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## Canadian Problems and the Canadian Club

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MR. SEDGEWICK: Gentlemen, last September the Association of Canadian Clubs embarked on a new line of policy of expansion and co-ordination of Canadian Clubs, and an effort to make the Clubs a direct influence in the building up of the united Canada. In line with that policy Mr. Graham Spry, who is our guest today, was selected as National Secretary. He will demonstrate to you today whether he appears or not to be competent for that position. Those of us who have heard him have no doubt at all. He is decidedly Canadian. He was born in Canada, originally in the year 1633, when his first ancestor came to what is now the Province of Quebec. He was born in Ontario, but he has moved to the West, and in interpreting to you his conception of the West he may not see eye to eye with you, and therefore I hope you will bear that in mind and any opinions you think wrong I hope you will treat with consideration.

MR. SPRY: Mr. President, gentlemen, this is a platform from which recently have spoken Prime Ministers and Ambassadors. The difficulty that a young man has to face in speaking from such a platform is, as you will know and appreciate, great; but the gratitude for the privilege is equally great; and as a matter of fact, in regard to the ambassador, the qualification is as great. I don't mean that

\*At this meeting a Nominating Committee was appointed, and at the Head Table were seated a number of distinguished past presidents of the Club.

I am the equal of his Excellency, Mr. Massey, but I do mean that I also am an ambassador, and a senior ambassador, for Mr. Massey is only the ambassador to our good friends, the United States, while I am ambassador to the Dominion of Canada. So, therefore, I stand, not personally, but in terms of appointment, on an approximate equality which does not enhance my courage, but which I have mentioned in order that I may convict myself. And now, the West. In these few remarks, I would like to say what I will say upon three points. First, to make the point that the West is as Canadian as any part of Canada; secondly, that the Canadian Club movement, and particularly in the West, is definitely on the upgrade, is expanding, and in the foreign settlements is a real influence; and thirdly that in asserting, in trying to express some spirit of vigorous national sentiment the Canadian Club is doing that, fully conscious of the value of the British connection, and has the faith that the Fathers of Confederation had, which Lord Durham had, which the founders of this nation had, that it is the building of a strong and united Canadian nationality which can best serve and preserve British institutions and best make possible co-operation with our British nations under the Crown.

My pilgrimage, my crusade, through the West has been one of overwhelming interest. Surely there cannot be a greater voyage of discovery than the voyage of discovery that leads to the finding of one's own country. In the West you see those struggling towns, those unpainted frame villages, farms miles apart; and you find on one line of rail towns as different in character, in racial characteristics, as Ontario and the Ukraine, as the Gaelic part of North Scotland and Quebec; and whatever the color, whatever the race, the pattern is a Canadian pattern essentially British in its love of free institutions, in its fairness. The West is probably less influenced by other countries than any other part of Canada. Problems there are pressing, they are immediate. They demand immediate solution, and the people there are approaching these problems directly, not looking for ideas from other countries or peoples, but trying to work out their problems in their own way.

Culturally, the great product one notices throughout the West is music, particularly choirs. In towns of just a few hundred people there will be several choirs. In all of the Prairie Provinces there is an annual and widely patronized musical festival, and three of the expert adjudicators brought out last year from Europe said the larger choirs of Western Canada compared favorably with any other choirs they had heard. Increasingly Western Canada is welcoming the growth of musical institutions. Any prominent musician is sure of a large, even a packed and full, house in Winnipeg or any of the cities of the West; and not only the cities, but the small towns and villages show a real interest, a rich interest in music, and that, as far as I could see, was the principal cultural interest arising from these scattered communities of the West.

There is a great deal of serious reading among the farmers and laboring people, a real and intense appreciation of education; but above all there is an interest in and love of music, and it expresses itself in a Canadian way in choirs. I say in a Canadian way, because it seems to me one of the most notable things is a capacity to co-operate with the other fellow.

Politically, there is enormous vigor in the West. The fact that there is a variety of groups in Western Canada is not proof of the end of a Western movement or death of the Progressive party. It is rather the evidence of very intelligent experimentation. Perhaps the most interesting is the United Farmers of Alberta, and it has had its most interesting application in the Provincial Government of Alberta. The four principles are extremely interesting; one might say they are a contribution to political theory. You have first of all the principle that Government is not a battle for power between parties, but a businesslike administration responsible completely to the people. Consequently, that responsibility is effected through an organization based upon local groups. The power comes from these local groups; it does not come from the party machine. There is no real campaign fund. In the federal election Mr. Kennedy of the Peace River constituency had \$700 of expenses. In the Provincial election of last fall the whole

U.F.A., in the Provincial aspect, spent only \$35,000. That covered the trips of the Premier and campaign bulletins. The third principle is that the local groups shall be based upon an industry, and the fourth is that the representatives of these groups finally elected to the House shall co-operate with the representatives of other groups, either by open discussion or by representation in the Cabinet. Now, you may agree or disagree, but you cannot help saying that it is an interesting experiment, that it is a new experiment, and that it is indeed a new and uniquely Canadian experiment produced by Canadian conditions.

Remember this, with the birth of that movement is identified an American citizen, Mr. Wood. He is a typical example of what the first-class Canadian, and the leading American citizens of Western Canada are doing. He is an American taking Canadian conditions and studying them and trying to solve the problems they create.

Now, economically, there you have the enormous wheat pool. Again you may approve or disapprove of the principles underlying that organization, but you cannot say that if it is intelligent for half a dozen men to form a company it is not intelligent also for several dozen farmers to organize a company that has done \$450,000,000 of business and they have used that organization in the marketing of their wheat. I am told that the renewing of contracts for a second five-year term has gone so far that it is almost certain that the wheat pool will be continued with increasing support for another five-year interval. There is an enormous wheat pool sentiment in the West. Again, that pool was an American idea taken and adapted to Canadian conditions and so changed that Mr. Sapiro would hardly recognize his child. Again, you take that system worked out in the U.F.A. of making the central executive entirely responsible to the branch, with the right of recall. The wheat pool administration is absolutely in the hands of its membership. And we may say again that that is an example of a Canadian ability to create a large social organization of a co-operative character.

And, in general, the West is essentially Canadian. True it is that there is a considerable proportion of non-Anglo-

Saxon population. The older people of these non-Anglo-Saxon races are not, it is true, being absorbed, but the children going to Canadian schools are being Canadianized, are, in a word, becoming good Canadian citizens.

Now, when you turn to the question of Americans, I must admit that I am amazed by the questions I am asked. "Is it true," I am asked, "that the Americans are wielding such a tremendous American influence on the West?" Well, so far as my humble observations go, the summary I would make is this—that the Americans who have come into our country, and there are some 209,000, have become a real asset to the life of Western Canada and have contributed a great deal to the upbuilding of that country. Then you have this question asked: "Why is it that the Alberta Legislature once did not read the prayer for his Majesty the King?" That little incident was broadcast through the country. The origin of that was that the prayer was an enormous one, a long one. That fact has news value; it is something startling and regrettable. But the fact that the regiments of Alberta deposited some nine or ten Union Jacks at the entrance to the Legislative Chamber has no news value, and our good friends, the press, did not put it in the papers. Now I do say the modern press, of course, has to sell its paper, otherwise it would not exist, so ordinary practical developments lack news value to readers. That is one of the reasons why there is so much inaccuracy in the press of the West. If one man gets up at a farmer convention and says something interesting and wild, it goes from one end of the country to the other; but if the other 1,500 farmers in convention quietly and sanely discuss their problems it is, except to them, of no news value. So it is that an erroneous impression of the West has been created in other parts of Canada. If the West is Canadian, I know its desire is to be Canadian, that its spirit, its practical capacity is Canadian. But it is like all the other parts of Canada between Quebec and Vancouver Island—while the desire to be Canadian is strong the knowledge of how to be Canadian is weak. There is little interchange of ideas between one section of the country and another. We derive our opinion in relation to our economic interests. It is

our interests that really form our public opinion. Take the U.F.A., for instance, they have their organization meetings, their outlook, their whole outlook, is most predominantly farmer by reason of the industry in which they are engaged. In Canada our industries tend to be divided geographically. Lord Bryce exactly sums up the Canadian difficulty when he said: "The public opinion that is created is fragmentary. It wants that cohesion which is produced by a constant interchange of ideas between those dwelling near one another."

Now, that brings me to the Canadian Club. It has a platform organized from coast to coast in cities, towns and mere hamlets in the West. There are clubs in places with as small a population as 400. There are clubs summing up nine or ten nationalities. In one place the President is a Roman Catholic priest, the Vice-President is an American, and there are Germans, Lutherans and French-Canadians on the executive. And the population there is 483. The first census showed 483 people, a most regrettable fact because it meant that under the Alberta Act only one beer parlor could be opened in that community. With a population of 500, a place can have two beer parlors. The local authorities carefully counted the people of the town, and found there was one institution that had been overlooked. That institution was the Roman Catholic nunnery. And so, as this priest himself told me, "Our nunnery was responsible for the second beer parlor." Well, that is one community. They are not all as interesting as that. But the Canadian Club is primarily a platform organized from coast to coast. The original club had two objectives, to bring Canadians together as Canadians, and to provide them with means of informing themselves about themselves. Now the Association formed last year is a third step. It is not only an endeavor to bring Canadian Clubs together as Canadian Clubs—it is also an organization to get the platform of the Associated clubs occupied.

I do not think that the Association of Canadian Clubs can be of great assistance to such a strong club as the Canadian Club of the City of Toronto. It might not be able to help at all. It would not be able to help the Montreal, Winnipeg or Vancouver clubs, but it can help, it can be a

real influence on the smaller clubs, especially in remote communities where there is a large non-Anglo-Saxon population; and then to organize for next year that we may be able to send out speakers to clubs in isolated communities, thereby helping to promote their ideas on Canadian problems, some sort of Canadian opinion in all sections of the country, to provide, in a word, precisely that interchange of ideas which Lord Bryce recorded in his "Modern Democracies" as being the great difficulty in establishing a really united Canadian opinion.

We do not expect to be able to accomplish a great deal this year, for the reason that no one knew just where there were clubs. When I was West there were two clubs became known to me that none of the files of the Club acknowledged had any existence. The Association has had no reliable information on the movement, so the first duty is to know the movement and try to give some common privilege to those clubs which spontaneously sprang up and had no idea that the Canadian Club was the platform method of creating public opinion. That is our work, the creation of an intelligent public opinion. There are many people who doubt whether it is possible that we can create a national public opinion but at least we can make as effective an endeavor as provincial or secular organizations make in creating that form of opinion. If we can spread from coast to coast information about our institutions, we are assisting in creating an opinion basis for Canadian people. The clubs can be an influence. Two different points have brought out the fact that the Canadian Clubs had spread certain ideas. Now, the first one, the Jubilee celebration. Notwithstanding in scores of communities where we have visited, Canadian Clubs were urged to take up the organization of a Jubilee celebration on July 1. There was a welcome for the suggestion, and if Canadian people are agreed on anything it is on a dignified marking of our sixtieth anniversary. But the second point which we established in the Western clubs of Canada, and that reflection can be seen in utterances in Canadian Clubs in Western Canada and the press of Western Canada, was that in our national celebration it would not only be the Anglo-Saxons who felt they were Cana-

dians, but that every race that had come to make its home in our territory would be treated as Canadians, and would be given its full place in the celebration. Ukrainian choirs and dancers, Jewish choirs, Icelandic sports—these are going to be brought out in our Canadian celebration throughout Western Canada. Now that is the least we can do. We advertise for settlers, and forget them when they come. That is the old policy. After all, immigration and not imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. The least we can do is to welcome them as Canadians. There is an insistent desire on the part of people, non-Anglo-Saxon, to be treated as Canadians. They are not going to be encouraged if they are left out of the celebration and called "bohunks."

Well, that seems to be the idea that we have tried to put across in Western Canada, that our celebration on July first should involve all representatives of all races. Now, that is a small example of where the Canadian Club has established a certain idea in the public mind. It can do that in a variety of other things. The platform, after all, is the method of a variety of other organizations, and to say that 40,000 Canadians organized in the Canadian Clubs, if they set out to create a national opinion, cannot do it, means that if they cannot, no other organization can do it. They have the platform and the means. All they need is the will.

Now, we mentioned in our remarks this word national, the creation of a national spirit. There is growing up in Canada a certain divergence of opinion on this question of nationality. There are tremendous rows in some Canadian Clubs where it is dangerous to sing, "O Canada." There was a tremendous furor when the question of the Canadian flag arose. There are organizations whose sole aim is to preserve British connections. You have the optimistic remarks of R. Jebb in a similar state of mind to Dean Inge. You have a feeling in Canada and England that the strong assertion of a national feeling means the weakening of ties with Great Britain. Now, that growing divergence should be opposed, and it can be opposed exactly in the spirit of the Fathers of Confederation, for in their assertion of the end of confederation you find this, that they see in the

creation of a united Canadian nation the means of preserving British connection. Earlier than the Fathers of Confederation you have Lord Durham, and his sentence exactly sums up the attitude which we can afford to take. Lord Durham said this in his report: "I am in truth so far from believing that the increased power and weight that would be given to these colonies by union would endanger their connection with the Empire that I look to it as the only means of fostering such a national feeling throughout them as would effectually counter-balance whatever tendencies may now exist towards separation." In other words, the creation of a nation was a method of preserving British unity. And those who doubt that the creation of a Canadian nation will do that are really weakening our position, making it more difficult for Canadians not only to preserve their own unity, but to make flourish British institutions in this country and their unity with other British institutions throughout the world. So the Canadian Club, in vigorously asserting a national outlook is not separatist, but just the opposite. But let us go to work on this question of some sort of national unity without that mental reservation. The first emphasis on Canadian problems is not a weakening of British institutions. It is a strengthening of them. That has been the view of British statesmen of any party. It was not the view of the British statesmen during the nineteenth century. Our statesmen, in that regard, were more far-sighted than the English statesmen. But there is a tendency to take the attitude of British statesmen of sixty years ago and not that of those of twenty years ago reversing the position of sixty years ago. Do you remember that statement of Galt's in a letter to his wife when he said that he viewed with strong regret the tendency of English statesmen to believe that confederation meant separation. "I realise," he said, "the responsibility that rests upon us of preserving a connection which has fewer friends in this country." The British North America Act aroused no more interest than a bill uniting two or three parishes. Hon. George Brown saw the same tendency and commented on it. Yet all these three men were trying to build a nationality within the Empire which would make that Empire stronger,

and surely it is obvious that when we are trying to strengthen this link we are only making the link between all other dominions stronger, we are making the imperial chain one.

Do you know, forty or fifty different communities have suggested this to me? It seems to me that there is no question which more urgently needs clearing up than precisely this question of a strong nationality in association with other British nations. The confusion, the doubt, the sheer ignorance and the folly of allowing its persistence is really extraordinary. It is perhaps a preliminary to solution of our other problems. It is part of the French-Canadian problem east and west between British Columbia and the Prairies.

Now, the Canadian Club has the platform from which this question can be discussed with the least controversy, and we should look forward to seeing next year speakers coming forward and trying to reduce the number of crass misunderstandings found throughout the country. In the assertion of a national spirit we are really not haply achieving something. We have every possible hope that the Canadian nation will become one of the first class powers. Why, even in 1864 Sir John A. Macdonald spoke of the day when Canada would have the fourth nation of the world. We do not need to take a first, second, third or fourth place. What we want to see is the full development of this country and that, in that development, it shall cooperate with other nations in the preservation of a stable world-society of peace in which the other nations may continue to develop as well. The world is changing. Empires have clattered into the dust. Faiths are ruined. Political faiths are blessed by new realities. In the words of that great South African, Smuts, "Humanity is on the march." Canada, with her free institutions, with her vast resources, with her racial qualities, has everything that goes to making a great nation. We have everything except this—an intelligent nationally minded nation, and this is surely the primary, the essential purpose of this Canadian Club platform from coast to coast in a hundred communities of every character from north of Peace River to the United States border. The real work of that Club is to produce an intelligent, national Canadian public opinion.