will always have parties, but over and above that must come the sense of duty to our mother land. The mother land is the whole race, the whole people;—a people made up of many, many races,—one great family working for the common cause. If we do that, I think we may survive the test of what the years have in store for us.

There are, it is true, sections of English-speaking peoples who are somewhat discontented. We have, of course, with us those pro-Germans who speak English. We have a majority perhaps of one great section of our Empire very much discontented,—I speak of the Irish people, and I think even they in time will come to us conscious that they made the mistake of their lives as a nation in not taking up the sword which was given on the Fourth of August, 1914. I think they regret it now. But you must remember that, although perhaps a majority of them are opposed to British rule for very, very mistaken reasons, there is still a magnificent minority that did much to retrieve the failure of the others.

I am, as you see, skipping from subject to subject rather rapidly because I am pressed for time. Well, closely allied to the question of national sacrifice comes that of social regeneration; and there we are faced at once with the great quarrel between capital and labor. Even there I am an optimist. I

do believe that in our people as a whole, right through the Empire, there is a sub-stratum of common sense that will extract them from present muddles. I am no prophet, I am not here to offer you a panacea for this vexed question; but I do believe that in most men's minds there is a sense of fair play, there is a sense of the truth of that statement that he who will not work, neither shall he eat,—but I do think that, if a man works, he should eat, and eat well; he should be well clothed, well housed; his children should be well educated. He should have a fair chance. The workingman and the capitalist should have almost similar goals to strive for. I think our people may be brought to see that that is a possible achievement.

All standards have their function, naturally. Take, for instance, the principal one, the vital one, the money market. Why, all of us here remember the time when, in England at least, we regarded a war budget of one hundred millions sterling as almost prohibitive. And then came the period when, with certain social upheavals and new ideas such as old age pensions and the rest, there came a period when our budget reached two hundred millions. Then the capitalists said our country was going to the dogs. The bank reserves, the gold reserve in the Bank of England, amounted to about fifty-three millions sterling. With fifty-three millions in the Bank of England we were solid, and how solid we were the status of the British pound spoke for itself.

What is the situation to-day? Great Britain alone, has entered into indebtedness of eight thousand millions sterling—imagine it, eight thousand millions sterling. The United States has contributed about six thousand millions sterling, France about six thousand millions sterling; our defeated enemies have a staggering and enormous liability loaded on to them. In other words, and I speak not as a financial man but as a man with some degree of common sense, gold has gone down to microscopical quantities as compared with paper currency; and it is just as easy to print five pound notes as to print one pound notes; just as easy to print one hundred dollar bills as one dollar bills. The printing machines will turn out your money. What is behind them? Credit, trust in each other, and faith. There must, of course, be retrenchment. We cannot go on at the present basis. There must be a time when the great treasuries of the world will put their heads together and say, "is the gold held?"

Extravagance of preparedness for war on the present basis must be cut down. I think it will be cut down. I think the time will come very soon; and in that, I think, you will find the Genesis of the League of Nations. Never mind what you may call it, article one or article ten, that isn't the point. The point is that in the heart of every reasonable man and woman in the land there is a feeling that no such monstrous thing as the German attack on humanity must ever again be permitted; that we will bind ourselves together to stop it, to eradicate from the human mind even those thoughts that will make it possible. That is the true League of Nations; and that is, I think, now with us.

We have one great danger to face, and I wonder whether some of you quite realize its nature. In my youth, and there must be some of you who shared the same belief, Thomas Carlyle was a sort of God to us, an inspired prophet; and I am sure that to Carlyle I owed my ideas of the greatness, the thoroughness, the efficiency, of the German nation. I am quite sure of it. In one of his monumental books, *The French Revolution*, he gives us what I thought was the basis, the true actual cause, of the outbreak in France of the French revolution. But unfortunately, Carlyle, great as he was, did not know the facts. He did not go quite far enough, He did not estimate the secret poison, the effect of the secret poison, which even then had made itself felt in the world.

There was a man about one hundred and fifty years ago named Adam Weishaupt, a professor in a University. Perhaps you never heard of him, but he formed what he called the order of "Illuminati"; the wise, or the "illuminated" people; and he was the author of to-day's system of Bolshevism. He and the people of France did not know it, leaders of the Terrorists did not know it. He was a man with the original notion that in order to reconstruct society, you must first destroy society—destroy the whole social order and then begin from the bottom rungs to build up some fantastic notion of liberalism. Adam Weishaupt was really responsible for the French revolution. He very probably was a German Jew. We see to-day in Russia Bolshevism of the same tenets taught by Adam Weishaupt one hundred and fifty years ago, also brought about by a German Jew.

There is no question of what a great menace against humanity is this Bolshevism. There is perhaps a greater menace from Bolshevism than from monarchical Germany;

because, while the latter can be defeated in the open on the field of battle, the other one we must meet by argument, education, and tuition. And I am sorry to say that most of us, too taken up by our own personal concerns, do not devote the time necessary to going down into the marketplace and enlightening those whom we might meet and make wiser. That I regard as a very serious menace. It has taken root and flourished like a green bay tree in Russia, and it has already invaded other states. Sections of France seem to be ready for it. Unlimited efforts, backed by unlimited funds, have been put forth to bring about an upheaval in England and in the United States. I am not here as an alarmist. I am sure we can crush this monster. That it can be crushed cannot be questioned, looking over this Empire. This war has bonded us together in a way nothing else could do.

Well do I remember, in those first days of August, how we were thrilled to hear that Canada was coming, Australia was coming, South Africa was coming, India was coming; that all the British Empire had arisen together, cast aside differences, and banded together for the common cause. How it thrilled us. We knew your men were coming from the far west in this country. We knew there were men in the back parts of Australia who had marched 1,000 miles; and, as they marched, picked up new volunteers and picked up drill instructors and held drills in the little towns and villages as they passed through; and marched finally into headquarters almost a disciplined regiment of 1,000 strong to help the mother country, to protect her, to call themselves once more her sons.

Among the insidious methods adopted by the enemy, and he still is active, is to discredit the part borne by the British Isles in the struggle during the latter part of the war. They cannot, they dare not, say a word about what we did in 1914 and 1915; that is beyond them. But when the stage was set finally for the last great conflict, when Northern France rocked to and fro with battle; then they said that Britain was weakening, was beaten at heart, had her back to the wall; as some wretched fellow said the other day in New York, that she had her back to the enemy too. The man who said that never led American troops in the field. He was appealing to the basest instincts of the party to which he belongs, when he discredited the British efforts.

I took the opportunity of ascertaining from the war office just what proportion of British forces there were in the field in the critical period from March 1918, when the great German drive began, until July 1918, when we began the counter offensive which ended in victory on November 11. In March, 1918, the British alone,—exclusive of the Dominion of Canada, Australia, South Africa and India,—the British Isles alone had in France 1,620,000 men. In July, 1918, she had 1,602,000 men. In November, 1918, she had 1,573,000 men. Why did the figures shrink slightly? You know. The men have never left France; they are lying there still. So that, counting your own splendid troops of the Dominion, counting the Australians, the South Africans, the Indians, the British army never at that period had less than two millions in France. And during the whole of 1918 she bore the immensely larger part of the fighting.

And where were we not fighting? In Mesopotamia, Palestine, Egypt, Salonika, with the Italians, Russians; I imagine the truth is that three million, rather than two million, men would be nearer the number of men we had in the field in 1918. And beyond those three millions of men, you know what you were doing here, keeping up the full strength, still recruiting, had new men still coming forward to fill the gaps. And so had we in Great Britain.

Well, I apologized at the beginning for not preparing a speech but it is not necessary, is it? I could talk for another hour about things interesting to all of us, but I must not do that.

But it was a wise thought on the part of our rulers, and they are more able men, in the Cabinet in England, than they are often given credit for;—it was a wise thought that sent the Prince of Wales to Canada at this moment. I cannot help thinking that that boy, that that personality, represents the future of the British Empire. In some sense this fine young prince stands for the future of the English speaking world. The meaning of his title, "Prince,"—it comes from the latin "Princeps"—is "leader." Well, he is a leader. He has been trained in the greatest school of manhood on leadership that the world has ever seen, the battle fields of France. It is a matter of common knowledge to every soldier that he shared their difficulties and dangers through the four and a half long years. He never spared himself. It isn't generally known, I believe, but

he undeniably went over the top six times. And I was told by one who knows him well, and this is something I would not like the press to notice, I was told by a man in whom I have great faith; that the Prince told his friends that he wished to go over the top (in disobedience of orders I am sorry to say) for this reason, that he wished to fall with the other men of his race who had fallen in Flanders. He wished to be killed. He thought that, by doing so, he would make everlasting the claims of the British monarchy to recognition by our people.

Those of you who have seen him, who have watched his fine democratic demeanor, who have listened to his well-chosen if halting words; you believe that boy, I am sure. He felt it in his heart; he is just the kind of a boy who would do it. I was glad to hear it. I am very glad indeed.

I have here a private document issued by the Department of State of the United States; and which, therefore, can be taken, shall I say, with greater acceptance of reality than it would have been had it been put forward as a document by the British Government. It is a translation of a circular in Spanish issued by the Germans in Spain, issued to warn Spain to remain neutral. I must read one or two paragraphs. It says that besides a large amount of war material captured on the battle field the Germans have taken possession of an incalculable booty in France and Belgium, "including 417 high grade watches, 5016 average watches, 18,000 sets of underwear, 15,000 sets of embroidered women's handkerchiefs, 3,700 umbrellas and parasols, 1,575 silver spoons, and 523,000 bottles of champagne. These figures show a large increase over those of the campaign against France in 1871. In Belgium, besides money, our troops have confiscated old paintings valued at three million pesos. Due to the treachery of Cardinal Mercier and other priests who had endeavored to stir the people against the good hearts of the Germans, we were forced to teach a severe lesson. We have destroyed four Cathedrals, rendered 8 unserviceable, destroyed 27 churches, and rendered unserviceable 34." That circular is certainly on the side of moderation as far as numbers are concerned. But have you ever heard such extraordinary claims by an army, not a word about rifles and cannon and prisoners and legitimate spoils of war, not a word of that. They are telling peaceful and neutral people what will happen to them if they dare offend the Germans.

And that is why, gentlemen, I think I have shown you that when I am asked to forget and forgive the German I refuse to do either. As long as I live, I will never forget what he did, nor forgive him for what he did. Up until a year ago I would gladly have killed him. I tried my best on many occasions, prepared for it anyhow. Now I am not going to forgive him. He is going to be kept under for many a long day; and, God helping me, with word and pen I will fight him as long as my mind continues to work.

That is the message which I think is in me. I believe it is in the hearts of other English-speaking men and women. I know it is in the hearts of the great majority of the people across that lake, the American people. The German is not to be forgotten or forgiven. In the words of your fine soldier,

“To you from failing hands we throw  
The Torch—be yours to hold it high;  
If ye break faith with us who die,  
We shall not sleep...”

I shall not break faith. I have a son lying dead in France and, by God, I will remember him as long as I live.