

(September 10th, 1936)

Address

ADDRESS BY THE RT. HON. VINCENT MASSEY.

PRESIDENT MESS:—Your Honor, Guests and members of the Canadian Club. You can imagine our pleasure when, after an exchange of cables, we received an acceptance from our guest speaker of our invitation to address the Canadian Club, particularly when you consider that he is only spending ten days in Canada, and five days in Toronto. I realized that he had spoken before the Canadian Club at least once before but it took me quite a while to appreciate that he had addressed the club in Toronto on more than three occasions. I delved into the archives of the Canadian Club and found that on previous visits he had been introduced by the late Victor Ross, George Sedgewick, and the late Harry Sifton. I feel, therefore, that very little remains for me to say. His chief virtue, to my mind, is that he has resisted what must have been a temptation to forsake public life and follow arts and letters. He is of independent means, but he has not used his abilities only along the lines of his wishes, but has placed his services with the Government and assisted them in their relations with other countries. It is such gentlemen who are the backbone of British politics today. Gentlemen, Mr. Vincent Massey.

THE HON. VINCENT MASSEY:—It is a great pleasure to be back in Canada again, although I am sorry that my visit has to be a short one, as the pressure of work in London makes a longer sojourn impossible. There is no question of the importance when one is in a representational job abroad of keeping in touch with one's own community. Fortunately London is the place of all places among those where we have Overseas offices, where it is easiest to see one's own fellow citizens. I was interested to notice that in the months of May, June and July this year over five

thousand Canadian visitors have put their names in the book in Canada House. And only a small proportion of these can be accounted for by the Vimy Pilgrimage. The members of this great contingent of Canadian citizens used the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Field as one of their Headquarters in London. This famous centre of religion in its most human form was indeed a second Canada House during this period.

The increase in the annual visitation of Canadians to London is to be welcomed for two reasons. In the first place it is some evidence of a return to normal times, and secondly it reveals an increase of those personal contacts, on which the mutual understanding of any two communities in the British Empire or outside must rest. We are endeavouring to do at Canada House all that we can within the limits of available resources for the Canadian visitor. He or she will always represent a major responsibility. I should like to make a request of you Gentlemen, many of you I know are frequent visitors to London. From you I will always welcome any suggestions which you might care to make as to the work of your office in Trafalgar Square. It often happens that people who view an institution from without can see things about it which are not evident to those immersed in its work.

Sometimes the functions of a Government establishment abroad can be easily misunderstood. If the activities of a diplomatic mission were confined to those most featured in the popular press, it might easily seem to be represented by a decorative colour scheme of pink teas and white spats. As a matter of fact the ceremonial side of diplomacy represents a very small expenditure of time. Our offices Overseas within the Empire or outside it are practical institutions, existing to achieve practical purposes, just as practical as those performed by a Post Office or a Customs House.

Canada House is, of course, both different from and similar to our other offices abroad. The representation of the Dominions in London reflects many of the special characteristics of the growth of the British Commonwealth. It is replete with those paradoxes and anomalies which give the Empire its most individual qualities and provide a perpetual puzzle to the outside observer. In one sense the

office is diplomatic. In 1880, when Sir John A. Macdonald established the office, he described its first incumbent as holding a "quasi-diplomatic post", in fact, holding a diplomatic post, Sir John went on to explain, "so far as was consistent with our existence in the Empire". This is, of course, very true, for the Dominion High Commissioner's primary duty is to represent the interests of his own Government in its relation to that of another British State, and that is a diplomatic job. On the other hand the Empire is a family of nations, and in consequence of this, relations between their representatives are much more informal than those between foreigners. Another result is that in London various Commonwealth bodies exist, like the Imperial Shipping Committee and the Imperial Economic Committee, which represent those matters in which each Dominion must consider its interests in relation to the other members of the Commonwealth.

One of the most important jobs to be performed by an office, such as ours in London, might be described by the phrase, "The projection of Canada"—the task of making Canada known to the British people in all its aspects, and this covers a range of activities running all the way from the advertisement of Canadian commodities to the presentation of Canadian life and achievement in all its forms and the problem of publicity is, therefore, one which has to be approached as a whole. The greater the extent to which the public in any community can be made, (and I apologise for the phrase,) "Canada-conscious", in a general sense, the more favourable will be the atmosphere for the marketing of our commodities.

It is a curious thing that notwithstanding all the modern scientific media for the transmission of information, the knowledge, which one people possesses of another, seems never quite up to date. One is conscious of a time-lag in Great Britain in the popular ideas about Canada. Over there today we are still thought of very frequently as a land of wide open spaces, given chiefly to agricultural pursuits. Agriculture, of course, as everyone knows, is the foundation of our economic life, but notwithstanding that we have become, I needn't say, one of the first ten industrial nations of the world. Too little is known abroad of this

industrial development, nor is the world abroad sufficiently familiar with such important factors in our economy as the amazing growth of our great mining industry. We must have more knowledge of Canada in Great Britain, knowledge of all nine provinces, of all our economic activities, of our life in all its aspects, and not only present-day achievements but future possibilities as well.

The Canadian visitor is conscious of the dearth of Canadian news in the Metropolitan and Provincial press of Great Britain. This problem alone calls for very careful study. Through the press, through films, good films and a constant supply of new films, through the spoken word, exhibitions, through a dozen different media, it should be possible to make Canada better known in England. Part of this process involves the task of actual advertisement. Under this head, it may interest you to know, we are inaugurating this autumn a comprehensive programme of advertising, which experts declare will be the most concentrated and scientifically directed Regional campaign yet launched by a Dominion. This campaign will commence in October in the Glasgow area and will continue there for four months, to be followed shortly by a similar campaign, in each of the great centres of population in the British Isles. Every medium of publicity will be used, and under the slogan "Canada calling" an appeal will be made to British wholesaler, retailer and consumer to buy Canadian foodstuffs of all kinds. Information will be given shortly to the Canadian exporter regarding this campaign and his cooperation invited.

There is, I am glad to say, a definitely friendly feeling in favour of Canadian products on the part of the British buyer. A survey of one of the home counties has shown that the country hotel-keeper is sympathetically interested in the possibility of using Canadian food products, not only because they are good, but also because they are Canadian, for there is no doubt that the produce of the Empire makes a powerful appeal to the consumers of Great Britain. The reciprocal principle is an effective factor. It is nowhere better illustrated than in those tins of tomatoes which are sold in South Wales labelled "Produce of Canada packed in Welsh tin plate". The posters in Welsh at the pit heads

are a natural sequel which read "Buy from those who buy from you".

I used the phrase "Projection of Canada" a few minutes ago. If a correct picture is to be presented of one country to the people in the capital of another, that picture must present its life in all its phases, its industries and also its arts, its material accomplishments and its spiritual aspirations. We are developing a fully rounded national life here in North America. If we are proud of our product of farm and factory we can also be proud of other sides of our life. I can think, for instance, of Canadian contemporary painting which creates so much interest today in London. That side of our life has never been better represented than by Walter Alward's great monument on Vimy Ridge. Let me say just in passing that I believe that future generations will look upon these two great pylons at Vimy not only as a monument of an heroic feat of arms, but also as one of the world's greatest achievements in art. I know of one distinguished English architect who has visited the memorial often in the last few years and regards it as the greatest monument of the War. Canada should be very grateful to the man who modestly and unobtrusively over the last fifteen years has produced a work of architecture and sculpture which will make us all just a little more proud of being Canadians.

But I am digressing. I was speaking of some of the activities of the Canadian Office of London. Its work is varied, and much of it is perhaps not widely known. It is a surprise, for instance, to many to find that the Pension Branch at Canada House is responsible for a roll of 9,000 pensioners who served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and are now resident in Great Britain. Various other Government ministries are represented—the Department of National Revenue with its Customs Officers dealing with the appraisal of articles for export to Canada. The Immigration Department with its staff and also the Inspectors from the Department of National Health. The Liaison Officer of the Department of National Defence working with the Air Ministry, the Department responsible for public exhibitions in Great Britain and abroad, the Special Commissioner dealing with the marketing of animal pro-

ducts in Great Britain, the Commissioner directing the marketing of fruit, the Department collecting and cataloguing documents for the Archives at Ottawa, the staff of Trade Commissioners with whose work many of you gentlemen will be very familiar, but I need not burden you with these details.

Cooperation with the Canadian Community in Great Britain is an important function. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is, for instance, one body with an important relation to Anglo-Canadian trade with which close association is maintained. The Canadian student community of Great Britain represents another different group for which there are services to be performed. There are now in the British Isles 400 to 500 Canadian students, many of them in the two old Universities. Many others I have found in London and Edinburgh Universities. Others are scattered about pursuing individual courses of study. Music, art, architecture claim a good many. It is interesting to find some of the pursuits that have attracted Canadian youth. I discovered one young man from Toronto studying the craft of the potter in the famous potteries of the "Five Towns", another following an equally ancient craft and learning to be a distiller. All these young men and women seem to be getting what they want to get. More and more of them are going to Great Britain to get it and all of them look forward to their return to Canada, eager for a chance to use their knowledge.

An office such as Canada House must be a two-way avenue of information. One of its functions, of course, is to report on public affairs and economic conditions in Great Britain. The Old Country at present provides plenty of material for study, more today than ever before. I think that all of you who have been in England this year will bear me out, when I say that there is a steady increase in the tempo of life and in its productivity and in those changes which can be properly called progress. From the observation post I have the privilege of occupying just now I have been endeavouring to see what I can of what is going on as a whole in all fields of activity. London, however important it is, is not Great Britain, and to know the scene in Great Britain one must get about the country, as I have tried

to do, into the Midlands and North of England, into the West country, Wales and Scotland. I have been immensely struck by the spirit with which life in the British Isles today in all its aspects seems to be infused, by the vitality and confidence and energy which mark it. I am not forgetting those dark patches in South Wales and Durham, but even there reclamation work, both governmental and private, is proceeding at an accelerated pace. Everywhere in Great Britain today one finds a dual function in process, which might be described as self-examination and re-organization. There is nothing showy about it, for there is nothing spectacular in English method. England is the home of moderation, but quietly and unobtrusively prevailing practices are being challenged everywhere in Great Britain today, and if found inadequate to present-day needs, courageously altered. It may be the curriculum of a public school, the uniform of the private soldier, the organization of a steel mill, the construction of dwelling houses, the organization of the General Post Office, the design of a sleeping car, whatever it is, and I have mentioned various actual cases, there is disposition to say, "How can we make this serve its purpose better?" As a result Great Britain today can lay claim to a remarkable and increasing standard of practical efficiency. Too often, I am afraid, the casual visitor is apt to concentrate unduly on that part of England which is represented by the thatched roof cottage and the ivy-mantled tower. May these always endure, but there is another Britain, which the visitor should not miss. Its characteristics are not always of age. We are, as a matter of fact, given to the foolish habit of personifying countries as being old or young. Britain presents today, I believe, in a striking degree certain attributes associated more with youth than with age, the quality of enterprise, of imagination and energy. The erection of three million houses since the war is only one evidence of her concrete achievement.

But happily old forms remain, when they do not impede progress. That vivid sense of the past, which is a peculiar English quality, leads to the preservation of the old traditions, which give colour and romance to life. I had the pleasure a few weeks ago of seeing one of these ancient ceremonies, where a great public figure, nowhere with

warmer friends than in Canada, Lord Willingdon, was installed as Warden of the Cinque Ports. This ancient office which centuries ago was an important factor in the defence of the English coast has now been wisely preserved as a retiring dignity for great public servants with all its ancient ritual preserved. I was glad that one of the Guards of Honour drawn up for the Lord Warden after the ceremony at Dover was composed of the officers and men of H.M.C.S. Saguenay.

I mentioned the importance of reciprocal trade between Canada and Great Britain. There is another form of reciprocity, the commerce of ideas. We have exchanges to make, not only in crates and bales, but in the sphere of intangible things as well. In the world of today more than ever we can recognize the importance of those things which are not found in blue books or in trade statistics and which give a spiritual kinship to the British peoples. A few weeks spent in the uneasy and restless atmosphere of the Continent serve to bring this home to us. We have, for instance, been accustomed to take democracy for granted as something which is certain to prevail on this earth, something which will give the nations of the world a sort of automatic progress. We have had some rude shocks. Democracy is not just a textbook word, a comforting term for an occasional speech. It is a system of government which has been solemnly, deliberately repudiated over a very large area of the earth's surface. On the other hand, it is nowhere more jealously guarded than in those countries over which the British flag flies.

Great Britain is the cradle of parliamentary democracy, and we are its heirs, and this means that we have in common not merely some abstract ideas, but it means something very practical. It means that within generous limits the individual with us can still say and do what he likes without accepting his ideas from the policeman or looking anxiously behind the door before he expresses his views.

Again take the genius of the British people in reconciling individual national feeling with cooperation in a larger whole. How much happier the world would have been if Europe had learned from some of the experiments in the field which generations ago were tried successfully in those

small islands off the coast of France. I am not thinking now of the majestic achievement of the British Commonwealth but of earlier experiments in Britain itself. The intense national feeling of Wales and Scotland, far from abating through the years increases in its natural vigour, and this despite the fact that they are part of a larger unit. Suppose that lesson had been learned in Europe. Suppose the racial minorities in Continental countries which through the generations have suffered so much by oppression had been given the right to speak their own language, maintain their own system of education, the right of religious freedom and individual liberty, they would then in most cases not have sought a separate existence. How much anguish would have been prevented! We might well have avoided the picture which Europe presents today of a great increase in tightly bound national States, bristling with armaments and tariffs and all the destructive apparatus of aggressive nationalism.

But if that uneasy Continent has little to teach us in the sphere of International Concord, we can learn much in the art of living. The visitor can only be struck, as I was a few weeks ago afresh, to see what intelligence has been applied of late to the problems of the modern city, such as housing and the construction of the modern factory, each equally attractive with light and air unthought of a generation ago, the organization of recreation and amusement, the popularization of art and music, so that they become part of everyday life for the people. Of all Continental countries Sweden has perhaps most to teach us. A country of seven millions which has emerged from the depression with a balanced budget, no unemployment, which possesses no slums, with a striking standard of public education, little or no waste, beautiful cities and a happy contented people aloof from the Vortex of anxiety and strife not many miles away from its shores. Swedish problems are in many respects simpler than those of other nations in different circumstances, but nevertheless it presents a picture of economic and social accomplishment which amply repays study.

I have spoken of some of the ideas which we in Canada have in common with Great Britain. There is another

which hardly need be mentioned in these days, and that is a passionate devotion to peace. That instinct, always strong in Great Britain has, I believe, never been so strong as now.

These are difficult times—difficult for all of us. Sometimes the distant view intensifies a feeling of tension. Nothing is more unhelpful in times of stress than an attitude of fatalism or of panic.

Let us hope and trust that those qualities of forbearance and sanity which are not unknown even among the nations of today, may bring the world a happy issue out of its affliction.

It is, I hope, not unduly complacent to say that a certain practical wisdom, a fairness of mind and an essential steadiness are part of the British tradition in relation to world affairs. You will have read, I am sure, the deeply impressive speech of Mr. Stanley Baldwin when he addressed the Vimy Pilgrims in Westminster Hall a few weeks ago. I shall not forget the picture of that gathering, 6,000 men and women filling the great building, their coloured berets making a sea of blue and gold in the dim early morning light. The Prime Minister was deeply moved—what sensitive man could fail to be? He spoke of the building in which he was standing, through which eight centuries of history—our history—has rolled, in which the first free Parliament in the world had been held, summoned by a Frenchman with an English heart—and made a simple, heartfelt plea for peace, short and moving like the fine speech of our own Prime Minister on the same theme three days before at Vimy.

Then came the ceremony at the cenotaph, worthy of the great traditions already clustered round that spot. It was a Canadian event, for which Whitehall had been cleared for the whole morning, and Canada, through her great contingent of ex-service men, paid a tribute to the cause.

In closing I cannot help mentioning the conclusion of that day—Canada's day in London—when eight thousand Canadians (for this party included many who were resident in England), eight thousand Canadians were the personal guests of their Sovereign in their Sovereign's house. It is hard to describe that occasion. Many of you here today were present and I think you will agree it served to remind

us of two things. It made all those present realize afresh the meaning of the great Office which serves as the greatest link in this Commonwealth of ours. It did something more—it showed that that great Office was no abstract thing, but was occupied by a very human person, who commands not only the loyalty and respect but also the deep affection of his people.