

(January 31st, 1938)

## Canada Since Confederation

BY ROYAL MAITLAND, K.C.

T. D'ARCY LEONARD, Chairman:—Gentlemen, before introducing our guest-speaker today I am going to read an extract from the constitution of the Canadian Club: "It is the purpose of the club to inspire patriotism by encouraging the study of the institution, history, literature and resources of Canada, and by endeavouring to unite Canadians in such work for the welfare and progress of the Dominion". Never had it been more important than now that Canadians should join in an interchange of views and opinions with a view to furthering the objectives set out in our constitution.

This season, so far, we have had addresses from speakers representing Saskatchewan, Manitoba and dealing with Canadian affairs. Today we have a distinguished citizen of British Columbia—Royal Maitland, K.C. who was formerly Minister without Portfolio in the Conservative Cabinet. We welcome him today not only as a distinguished Canadian, but as the able representative of Canadians on the Pacific coast.

MR. MAITLAND:—Mr. President and members of the Toronto Canadian Club, I hasten to tell you how much I appreciate the privilege of speaking here today. Your president told me that you hold meetings every Monday and that reminded me of a conversation I once heard about another service club. A friend asked the president how they were getting along, "Fine", he answered "except for two difficulties. First we have to find a speaker for every Monday. That's not so bad. It is the second that hurts. We have to listen to him when we have found him.

Today I come back to my native province—the province in which I lived till I was nine months old, and I am at somewhat of a disadvantage because the boys I used to play with then have forgotten me now. But let me say that if anything I say that appeals to you, you may attribute it to the fact, I was born in Ontario, and if I say anything you don't like, you may attribute my misdeed to the fact that I grew up in British Columbia. Naturally I give you the B. C. view today. Far be it from me to try to speak for the West in general, if that is to include the ideas of Alberta.

Ontario and B. C.! We have much in common. We both love this Canada of ours, not only as Canada, but also as a part of the greatest empire, I suppose, that time has ever known. It is not a difficult task to prove it. Think of 1914, when the young men of the Empire rushed to her defence so that she survived and emerged with honor. What followed the war?—Crowns fell, new forms of government were started, dictators achieved power, liberty seemed to have been abolished and chaos held sway. From it all the Empire emerged supreme, loyal to democracy, and her constitutional monarchy.

What nation survived in this way? Hardly one.

In 1929 came the great depression—the greatest depression the world has ever known or will know, and again the British Empire emerged supreme, as compared with the other nations of the world. That is something to be proud of.

Sometimes I stop and ask myself why it is the Empire should have so survived and become so strong and successful. I am inclined to think that it is because we have kept the faith of our fathers who laid a foundation of truth, justice, right, law and constitutional government that has made the British Empire what it is today. We have something that is great and wonderful, something that must be cherished, something that must not be endangered by any of us.

Today I am afraid whispers are heard that bring a little worry, little whispers of danger to Canada, because when I hear things that put race against race, province against province or province against dominion, I see the breaking

down of that very thing that our forbears handed on to us. That is where our danger lies as I see it in Canada today, and I say to you that no man has the right to exploit such a great thing as the Confederation that means so much to hearts of the people of Canada.

Let us look upon Canada and upon Confederation and see what story that tells to the time. It is a story, before confederation of great sacrifice, of the challenge of men who wanted a great nation. There were three—the days of exploration and discovery, the days of conquest, and the days of moulding Canada into the great nation she is today—a great nation in a great Empire. It was a hard rough trail that was followed by our forefathers who moulded the country we enjoy today.

Looking back to the Treaty of Paris we find that Treaty stands as a just and generous Treaty. The men who made it saw a future for Canada—not a few scattered Balkan States, but a great nation in which two great races would be merged as one. They had to fight for responsible government, and there were times when they had to fight, and lines had to be given for Canada as Canada, and when I hear men saying things that would destroy what was so hardly achieved I feel it to be our duty to resist to our utmost any thought of that kind. When I hear men talking about breaking up this Dominion I wonder if our forefathers died for Canada or whether they thought they were fighting for a lot of little nations in the north part of America.

I wonder whether Wolfe, Brock, Selkirk and Carlton lived in vain. Everyone knew at the time of Confederation what was in the minds of the men who brought it about. The British North America Act made quite plain what was intended, and when those men in 1864, Macdonald, Brown, Galt, Tilley, Tupper and the others were working together they were working on a plan, and that plan was a united Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

That was what was in the minds of the men who brought about Confederation—a united Canada, a great Country, for ever growing greater, and it was on the faith of that

partnership and on the faith of the British North America Act that everything has been done in Canada for the past seventy years.

Let that not be forgotten. Canada—not nine little states—Canada has been behind everything that has taken place. All the investments that have been made were made because of the guarantee that Canada was Canada and behind everything they were asked to take an interest in.

Gold has been spent on that agreement of partnership and the lives of millions have been changed because of it. We have brought people from the Empire and from all over the world to Canada,—to a Canada that stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific—on the faith of that partnership.

No province in Canada has benefitted from the rise of a united Canada as Ontario has done, and on the other hand no province has sent her sons throughout Canada to build it, as Ontario has done.

On what faith did she send them?

She sent them on the faith that they were helping to build up a Canada that was to stand as one, as a great part in a great Empire that stands for the finest things of life.

The high place that Canada holds today—the highest place in the Empire of any of the old Dominions—must depend on something. Then on what?—On the faith of Confederation and on the faith of the British North America Act.

And yet I hear whispers from far-off Quebec, such as the one I heard the day before I left, that what we want is nine separate states. I hear Nationalist talk in Ontario, talk that serves to create a little dealing between East and West, whispers that Confederation is not a success and is not working in the way it should.

These things must be met. Some people think that Confederation is strong enough to meet them without any need to do anything about it. We thought during the depression that the talk we heard from day to day was just ephemeral, that it was a kind of safety valve and could do no harm. But you must not forget that if you let it go on you are sowing things in the minds of your children which may ruin all that our forefathers strove to achieve.

Those are the things we must fight against.

But after all the question is has Confederation worked? —Has it done all the things for which its founders hoped?

I think it has. It is much the same thing as the Empire. At the time it came about it was a matter of grave doubt if a system of self-governing nations within the Empire could be a success. We led the way, followed by Australia and New Zealand. Fifty years later the question was answered and we found out that the ties of such an Empire were still binding. We became even more firmly knit together, when trouble came.

When the dark days of 1914 came Laurier said: "Long have we enjoyed the benefits of British Citizenship, today it is our duty and privilege to accept its responsibilities and its sacrifices." Those words and the response they met throughout Canada showed how strong were the ties of Confederation and how much they meant to us.

Today we have many troubles but we must see that they are not allowed to break down all that has been achieved. Don't think for one moment that we have not complained in British Columbia. We have fought many times against things we found exceedingly hard to bear. But we have fought in a dignified way. We have felt that the immigration laws have worked great hardship upon us, but let me say that never has there been a responsible public man who has ever suggested secession as an alternative, if we did not get what we wanted.

We have always felt that the way to work these things out, is not by making wild statements and threats, but by sitting together round a table to work it out by the use of ordinary common sense.

We have our troubles today but I don't know of any greater reflection on the brain power of him who might make it than the suggestion that we are not big enough—not great enough—to work them out together to the best interest of the Dominion as a whole.

There is one little situation that I should like to clear up. It has been said lately that the East is carrying the West. I can only speak for British Columbia, and please

believe that I do not speak in any spirit of argument but because I want to tell you something that I believe you should know. In 1935, the last year for which we have figures available the trade balance between my province and Eastern Canada was in favor of Eastern Canada by a matter of forty million dollars. In other words we bought from you, and paid you for forty million dollars more goods than you bought from us.

I point that out because people sometimes forget to tell both sides of the story. It is the same with banking and insurance. We have fifty-seven Canadian insurance companies in British Columbia, and only one of our own in the whole province. I might add that thirty-seven of them have their head offices in Toronto. We are not complaining because we feel that they have the backing of the whole of Canada, but that does not alter the fact that the business is coming to the East.

As for banks we have none of our own. They are all eastern banks and their stock is all held in the east. And I would have you know that in British Columbia we do quite a banking business.

I think, therefore, that you will agree with me when I say it is not quite fair to say that the east is carrying the west and that there are benefits both ways. The fact that it is so makes us feel that we are all Canadians and glad to work for one another.

There is another matter that has caused no little friction in years gone by. We have an immigration problem to deal with, and never, never, never have we people in Western Canada, in British Columbia, had any real say in the matter of immigration laws. Today we are met with conditions that should be rectified.

You have all heard about the Doukhobors, and I want you to believe me when I say that they are costing us millions of dollars. We are forced to keep constant patrols on the railway bridges in the interior of British Columbia to prevent them from being blown up by these fanatical people that we can neither control nor teach, and with whose entry into Canada and settlement in our province we had nothing to do.

Again we have the Oriental problem, and on this, too, we have never had any sympathy from the East, but we have certain ideas about the future. We have in British Columbia ninety-one per cent, of all the Japanese in Canada, and Japan is the only country in the world, that has the right to send people to us, whether we like it or not. There are more than twenty-five thousand of them in British Columbia. They are driving our own people from the fishing grounds, and they are reaching out into more activities and growing in numbers every year. When we protest we want the sympathy and understanding of the east for we have our own ideas of what it will mean to our white population if it is allowed to continue. But we do not get excited about it and talk wildly about breaking up confederation, if nothing is done. What we want to do, is to get the thing settled amicably, on a common sense basis, but settled it must be. This country will be the heritage of our children, and we must leave it to them a better country and more secure, than we found it.

We have other problems for the dominion as a whole. Problems of education and problems of the spirit. Sometimes we must forget the immediate monetary advantage and look to the future, in the moulding of the character of the men, women and children of Canada.

Let us turn to what I consider is the greatest problem that faces the Dominion, the problem of the kind of people who are going to live in it with us in the future. We welcome and are glad to have all races and all creeds, all the kinds of people that want to come to Canada in the right spirit. We have made mistakes in the past, and I say that there should be behind the Government the active opinion of the whole people, that those who come must be willing to accept our belief in law and order, the proper administration of justice, in constitutional government and all the things that have gone to make our lives under the British Empire, the happy and free lives that they are.

The sooner the world understands that that, is what we mean to have, from the people who come to live with us the healthier and easier it will be for our children.

You have been more than kind in giving me this opportunity to speak to you, and I would like to leave with you the thought that you should build up in your children's minds the love of this country which they must have. It should be implanted in their minds that the history, tradition and beauty of this country are such that any child should be proud that he comes of Canadian parents and is a Canadian himself.

Are we really trying to build up this feeling in the minds of our children?

I ask this feelingly, because the other day I was talking to a bookseller in Vancouver. He carried on his shelves something like a thousand magazines. Of these two and a half per cent were Canadian, thirty-five per cent British, and the rest American. You and I both have the greatest respect for the United States, but after all it is not our country, and it is our own country that our children must learn to love. These things must do, as part of the sacred trust that has been confided to us.

What I have said, I have said because I was born in this country, because my children were born in this country, and because I love this country.

MR. LEONARD:—Mr. Maitland, I think the applause you have just heard should go far, to give you the assurance of sympathy, for which you have asked. Instead of voicing to you the thanks of the club I am going to suggest that the duty should be undertaken by the Hon. Arthur Meighen who is with us today.

SENATOR MEIGHEN:—I presume you asked me to propose this vote of thanks because I ought to be assumed to be the most grateful member of the audience, for the appearance of such a promising young conservative on our platform. The time has come when we watch with anticipation and hope when we see the feet of a young man of ambition ascending the ladder of the party to which we both belong. I could have thanked on many occasions in the past. Those were the times when his province responded to intelligent appeal much more than it does today.

This time he brings us a message of Canadian unity. There is an impression abroad among some of the provinces

that Ontario is the spoiled child of fortune. There may be a little ground for the feeling. Nature has been very bountiful to us. We started off at Confederation with a population, we and our sister province. We both had, even before Confederation, the advantages of a great assembly of people in markets for our manufactures, and populous areas for the sites of our factories. Again we have not been afflicted with those visitations that the west has suffered from periodically, particularly the Prairie West. But we know that our disposition, towards the less fortunate provinces, must not only be reasonable, but generous. That sentiment is universal in Ontario, and I think it is general in Quebec too.

I do not place the Province of British Columbia against the less fortunate provinces. It is only a few weeks since I read in Dominion Statistics that the average purchases of radios and automobiles are higher in B. C. than in any other province, and I am certain that there is no higher average of intelligence in any other province of Canada. So notwithstanding the influence of the Japanese I have no fears for the future of British Columbia.

Nor do I feel that there is any very urgent need to rush into recasting the terms of Confederation. I am not one of those who think we have to tear up the British North America Act and start anew. I welcome the appointment of the Rowell Commission, first, because it is essential to overcome in the future the possibility of such decisions as the Privy Council gave on the legislation of 1935, and second, because from a Commission so headed, it is very likely that excellent recommendations will come, as to co-operation between the Provinces and the Dominion. But we can never recast the financial terms of Confederation. Nothing can be put into permanent form there. When disaster comes no financial relationship will stand. It must be elastic and able to be at the demand of the provinces, except in the matter of indirect taxation, and if we allowed that it would lead to one thing only—the establishment of separate nationalities in the provinces, and the dismemberment of the country.

But we have to alter the terms, that resulted in the decisions of 1935. Neither this country, nor any other can

go on in terms of a law, by which we cannot make a treaty with any other nation, and carry it out except by gaining the consent of nine separate provinces, and when a member of the government talks about Federal Legislation, meaning nine different steps by nine different provinces, he affronts the intelligence of the country. But that is something that the Rowell Commission will have to report on.

However I am making a speech when it is my duty to thank Mr. Maitland for a very eloquent speech, and I am sure we have all come to the conclusion that it is a fine thing to have heard a young and aspiring citizen, give us this message of unity.