

(April 18th.)

Some Lessons From Britain for Life in Canada.

By J. A. MACDONALD, M.A., LL.D.

ADDRESSING the Canadian Club, on the subject: "Some Lessons from Britain for Life in Canada," Dr. J. A. Macdonald said:

Mr. President and Fellow Members of the Canadian Club.—This offence is not mine. I tried to evade the necessity of imposing a speech on this Canadian Club of which I have been a member since its inception. The failure of arrangements for to-day's programme made it convenient that a local man should do duty. I consented on the understanding that I should speak on a theme which from various points of view I have discussed elsewhere. As affairs in Britain are always of interest to us, and never more interesting than in these days, I take as my subject "Some Lessons from Britain for Life in Canada."

I do not pretend to any authority in speaking of things in Britain. The problem is too complex, the situation is too critical, for me or for any visitor from Canada to be dogmatic in discussing it. One needs to know not only the facts but the history and the background of those facts before one speaks with confident assurance. Not even the exceptional opportunities enjoyed in connection with Imperial Press Conference warrants one in disposing of the vexed questions of life in Britain with an easy wave of the hand.

I am reminded of an incident told me by Mr. Hamar Greenwood at the banquet of the Eighty Club to Mr. Asquith on the evening before I left London. There had been a bye-election in the Peak District that day. Mr. Greenwood had taken part in the campaign. He was speaking in one town when the ubiquitous "heckler," that interesting figure in Eng-

Dr. J. A. Macdonald was the founder and first editor of the *Westminster Magazine* and since 1902 managing editor of the *Toronto Globe*. He was one of the Canadian delegates to the Imperial Press Conference held in London in the summer of 1909 and during his visit he had special opportunities of observing social and political conditions in various parts of England and Scotland.

lish campaign meetings, persisted in interrupting him. The fellow was partially intoxicated and his questions were inconvenient. Another man rose up in the audience and called out in dialect: "Mister Greenwood, don't you pye any attention to 'im; 'e's no good; 'e let 'is wife go to the wuk'us to-dye." The half-drunken heckler pulled himself up and said: "Mister Greenwood, Mister Greenwood, don't you—don't you blime me—till you see—the Missus." Now, sir, it is always important, in forming our judgments that we "see the missus." We should know the necessary facts.

But, sir, while the native-born has advantage over the visitor in close personal knowledge of the situation here or there in Britain, familiarity may dull his senses of the significance of facts which strike and impress the stranger who comes with fresh eyes and has other experiences and conditions in mind. In what I have to say I shall speak of things as I saw them. I shall try to present some points of instruction and of warning as they impressed me. I select only those that seem to yield lessons for life in Canada.

First, I set the lesson of the land. The land situation in Britain is full of instruction and of warning for the people of Canada. Broadly, the land is the prime source of the nation's wealth. The land is the basis of the people's prosperity. All our great institutions of civilization have their roots directly or indirectly in the soil. More than on any other one thing the comfort and prosperity of a people depend on the uses they make of the land. Land is limited in area and fixed in location. It cannot be increased. It cannot be transported. You buy a half-dozen motor cars, but your abundance does not prevent your neighbor from having his supply. New motor cars can be procured. But if you own or control all the land other people must go without, for more land cannot be made to meet the demand.

In Britain the land situation is made acute by reason of the very large population on a very small land area. Nothing but the utmost wisdom could handle the land of Britain so as to deal justly with the interests of all the people. But instead of economic wisdom we have the utmost of economic folly. I need not tell you the history of the British land situation. You know how a century or more ago when men accumulated great wealth through investment in India, or in America, or elsewhere, they found it necessary, in order to gain a social standing at home, to acquire great estates. The aristocracy of Great Britain was a landed aristocracy. You know, too,

how great grants of land were made to favorites of the King in return for services in war. It was needful that these landed proprietors have a large class of retainers who could be pressed into service when the King went to war. Men of wealth bought the small farms and the farmers became tenants on the large estates. These tenant farmers were able to pay their land rent, partly out of the small home industries which they conducted. In parts of Scotland the land situation was affected by the clan system. When that system broke down after Culloden the chiefs of the clans became the landlords of the estates. We have now great Scottish landlords like the Duke of Sutherland, who owns more than a million and a quarter of land; the Duke of Buccleuch and the Marquis of Bute with their vast domains, the old clan chiefs like Argyll, the head of the Campbells, and Lochiel, the head of the Camerons. In some cases the men who followed their chiefs to the field were, after the clan system broke down, compelled to leave the estates and make new homes for themselves beyond the seas. The landlords in England and Scotland, as well as in Ireland, when they got control of great estates, and when they were no longer required to provide hundreds of men for war, found it to their advantage to clear the glens and the moors of their human tenants, and to stock them with deer and rabbits and grouse. It has been shown that eighty per cent. of all the land of Britain is held by three per cent. of the people. Is it any wonder the land problem is fixed and will not down? One-quarter of all the land of Scotland is owned by twelve persons. Is it any wonder, in view of the action of the lords in throwing out the Scottish Land Bills, that the people of Scotland should be keen for the reform of the House of Lords?

But another influence was at work bearing on the land question. There came a time when the small tenant farmers were unable to pay their rents because of the failure of their home industries. The great industrial revolution, with its establishment of large factories with their industrial machinery, killed the hand weaving, the cobbling and other small industries. The people were compelled to leave their farms and follow other industries.

Then came the days of the sporting aristocracy. The great landed proprietor found it more profitable to rent his land for shooting privileges than for agricultural purposes. As the leases fell due deer forests were created and grouse moors and rabbits warrens. To-day great areas of Britain are

almost without human habitation. Within a period of five years, including the year 1900, 700,000 acres of moor and bog-land in Germany were reclaimed for agriculture. During the same five years more than two million acres in Britain were withdrawn from agriculture and given over to grouse and to deer. Again, I ask, is it any wonder that the land problem in Britain is acute?

One of the campaign songs in Britain was "God made the land for the People." The sentiment of that refrain needs to be brought home to the people of Canada. Our country is too young to feel the pressure and the pain of the landless people of Britain. But a century of history will make as great a difference in Canada as it has made in England and Scotland. If we squander the resources of land with which this young nation is now so richly dowered, a generation will arise whose curses on our heads will be as bitter as those that now fall on Kings and Nobles who alienated from the people the lands in Britain a century or two ago.

And not the land only but all the great natural resources of the country. God made them for the people too. He who put fertility into the soil put electric energy into the waterfalls, and ore into the rocks, and timber in the woods, and fish in the waters. He made all these for the people. No King, no Parliament, no one generation has the right to alienate from the people's uses for all time these natural resources which God made for the people's good. I am not now talking government ownership, or municipal ownership, or private ownership. I am asserting the principle that whoever may be given control and the right to operate, the objective of it all must be the interests of the many and not of the few. We in Canada to-day are on the eve of unexampled developments. If great corporations and syndicates are allowed to control our resources of land, or water, or mine, or wood, our children and our children's children will have to bear the curse of monopoly and absentee landlordism that has vexed Britain for many generations. It is for this reason I press home my first point that the land situation in Britain is full of instruction and warning for the people of Canada.

My second point is this, and it grows out of my first, that the social situation in British cities is a warning to Canada against allowing slum conditions in our Canadian cities. If the same conditions are allowed, the same results will be inevitable. In Britain the slum is the outgrowth of the land situation. Just because the people were driven from the land, just because they were compelled to follow their industries to

the towns, there were created those conditions which made the slum inevitable. The crowding of people into industrial centres produced unemployment, and unemployment produced degeneracy. That forcing of industries in Britain resulted in over-production, for which there was no market because the people were not on the land. The depopulation of rural Britain destroyed the home market for the British mills and factories. In the United States 37 per cent. of those reported as employed in occupations are on the land, producing wealth from the land, and consuming the output of the factories. In Germany 39 per cent. of those employed are on the land, in France 44 per cent., but in Britain only 10 per cent. of those employed in occupations are on the land. No wonder there is no home market; no wonder over-production in the factories produces congestion at home. No wonder congestion produces unemployment, and by the law of life unemployment leads to degeneracy and the slums.

That law holds for Canada as well as for Britain. We have the beginnings of slum conditions in every one of our large Canadian cities; all that is required is time. Time and the down grade tendency of life will reproduce in our midst the results deplored in the old land. For this reason the utmost official care should be taken in the planning of towns, in their surveys, the width of their streets, allotments for parks and gardens, and all those considerations for public health and happiness which reason and experience have approved. It will not do to allow the commercial enterprise of land speculators, or the cupidity of great corporations, to determine the physical conditions under which coming generations shall be born and shall live. Some of the larger industrial and commercial centres like Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Fort William and Winnipeg, are not without their social perils. Have you read Ralph Connor's new book, "The Foreigner?" The situation in the foreign settlement of Winnipeg there described with all its disgusting animalism and vice is true to fact. Change the names and the language of the people and you have what is essential of other communities. And not in foreign settlements alone, but some in which is spoken the English tongue. Congestion, unemployment, drink and vice—these four will convert any district into a slum in two generations. They say in Britain that it is not more than three, or at most, four generations from the health and vigor of the moor and the glens to the recklessness and despair of the city slums.

And this is a question for you members of the Canadian Club. It concerns every one of you. No man is safe. No

class of the community is safe if there is allowed a festering and fevered slum within the radius of your city. The downtown tenement is in daily touch with the uptown villa. Every man of you who cares for the good name and good life of your city is under obligation to have concern for everything that makes for industrial efficiency, social happiness, and a high standard of life. Democracy means that we are all members one of the another, and that if one member suffers degeneracy and decay, all the other members suffer with him.

My third point is this, that the decay of life in rural Britain is a warning to us to have special care for life in rural Canada. No nation is strong that has not strength in its country communities. From the day that the murderous Cain builded the first city until now, great centres of population have been artificial and have tended to social and moral decay. Life in the city is being constantly renewed and restored by the incoming from the country of new blood, new brains, new nerves, new muscles and new morals. For many generations the great cities of Britain, London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and the rest have been hungry devourers of human life. They have been kept back from self-destruction only by the annual recruitment from the moors and the glens. To a surprising degree the management of great enterprises and the leadership in great movements are in the hands of men born in the country homes and educated in country schools. I put it to the great captains of British industry: What would you do if your supply of workmen, and clerks, and managers from the country was cut off? I put it to the heads of the great universities: What would you do if you no longer received into your classes the "lad o' parts?" I put it to men responsible for the army like General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien at Aldershot; What would you do if there were no more recruits from Devon, or from Yorkshire, or from the heathery hills? Their answer was the same. The nerve of all their enterprises would be cut; the pride of their achievements would be destroyed; the strength of their might would be gone forever. All the great callings of the nation will suffer irreparable loss if the human breeding places in the country are destroyed and made to give place to the pheasant and the deer. The question for the army was put concretely by Kipling:—

Will the rabbit war with your foemen—the red deer horn
them for hire?

Your kept cock-pheasant keep you?—he is master of many a
shire.

I know quite well that it will be said that rural Britain cannot sustain a large population. A large population may not be needed; what is needed is a good population—good of heart, good of brain, good of blood—and enough for seed. Once there was such a population, but from millions of acres it was swept away. What was left behind too often was the weaklings of the flock, enough only for gillies and caddies and beaters for the sports.

I give one instance of a breeding place of men. It is a glen in the North of Scotland opening into Loch Ness. One side of that glen is a place of human habitation, the other side is wholly given over to game. From the homes of that one side have come generations of men during more than four hundred years who have given lustre and distinction to British arts and to British armies all over the world. When I visited the glen in July last the innkeeper gave voice to the pride of the parish—not in its wealth, or its popularity with the aristocrats of the south country, but in its school. "We have 140 children in the school," he said, "we have three M.A.'s on the staff; we prepare the scholars for the university examinations; we are never without our representatives in the great universities of Scotland and England; we had seven firsts in one year." There's a record for you; there's the glory of the Highlands; 140 children in the school and seven firsts in the universities in one year. And you ask about the spending of so much money on the schooling of the children of the glen. This is what the innkeeper said, "Of course they leave us; they go to the cities and they go to the towns and they go to Canada, and we are proud of them; the only thing we have to export is educated people." Tell me, is not the maintenance of such an industry worth while? You men who are proud of Canada's exports of bacon and barley, and you who demand higher protection for your "infant industries," you who insist on state favors for woollens and breakfast foods, tell me, ought not the rearing of real infants into great men to be encouraged and guarded for the nation's great sake?

And if we would indeed guard and encourage what is best in the life of the country we must join hands, all of us, in country and town alike, to promote those conditions of life which will make country homes and country life attractive and satisfying. Hence, transportation. Hence, education. Hence, all those gospels of the social life which enrich the mind and encourage the heart. Not only great transcontinental railways and net-works of electric lines, but also that

still more important feature, good roads on all the concessions of all the counties. Every encouragement should be given to country schools and to country school teachers. Rural telephone lines and the supply of electric energy wherever it can be advantageously used should be within the scope of Dominion, Provincial and Municipal Governments. The church, too, as well as the school, must be made a centre of light and leading, not only in the towns but in the country districts as well. It is a duty incumbent upon every good citizen, upon every man who cares for the nation's weal, that he take warning from experience in Britain to do his share in promoting the vitality and happiness of country life in Canada.

One point more and I have done. Certain qualities and characteristics of life in Britain need emphasis in Canada. One of these is the pluck of an Englishman. I have no Saxon blood in my veins, but no one who admires independence of character and determination to succeed can fail to do honor to the quality of pluck, which is typical of the Englishman. I do not mean pluck on the bridge of a man of war or in the front line of battle, but in all stations of life where confidence and independence are required. Take one instance in trade. A few months ago Lord Charles Beresford, in an address to the Canadian Club at Toronto, made great complaint that the shoe industry of England had been destroyed by the competition of American shoe factories. It is true that a half dozen years ago the great shoe factories in Leicester were threatened with foreign competition. The surplus output of the United States factories was being dumped on the English market. Englishmen by the thousand bought American shoes; they preferred the American styles. A great wail went up that the English industry had been killed. Now, what did the Englishman do? Did he go to the Government and ask that this American competition be excluded from Britain by Parliament? Had he been a German he would have done that, or a Frenchman, or an American, or even a Canadian, but, being an Englishman, he said, "By Jove, I'll do it myself," and he took that American shoe which found favor in London; he examined its style and quality; he judged his own shoe to be better quality and more comfortable in style, "but," he said, "it is their feet, and it is their money, and I'll make a shoe to fit their taste." He made that shoe on the American last and he imported from the United States the machinery required for the making of that shoe. That machinery he bought at 50 per cent. less than his American com-

petitors had to pay for it. With that machinery and with his own skill and the manufacturing advantages he had in England, he has not only held his own but has beaten his American competitors in the markets of Britain and of the world. That is what I mean by the pluck of an Englishman and that is the quality which Canada would do well to emulate.

One other feature of English life deserving of imitation is what I might call honor in business and in public relations. There is in Britain a fine sense of honor in public life. I do not mean that their election campaigns are devoid of excesses and absurdities equal to our own. I do not mean that among their public men there are no tricksters. What I do mean is that, taken for all in all, public life in Britain has a standard of honor and of integrity which, so far as I know, is not equalled elsewhere in the world.

The same is true in matters of trade. Not that there is no shoddy turned out by their factories. There is abundance of shoddy, but it is called shoddy and it is paid for at shoddy prices. I have in mind one instance of honor ruling the market which I have told elsewhere and purpose telling again. It was at the great annual wool fair in Inverness. For nearly 100 years that wool fair has been an event in the North of Scotland. Farmers and wool growers of all the Shires and Islands gather at Inverness during the second week of July. They meet there with the buyers and brokers of wool from Glasgow and Alloa and Hawick and Carlisle and other great centres of the wool industry in England. The Highlanders' English may be for you as difficult to understand as the Englishman's English, but between them they strike their bargains for the season's output of wool. These transactions are made and no documents or signed contracts bind the bargains. After having watched that market for a day and a night I asked a man from Dumfries if it was quite safe for him to depend on the Highlanders observing the contract and delivering the wool on time and up to the standard. "Absolutely safe," he said: "I can make all our arrangements with our mills and with our customers. The wool will be delivered on time." A man from Badenoch, one of the Macpherson Clan, over-hearing my question, asked, partly in dignified disdain, "What would you be signing for? Have you not the word of the man who sold the wool? What signed contract would hold if the word of a Highlander would break?" For nearly a century that market has been maintained on the foundations of personal honor as between man and man. A man whose word

would require a bond was deemed unworthy of a place where honor rules the market.

And now, sir, there is conjoined with that experience one other that came to me on my return to Canada. Almost the first editorial I wrote after returning to Toronto was on "Dishonesty in the Canadian Apple Trade." That article was based on a report from Britain that the largest fruit merchant in the North of Scotland, with headquarters in Inverness, reported that it was found necessary to empty out completely all barrels of Canadian apples. While there is good fruit at the top and the bottom, windfalls and low grade are in the middle. I know quite well the excellent work that is being done by the officials of the Government in enforcing the Fruit Marks Act. I know quite well the educational work that is being carried on by the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association. But something more, something that goes far deeper, is needed. There needs to be engrained, not in Government officials alone, but in the minds and hearts of all the people, such a sense of honor as would make a man ashamed and afraid to look himself in the glass if he were conscious of dishonorable conduct on the market or in trade.

One of the perils of a new country, one of the special perils of Democracy, is the decay of the moral fibre. Britain's marvellous prestige on all the continents and among all the nations is in no small degree due to that fidelity to trust and sensitiveness of honor which has been so great a characteristic of the race. If we would make Canada worthy of her place in the Empire and worthy of her position in the world, we must see to it that in all relations of life, in business, in politics, in our social institutions, honor is made an obligation and an authority from which there is no appeal. The best men in Britain to-day are looking eagerly, almost hopefully, to this young Dominion. They know that for them and for their descendents in the old land the doors of opportunity and of achievement are neither as many nor as large as in these overseas Dominions of the Empire. Among all the nations under the Crown there is none that has had such a chance, there is none that holds a position so strategic, there is none from whom so much is expected. If Canada would measure up to her opportunity and would meet her responsibility then this generation of Canadians would do well to be warned by the history of Britain and to be encouraged to imitate those things by which Britain was made great and free.