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The Past and the Future of Our Race.

By the Right Hon. James Bryce.*

AT a special meeting of the Canadian Club held on May 8th, 1911, the Right Hon. James Bryce said:—

First let me thank you for the cordial welcome you have given me. It is not now the first time—I think this is the third occasion on which I have had the honor of meeting the Canadian Club of Toronto. And let me thank you, Mr. President, for the kind words with reference to what I have sought to do in Canadian interests as Ambassador to the United States. I may tell you, gentlemen, that three-fourths, perhaps four-fifths, of what I have done at Washington was work done for Canada. And that does not mean that Canada and the United States are particularly contentious neighbors; it means that you have a frontier of more than three thousand miles, along which a great number of questions necessarily arise of interest to Canadians as a whole; a great many communications have to pass between the two nations, and in those communications I am honored to be the intermediary. I count it a very great privilege to be honored in that way to serve Canada, and to be the embassy of Canada just as much as of the United Kingdom. I am proud of the unity of the Empire. We are all one: the interests of Canada are just as dear to me at Washington, and should be, as the interests of London. I assure

*The Right Honorable James Bryce is the British Ambassador to the United States. He is a publicist of the first rank, and the author of "The American Commonwealth" and other political works.

you that is the wish of the English people, and not only of His Majesty's Government that now is, but of any Government, with no difference of party; it is the desire we all entertain, to place the interests of the British Empire and all the self-governing dominions on a level with our own, and to make our army and navy, our diplomatic and consular service as much at their service as at the service of the United Kingdom.

The great object I have tried to attain, acting in co-operation with His Majesty's Government and your Government at Ottawa, has been to endeavor to remove as far as possible all possible circumstances which might have the effect of causing friction. There have been as a legacy from the past a certain number of questions left over which are capable of becoming matters of trouble, which might possibly become acute. Our object has been by anticipating these troubles and providing means for their solution, if in any way hereafter they might tend to become acute, to prevent serious trouble arising between these two nations. It is far better to preclude causes of quarrel than to cure them when they exist, for peacemakers are all blessed, but twice blessed is he who prevents a quarrel from emerging.

I am happy to think, and this has been my chief satisfaction in discharging my duties at Washington, that my task has been rendered easy by the good feeling that has subsisted between the two Governments, and among the two peoples. At no time has there been such a growth of friendly feeling as during the past few years.

A striking instance occurred two years ago at the anniversary of the discovery of Lake Champlain, when four regiments gathered in the northern part of the States of New York and Vermont; and when these regiments, one being composed of Highlanders, appeared on the shores of Lake Champlain, at Plattsburgh, formerly a scene of conflict, and saluted President Taft, no applause given to any regiment was so hearty and universal as that given to this Canadian regiment. That was a sign, simple but significant, of the feeling which I believe is to be found all along the border. It has made possible the conclusion of all those treaties which have been signed between the two countries, and is the best augury for the maintenance of those treaties and most friendly relations for all time between these two great, friendly nations.

I cannot stand before you without remembering that occasion four years ago, when in company with my venerated friend and instructor, and your venerated fellow-citizen, Mr. Goldwin Smith, I entered this very hall. I remember the

tempest of applause as he walked up the aisle. I remember being doubly struck, because I supposed that there was hardly a man in the room that agreed with his political opinions,—I didn't myself, although I was his pupil fifty years ago at Oxford,—but I was struck with the fact that in spite of the strength with which you hold political opinions here, and that he stood almost alone, that did not affect the respect and admiration which you entertained for his great qualities as a thinker, a writer, and a citizen. He was a powerful thinker, a clear and striking writer, and a good citizen. He was a great worker for the community in which he lived. He was interested in philanthropic projects, and always endeavored to approach questions, political or social, on a high plane. He applied a very high Imperial standard to everything: his maxims may have appeared almost Utopian; he was one of those men who illustrate high Imperial principles in their own lives, and bring up the standard of public affairs. His memory will live and deserves to live, not only in this city, of which he was a literary ornament, but also in our land, as one of the most brilliant and striking figures of our time.

I have been asked, Mr. President and gentlemen, to say a few words upon "The Past and Future of Our Race." Let me introduce them by saying a few words about the whole race of mankind in general in this generation of ours.

This is the first generation that has seen every part of the world brought into touch with every other part. The European civilized races control almost every part of the globe, for except China and Japan there is no part of the world but is now under the control of some European race. This extension of the sway of the European races has been accompanied by a far greater opportunity for fusion of the races, their blending together, than ever before. That is conspicuously the case in the British Empire, because we rule over a number of different races, different in speech, different in blood, different in color, from ourselves.

There is a broad conclusion I have been led to form regarding the contact of different races of mankind. Where races, although different, are comparatively near one another, of the same color and with qualities and habits not markedly incompatible, the fusion of these races is generally a good thing, and generally produces a cross-race or mixed race which is at least as good as either of the original races, and generally combines a number of the good qualities of both. The most familiar instance of this kind is the mixture of the Celtic and the Teutonic races in the British Islands. If there are any

Scotchmen here, which I think is not improbable,—I see one (Dr. J. A. Macdonald), and I believe there are a good many more,—they will bear me out, that owing to the blending of races in Scotland and the north of Ireland, you strike a man of unusual activity, persistence, and fertile capacity. I think the same thing might be said of the blending of Teutonic and Slavonic peoples in Germany, producing a very capable, energetic, forceful race. I think you will find that, generally speaking, wherever two races mix by blood and marriage which are somewhat alike one another, the result is good.

Now the contrary appears to be true where the races are far apart. Of course we are only at the beginning of the scientific study of this subject. But the blending of the white race with the black, or the white with the Indian, or the negro with the Indian race, has not been shown to produce good results. Take the negro race, or the Indian (whether the North American Indian or the East Indian). It might be thought that you must have an infusion of white stock to improve the race; but whether you do improve it so, is not known; indeed the facts so far as known might be taken to prove the other way. I am not attempting to dogmatize, but certainly we may say it is not proved, and it is safest for us in the meantime not to encourage the mixture of races which are not near one another, as it would seem that those races that differ in color could not mingle their blood for the production of a good strong mixed race. It would appear in many cases, that the pure race (East Indian, or native American), is quite as good as, if not better than the mixed race obtained by commingling with Europeans. The Aztecs and Zapotecs are quite as good as the mixed race produced by the native Mexicans and Spaniards mingling. I think the same is true of the negroes and the whites.

Lastly, there is no reason to despair of any race. The study of history and the conditions in which nations have advanced, entitle us to believe that we must not set bounds to the possibilities of improvement of any backward race. Under conditions that were unfavorable the native American race has shown potentiality of great advancement. And the condition of the negroes now compared with their state when they came out of slavery also shows great advance: they came out of bondage without a penny to their names, and now they own property worth more than four hundred million dollars,—an evidence of industry and intelligence with which no one credited them in slavery. So don't let us be despondent even about backward races, but let us believe that Providence may

have reserved conditions of prosperity for them when they come into more favorable conditions. Therefore don't let me part from you in a pessimistic mood. Nevertheless, their difference from the white is still so great that it is better that the two bloods should remain distinct. We can't say that native races, such as the aboriginal races of this continent, are not capable of rising to a far higher level than in the past.

Now a few words as to our own race. It is an instance of the happy results that follow from the blending of different elements. In England and Ireland the aboriginal Celtic elements were found, in Wales and most of Ireland, and the north of Scotland; the Teutonic element came later; then the Norwegian and Danish, and later a small Norman invasion. All these blended to form one homogeneous race, out of which the Scotch and Welsh and Irish serve to make the blending more marked, each one being complementary to the others. There is great gain in the blending of these different elements, welded together by living our history together in the same small island subject to the same influences, so that we have developed a very strong type of national character and national patriotism. We have formed institutions that have become so characteristic that they bear transplanting. Institutions formed mainly in England, political institutions down to the seventeenth century, when they began to take their complete shape, have been made the model by all the other nations that desire to establish self-government among themselves in other parts of the world. They have been transplanted bodily to the British self-governing dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Newfoundland, where they are directly reproduced, with the form of the British Cabinet and Government under the British Crown. This is the great and definite result of the homogeneous character of the constitution established in England in the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Now within the last two centuries a new phenomenon has been introduced. The British people spread itself out over the world, first in the thirteen colonies which separated themselves from the mother country in the eighteenth century; later in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and to a somewhat less extent at the Cape. It is somewhat remarkable that in these two countries, Canada and the Cape, the blending of the foreign element has produced a good strain; it confirms the theory I have advanced, that if races are near each other, if they have friendly relations, can intermarry, and can understand one another, it would probably have good results for them to mingle; and within forty or fifty years the stock

would be not inferior to either in its strength of attachment to the mother country.

But now we come to a very interesting question, gentlemen, whether the British race, transplanted to these new climes, under different conditions of life, will begin to separate itself into divergent types of British manhood in Australia, in New Zealand, in Canada, and in South Africa? It is a question upon which at present we can only speculate; the phenomena are only beginning to show themselves, but we don't know how far the facilities now enjoyed in a growing ease of intercourse, a common literature and a common public opinion, may affect intellectual and moral results. Nor are we yet able to weigh against these the physical influences of climate and outward conditions, in order to decide how they will affect this tendency towards divergence. Psychical, intellectual and moral influences may cause divergence in types. Some divergence there must be: climate would make this inevitable. I am inclined to hope and believe that the divergence will not be widely marked, and I feel pretty confident that no such divergence of type will arise as will make it difficult for any one of these British stocks to understand the others. I am confirmed in my opinion by the fact, that though the people of the United States are separated from us now by a century and a quarter politically, though they don't understand us always in everything English, nor do we understand everything of the United States, still they understand us far better than any other country, and we have less difficulty in understanding them than we have in understanding other nations, as for example, Germany or Italy. I venture to believe that whatever differences in physical appearance or in mode of speech may arise, there will not be a lessening of intellectual and moral sympathy; politically we all agree in cherishing the same ideals. I certainly do not think the difference will ever be such as to make political unity throughout the Empire any more difficult than it is now.

Pardon a word of counsel. You are beginning to receive into Canada as into the United States a very large number of new immigrants. In the early times the immigrants were largely Germans and Scandinavians; they differ very little from us; but now the immigrants are largely from the South European and Slavonic peoples, who are more unlike us. Many of them have little or no notion of what free self-government means. It is a serious matter for you, if there should remain an unassimilable foreign element in the body politic, not understanding the spirit and genius of your institutions, who would

take part as voters without understanding the principles by which you are guided. It would be a political misfortune for you. It is a great political danger for you. Happily you are not getting such great numbers in one place as would make it impossible to avert the danger, if you will hold them, and educate them. A good deal has been done, but unless considerable efforts are made to bring them into the schools, to deal with them personally, neighbors showing interest in them and helping them by giving them an insight into your modes of life and ideas, you will have occasion some day or other to regret it. Perhaps the problem is easiest in your Northwest Provinces, where they will scatter over a large rural area and mingle with your own citizens. It is different in the large centres, where they tend to remain separate and not mingle with the people of British stock. In great cities like Toronto and Montreal the problem is particularly serious, but there is no reason in the world why the problem should not be solved, once your educational machinery and social benevolence are set to solve it. Only address yourselves to the tasks that lie before. We in England have inherited from the past not only things we have to be proud of, but also some which we have reason to regret. A considerable portion of the people have been only lately redeemed from ignorance; since only forty years ago a considerable portion have been freed from conditions of lamentable poverty; we are making efforts, which I hope will succeed, to further improve these conditions. But you need not have the faults of the past from which we suffer. You have an unlimited supply of rich land, you have high wages, and all the evidences of political prosperity. You have hardly any pauperism, and I don't see the need of any at all. All that belongs to comfort and wellbeing can be easily provided. You have a fertile soil and extraordinary facilities for commerce. The problem which much more rests upon you is not to let yourselves be absorbed by the fascinating task of developing your physical resources. It is a fascinating task; anything more fascinating it is difficult to see, than making the great floods of commerce flow along your transcontinental lines. Standing as you do between two seas, with all these natural resources at your feet, it would be very natural for you to be absorbed by the charm of developing these resources. But remember all the time that the problem that will tax your capacity is the great economic and political question, demanding the highest kind of mind to solve it. Men should study economics historically and philosophically, and make themselves masters of the subject. You need practical men of the

highest talent, statesmen of constructive political capacity, who will take their theories and apply them to political problems. Therefore let me beseech you not to let yourselves be drawn aside from the tasks of constructive statesmanship. There is a splendid opportunity for any Canadian to devote himself to Canadian statesmanship in this generation; and if he does he will deserve to be remembered as one of the makers of Canada, and just as much one of the benefactors of his country, as one who makes a great discovery or builds a great transcontinental line.

You all remember the anecdote of that man, General Wolfe, whose name I have mentioned with reverence: as his men were rowing him up the river he recited some lines, and he gave his opinion of the respective merits of poetry and war in the remark: "I would rather be the author of Gray's Elegy than take Quebec." That was a great statement, at any rate we can say who know the significance of the battle next day. And if it be true of the great poet, it is also true of the great philosopher, and of the great statesman who brings intellect to the tasks of statesmanship.

I hope therefore, and believe, that as in England we have always thought that one of the finest careers open for an inspiring life is that of public statesmanship, so in Canada it may be the same, however great may be the attractions of the development of your material resources.