

(October 29, 1926)

Address

BY THE EARL OF ELGIN, C.M.G.*

PRESIDENT GEORGE H. SEDGEWICK: Gentlemen, we have recently been favored by an address by a guest, in introducing whom I took the occasion of remarking on certain traditions we were proud of as being British. Today I would like to mention one other as appropriate to the occasion. And that is the tradition in great families in the old land of public service and devotion to the welfare of the Empire. I think we could hardly get a better illustration than we have in the family of our guest today: a distinguished minister to Turkey, as well as filling other important diplomatic posts; two governors-general of India, and one of those also a governor-general of Canada, and I think one can safely say that there was no other governor-general who achieved anything greater in the way of service to this Dominion than did Lord Elgin from 1847 to 1854. Our guest today is following in that tradition and I am very glad that he had been able to come and address the club. By reason of the fact that he is speaking in Convocation Hall tonight he has asked that he be allowed to give an informal address, which of course, we are delighted that he should do.

LORD ELGIN: Mr. chairman and gentlemen, I feel it rather a formidable task from the fact that I come here under the auspices of the National Council of Education and that name rather presupposes that the guest is to deliver a formal lecture or something in the way of an intellectual treat. Major Ney, the chief organizer of that association,

*The Earl's father was Viceroy of India 1892-98, and his grandfather was Governor-General of Canada from 1847-54. His maternal grandfather was the Earl of Durham, whose "Report on Canada" is one of the most important documents in the history of the Empire.

has introduced into the last paragraph of that little leaflet he has issued, I think probably the kindest of little touches. He says that he hopes that as a result of his visit Lord Elgin will educate himself, or words to that effect.

But the real meaning, as I understand it, of these gatherings of the Canadian Clubs and the real meaning of this effort of the National Council of Education in bringing visitors from overseas and in bringing visitors from this new country back to us in the Old Country is to establish and strengthen those bonds which unite us in our history, in our traditions, in our friendship and in our love. I have been asked to speak in various places on the influence of nationality in forming the character of the individual and of the nation, but I feel that today I would like to say first of all a few words about the relationship which my family has had with Canada, which you have already referred to, Mr. Chairman, as lasting over several generations. As a matter of fact I am the great-grandson of Lord Durham as well as—I was going to say the grandson of my grandfather,—Lord Elgin. But I believe, and I am sure all Canadians will agree with me in saying, that those two men did more to lay the foundation of Canada as she exists today than any two other men who have served their country and Canada. I have another link with Canada. I am the son of a Canadian. My father was born in Montreal at a time when there were some distinct troubles in that section. And one of the chief points of interest, one of the things which I cherish as a family heirloom, is a certificate which stands in my sitting room today saying that Victor Alexander, Lord Bruce, was entered as a member of St. Andrew's Society, Toronto, when, I think, he was about a day old. And there are two more personal links to which I should like to refer, personal to myself. During those great years of stress from 1914 to 1918 it was my privilege during one year to serve in very close proximity to that great Canadian Corps and during the whole of that time the feeling was there, which has always been in my family, of admiration for and love for everything that is connected with Canada. One more link I am reminded of by one of yourselves who is sitting at the next table, Dr. White, who came over to Scotland with a great reputation as a curler and opposed me on the rink, but I was

able with the rink from West Fife to hold up the traditions of the Old Country.

I should like to say a few words about the Canadian administration of my grandfather from 1847 to 1854. I think the keynote of his administration was that he made it his duty to make himself cognisant of and to study the differentiation of the various nationalities that composed Canada and to treat one and all with the same trust and courtesy. And it is that faith which he had, I think, which founded the Dominion of Canada as we know it today. He came at a very troublous time. He succeeded some governors-general who had not followed in the footsteps of Lord Durham and he came with the firm purpose of establishing responsible government in the colony to which he was sent and he treated, as I say, one and all with courtesy and respect and he gave to the trusted leaders, those who were elected by the majority as leaders in politics, his trust in return as governor-general. But he was not satisfied in operating through one party. He took the trouble to meet them all face to face and he even writes in a letter that he found Papineau, who was described by some as an arch-rebel, "a most intelligent and well-bred man." This, I think, was the keynote of his administration. Although figures are misleading it is interesting to note that as a result of his treatment of all nationalities and understanding and supporting responsible government, and as a result also of his negotiations with the neighboring republic and government and the reciprocity treaty at Washington, he was able to look back after his term of office to a tremendous growth in the trade and prosperity of the Dominion of Canada. I have here a note that in the year 1850 the exports to the United States were approximately \$7,000,000 and in 1860, \$22,000,000. Imports in the same period rose from \$10,000,000 to \$24,000,000; and if we look into one of the greatest enterprises in Canada today, the great development of the railway system which, I think, impresses everybody by its tremendous organization and the wonderful courage with which it has pierced through this great continent, we find that shortly after he arrived there were 66 miles of track and in 1860 there were 2,065 miles. I think those

figures will bear out what I have said, that it was in his term of office that Canada really found her feet. Now she found her feet because of her treatment and because of the growth of the spirit of nationality and the two essentials to nationality are first of all freedom of worship, not only religious worship, but freedom to do any little thing which we as a nation, as Scotsmen or Irishmen or Frenchmen, may feel we wish to do to uphold the traditions of the past whether in the matter of wearing a kilt or whatever it may be. And then the next thing we require for the growth and influence of nationality is that there must be some definite place to which we look as our national home. It is not necessary of course for everybody who belongs to a particular nationality to live in that country, but it is essential that they should be able to keep in touch with it and go back to it, because it is in the soil that that feeling of nationality and national patriotism is crowned.

Therefore, again I come back to the point at which I started—that these visits from one continent to another are useful from the point of view that they keep us in the Old Country in touch with your adventure and spirit of growth and expansion and keep you in touch with the spirit of tradition and history of the days gone by. I would like to quote to you from a document sent from the Scottish Parliament to Rome shortly after the great struggle and the disputed succession of Robert Bruce and John Balliol. Robert Bruce stood as a national hero and eventually won the independence of Scotland on the field of Bannockburn. John Balliol was the claimant selected by Edward of England and supported by the Church of Rome. This was a letter sent in 1320 after the freedom of Scotland was gained by the Parliament assembled at Arbroath:

"The divine providence and that legal succession which we will constantly maintain, and our own view and unanimous consent have made him our chief and our king. To him in defence of our liberty we are bound to adhere as well by right as by reason of his desire and to him we will in all things adhere, for through him salvation has been wrought to our people. Should he abandon our cause or be traitorous or acknowledge the dominion of the English we will instantly strive to expel him as a common enemy. We fight not for glory, wealth or honor, but for that liberty without which no virtuous man shall survive."

And now I want, if I may, as a short interlude, to give you in song what I think can best be expressed in that way, because music has an appeal which the ordinary human voice cannot give. (Lord Elgin then sang, in an excellent baritone voice, the song "My Hairt's in the Hielands," and was warmly applauded).

I think, he continued, that it is probably true that in art and sentiment we touch nationality closest and it is in art and sentiment that the different nations have made their strongest expressions and impressions on the world at large. If we take art we find even small nations making a tremendous impression on the world. We think of the Athenians with their sculpture and architecture, or of Italy with her paintings and of the various other nationalities in different parts of the world making their own contribution and their own mark, but, perhaps more in sentiment than in anything else. Sentiment. That word has come to mean something rather flabby. By sentiment, I don't mean you to understand sentimentality or sentimentalism. I mean real sentiment and real sentiment is what belongs to and comes from the heart of man; the real inner thing. I am going to quote from our national Scottish poet something which, I think, brings out that point:

"It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on Bank;
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in makin muckle, mair;
It's no in books; it's no in lear,
To make us truly blest;
If happiness hae no her seat
And center in the breast,
We may be wise or rich or great,
But never can be blest;
Nae treasures, nor pleasures
Could make us happy lang;
The heart aye's the part aye
That makes us right or wrang."

Epistle to Davie.

And from that note of personal sentiment I think we can turn to the more dominant note of national sentiment. By national sentiment I mean that sentiment which is at the

bottom of all true patriotism, the sentiment of a man trying and striving to do his best not for his own purpose, not for the purpose of any one class to which he belongs, but for the whole nation of which he is a part. And that is brought out for us in many different ways. It is brought out in difficult times, such times as we passed through from 1914 to 1918 when everybody, and Canada above all, showed an inspiration and example to the whole world that a man is willing to do his part for what he considers is true and just and honest, for his King and country. Again I must ask you, Mr. Chairman, to allow me to be perhaps a little informal and introduce another song into my address. It brings out the note that we are willing to do all we can for our country. It is the song composed by Robert Burns on what he thought was the address by King Robert to his soldiers at the battle of Bannockburn.

(Lord Elgin here sang "Scots wha hae.")

I want to conclude with just this as a motto: "Let us do or dee." This is no time or place for lying fallow. We must be up and doing to be worthy of the country to which we belong. You are showing in Canada a great example in many ways to the Old Country. You have in Canada great possibilities of expansion. Anyone who visits here even for a short time as I have done cannot but be impressed with the enormous possibilities of Canada for the future. As the Prince of Wales says, no one can visit Canada without becoming an optimist, and that is the spirit with which I go back to the Old Country. I am on my way now. I wish I could have stayed longer with you but I am going back full of optimism for the future. Since I came to Toronto this morning I have been tremendously impressed with everything I have seen. I hear there is great enterprise among the young men of this place and I hear there is a spirit among them to keep up the traditions of real and true sportsmanship and in that way to keep themselves fit and true citizens. Colonel Fraser has made a suggestion to me and it is one which I accept in the same spirit of that song—"Now's the day and now's the hour." If a thing is worth doing it is worth doing at once. He has suggested that there should be an "Elgin and Kincardine" cup given for

some form of competition for the young men of the University and the Province. Most willingly I respond to that request, not from the point of view that it may be linked with my name, because I have seen here, and others have expressed to me, the great feeling of affection which you have for my grandfather. I should much prefer that the cup were given in his memory and in his name rather than my own. I have chosen, therefore, the name "Elgin and Kincardine" cup because he used to sign himself Elgin and Kincardine. When he came to Canada he came as a Scottish peer, the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, but as some recognition for the work he did here the Queen gave him a peerage of the United Kingdom—Baron Elgin. I don't know whether it is a result of that, but my father and myself have always signed ourselves Elgin, omitting the Kincardine. Some people object, but such is the fact; therefore I will ask Colonel Fraser if he will accept the "Elgin and Kincardine" cup in recognition of the past.