

(December 11th, 1911.)

Stray Thoughts About Canada and the Empire.

BY MR. C. A. MAGRATH.*

AT a regular meeting of the Canadian Club held on Dec. 11th, 1911, Mr. C. A. Magrath said:—

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—I believe I have in the past had the honor of two—possibly three—invitations to address Toronto audiences but always managed to evade the issue. Not that I wished to be discourteous but because in this age of stress and trial I hold that no man should take up the time and attention of his fellows unless he has something to say.

When your Honorary Secretary conveyed to me your invitation for to-day, I realized that I had not the available time to prepare something for the occasion. I said I had recently addressed the Canadian Club at Ottawa on "Canada and the Empire." Your committee, Gentlemen, kindly permitted me to become a "Repeater." I do hope on this day of your Provincial Elections I will be the only man in Ontario who will attempt such a thing as, under your Election Law, I understand such a liberty is looked upon as a criminal offence.

And speaking of elections I realize the atmosphere about us is surcharged with politics. I had a political experience of my own a few weeks ago. I talked morning, noon and night on a certain issue that was then before the people. I got the habit and believe I even discussed reciprocity in my sleep, but to no purpose as the verdict was against me. Now the habit I fear has not yet passed away, and should any gentleman present be in a political mood I implore him not to show it in his countenance. Otherwise if observed by me there is no saying what might happen. You may remember one of those

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delightful poems of the late Dr. Drummond which appears in *The Habitant*. Bateese appeared at a sale of discarded street car horses. He bid on a likely looking animal, which was knocked down to him for \$35.00. He discovered that his Choual "Castor" was quite a trotter, and entering him in a race was sailing down the track beautifully in the lead when a mischievous boy rushed to the edge of the track as Castor came abreast and rang a bell. I will allow Bateese to describe the situation.

"Wall! jus' as soon mon Choual "Castor"
Was hear dat bell go Kling. Klang! Kling!
He's tink of course of city car,
An' spose mus' be conductor ring."

Well, Castor stopped. He disgraced himself and the race was lost. There then is an instance of force of habit and what it will do. Therefore, Gentlemen, for the next half hour please forget that an election is now on as should I observe any signs of it in any countenance there is no telling what might happen to me as well as to "Canada and the Empire." And now for my subject:

Is there any particular pride or pleasure in being a Canadian citizen?" I realize that this is a dangerous question, and yet if it causes us to give some serious thought to the subject of citizenship in this young country, then I will feel that some good has been accomplished.

What is citizenship? Is it not a form of ownership? To be a citizen in some of the Old World countries carries with it privileges only attained through the sweat of the brow. That is not the situation in Canada.

If we closed our doors to the stranger and grew only by natural means—that is, by the excess of births over deaths, then it would be a source of pride to be a Canadian citizen, because the majority of the people have sprung from a strong and sturdy stock. It is the stranger, however, who is appearing and will appear at our gates that concerns me. It is the great virgin wealth of this country that is its chief source of danger, for that is the magnet which attracts the stranger.

Canada possesses in her waters alone a vast asset, occupying as she does a strategic position in the world of commerce, with great water routes leading to the sea, with water powers capable of producing the cheapest energy, lightening the burden of man's labor, for they toil on even as we sleep, with a vast storehouse of raw material, timber, minerals, inland

fisheries and fur-bearing animals. True, we may have denuded our timbered areas to a considerable extent, but if we do our duty they will be renewed. Our fur-bearing animals may have largely disappeared through the greed of the hunter, but they can be replaced and become again a source of wealth to us. And then our agricultural wealth,—I absolutely lack the vision to measure its possibilities. Well, what does it all mean? The greater the wealth, the greater the attraction to humanity, to all classes of humanity. Gentlemen, it is, as I say, the stranger that will be appearing at our gate that should concern us.

Who is there in this country that is interested in transforming the alien into a citizen? I know of none. The only citizen-making period appears to be during elections when political parties are looking for votes. The greatest criminal, should he happen to get within the country and manage to keep out of trouble for three years, can join us. It is a simple process. He submits an affidavit that he has been with us for that period, which, in some provinces is posted for two weeks in a Court House—an establishment where litigants only are supposed to go—a class of citizen frequently not regarded as the most desirable. That point, however, I will not press. What is every citizen's business is no one's, and so, being unchallenged, the criminal referred to obtains his certificate as a citizen of Canada with all the privileges thereby implied—not the least of these being that of standing beside each of us and calling us a brother Canadian. If I may be allowed to say so, it is simply a farce. Should we dream of taking men into any other partnership with us in that way? Why should we do it in our nation-building business?

Now, I am not going to discuss our immigration methods, nor suggest they are not what they should be. That would be another story, but I feel that I have said enough to make us sensible of the fact that by far the most important service in Canada is the Immigration Service. To the official on the frontier, looking into the face of the stranger with power to say, you may or you may not enter, to that man must we look for the answer to the query. "Is there any pride or pleasure in being a Canadian citizen?" The hand of the politician with political patronage should be withered should he attempt to place it upon that department of our public business. It is the duty of every good citizen to get behind that Department and insist that our boundaries shall be officered by men with the keenness of intuition of the Indian of the past, whose eyes and ears were in constant training.

Now let me briefly touch upon some features in the growth of Canada. First, let me say that in proportion to the development of transportation facilities, the more liquid does population become owing to the ease with which people may surge back and forth. In the first forty-five years of the life of the United States, when the voyage from Europe lasted several weeks, the estimated immigration amounted to a total of 250,000 people. To-day, the immigration to that country annually reaches about 1,000,000. In the earlier years the difficulty of travel across the Atlantic withheld all but the strong and daring characters. Then as its great native wealth became better known and the rapidity as well as the ease and cheapness of travel increased, the numbers grew until to-day that great country cannot stem the tide, notwithstanding its rigorous measures against the undesirable immigrant.

Europe reproduces herself at the rate of 5,000,000 yearly. About three-fifths are absorbed into the life of that continent and the rest go abroad, principally to North America. Germany controls about one-fifth of Europe's increase, but, unfortunately, she will not let us have any share of them though her household is already overcrowded. She will eventually develop a colony of her own, when she secures a suitable territory.

Coming back to Canada, with her 7,000,000 people, lying side by side with one of the most powerful nations on earth, with a population of 92,000,000 and adding to its population every four years fully as many people as we have in Canada to-day, we should, I think, realize the absolute impossibility of maintaining our independence for any length of time if we should attempt to stand alone as an independent country. It would, as I told the Canadian Club in Ottawa, be a difficulty much greater than that of preventing the neighboring city of Hull from fulfilling its ultimate destiny of being absorbed into the city of Ottawa.

Canada will not feed the United States with people, but the United States, congested by immigration, will perform that service for Canada. From and through that country will come our chief supply of people, because every facility exists for moving people into this country just as easily as they can be moved from one State of the American Union to another. A resident of the United States can take a few days from his work and run into Canada. If he finds what suits him he can take root here, otherwise he returns and continues his work there. To the European that is impossible, for once he pulls up stakes in the Old World it is hard to go back. That is the

great advantage our neighbors have over our own people in Britain who desire to emigrate to Canada.

Canada's position is, therefore, different from that of any of the other Overseas Dominions. The emigrant who passes to Australia or South Africa is separated from his native land by a long sea voyage. To a greater or less extent he leaves behind him the ideals of his homeland and rapidly becomes knitted into the life of the new country; but obviously such a change cannot take place so quickly with those coming in great numbers from the United States to Canada. In the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, our new settlers are creating their own centres and naturally carry with them their own ideals. I repeat, then, that to maintain our national individuality is no small task for Canada, and should she ever elect to be an independent nation the task before her would, in my judgment, be absolutely impossible. In my opinion, Canada must remain an integral part of the British Empire, or else become part and parcel of the United States. There is no other course open. I realize there are many who do not agree with me in my conclusion, but, studying the conditions that must surround our growth, coupled with our position on the North American continent, I cannot see how it can be otherwise.

When a country grows only by natural means—an excess of births over deaths—there is no necessity to force the cultivation of a national sentiment, but when the growth is largely by immigration, as in the case of Canada, our natural increase being about 80,000 yearly, while immigration gives us about 300,000—then, I say, we must take active steps to mould these people into one national life with our ideals, the ideals of the British people.

I have no desire to touch upon the significance of the recent elections, and while in the present company I will not say that the economic feature that was before the people at that time was either good or bad. Still, I feel justified in saying after what happened that to serve an economic issue with a sentimental sauce is a dangerous business, at least that was my experience. The sentiment of older Canada, of our native-born population, was connection with Britain, while the sentiment of that portion of our West which is settled largely from the United States was closer relations with the United States, and that was quite natural. A country growing only through an excess of births over deaths will have but one sentiment, but when the growth by immigration is very considerably greater, then the sentiment of the native born may find itself

considerably modified by that of the immigrant population, and on some critical occasion perhaps completely overborne.

At the rate we are growing the immigration that we shall receive within the next twenty years will, at the end of that time, be fully equal to the natural increase of the present population. Looking, then, at the sentimental side of the issue dealt with at the polls recently, I can easily see that if it had occurred, say, twenty or thirty years hence, the result would probably have been very different.

A cosmopolitan immigration can make us a powerful people, like, for instance, the United States, but let us not forget that it brings with it cosmopolitan ideals. Conditions exist in that country to-day which its founders could not possibly have foreseen. It is our privilege to take advantage of their experience. Take one example,—the selection of a jury in the legal battle lately waged in Los Angeles, the outcome of the destruction of the Times building in that city,—it took several weeks to agree upon only a few of the twelve good men and true. So far as I know that is something that would not and could not occur where British ideals prevail. I do not wish it to be thought that I am casting any reflections upon our neighbors. They are a great people, and they have great problems to solve. It is only a few weeks since Edison, the famous American inventor, paid a marked tribute to the business integrity of the British nation: "They stand amongst the people of the world in the very front rank in the matter of honesty of purpose." Then is there not some honor in being a member of that great family? I do not say that with the thought that there can be no honor in belonging to other families.

Now, I come to the Imperial side of the question. First, is it desirable that Britain and her Overseas Dominions should go down into the far future as one people? If so, is it practicable? None is more interested in this than the French Canadian: his every hope of the future depends upon maintenance of the Imperialistic tie. At the outset let me say that I am an Imperialist. To me it has become a religion. I do not waste any time analyzing the true meaning of the word "Imperialist." My interpretation is that it stands for one who looks for some organic union—some cement thrown into the various elements that go to make up the British Empire, so that there shall be absolutely no doubt about our going down through the ages as a united family. I believe Britain allows all classes, drawn from all nations, to stand together shoulder to shoulder on the highest known plane of civilization. It is the disintegration of the Empire that I fear. And should that come

about, it would be the gravest calamity that could befall the human race. Amongst other things, it would mean throwing the white man's burdens within much narrower limits for support.

I consider that the majority of Canadians are Imperialists in the sense that I am, but we have two schools of thought:—one believing in the separate and independent upbuilding of each Overseas Dominion and then expecting they will all be held together by some golden thread of sentiment, and nothing more. The ideal is a good one, but let me add we are not yet rehearsing the millennium. If those Overseas Dominions were to grow only by an excess of births over deaths or were to be supplemented by an immigration largely British-born, then it would look practicable to me. But what is the situation? Europe is over-crowded. The United States are, as already stated, taking in one million annually. There is no reason why the Overseas Dominions should not, before many years, be absorbing the same number because their total capacity to absorb immigration will certainly equal that of the United States. Very good. But how much leaven is Britain able to supply her Overseas Dominions? She is reproducing herself at the rate of between four and five hundred thousand yearly, and probably only 300,000 are suitable for colonization purposes. So that she will be able to supply a leaven of only one in every three of those who will be emigrating to her Dominions. And while the theory is sometimes advanced that the filial affection of the offspring will always stand by the old Mother, we must realize that the filial affection of the stepson kind is not at all times very stable. There is the situation as I see it, in so far as maintaining the integrity of the British Empire solely by the separate and independent upbuilding of each of its units.

The other school of thought is looking for some business co-operation between the various units of the Empire with the clear understanding that each unit shall have absolute control of its tariff and other domestic matters. If you ask me for the details of that arrangement, I cannot give them. Had you asked me ten years ago if a man could fly I should have been in the same plight, yet to-day that is an accomplished fact. Fifty years ago certain men in British North America took up the question of confederating the separate British units on this continent. Each Province stood alone at that time and the argument was advanced by some that they could and should continue to do so with merely a thread of sentiment holding them together. However, the Fathers of Confedera-

tion felt otherwise and concluded to enter into a business co-operation, and we are bound together to-day by business as well as by sentimental ties. There are those who appear to feel that the various units of the Empire are too far separated from each other to come together in some business arrangement. That would have been quite true fifty years ago, but not to-day. While the ocean is not receding, the time it takes to cross it has rapidly diminished and distances are measured by time. The Thirteen Colonies were each independent of the other. They might have continued in such a condition for a while, but in unity is strength. They joined forces and made a lasting union, a business arrangement, though at that time the two extreme members of that union were farther apart in the matter of time than Great Britain and Canada are to-day.

It is true, there is a long, non-producing space, the Atlantic Ocean, intervening between Canada and the Motherland. But it is the cheapest possible traffic route to maintain. Look at our own Confederation, held together by a railway with at least two distinct intervening barriers. First, the gap from North Bay to Winnipeg, a distance of 1,000 miles, bridged by an expensive piece of road to maintain and practically non-productive in the matter of traffic; and then the Rocky Mountains section, dividing our great Middle West from British Columbia. Yet no one is going to suggest that we are not determined to maintain our national integrity by holding the different sections together by the present business arrangement. Suppose we dropped the business feature, how long would the thread of sentiment hold us together, and especially to Britain when at no great date the sentiment of the stepson may have to be reckoned with?

If Canada is to be great, it will only be through the development of her native wealth, and to accomplish that she must become a great trader in the markets of the world—the policing of her trade being as necessary as that of her centres of population, and even more so. No matter what her destiny is she must accept her responsibilities in the matter of defence until the thousand years of peace are ushered in, and from what we read in the papers about Europe the Millennium has not dawned yet.

Apparently those who believe in creating the Overseas Dominions into separate independent units favor each separately policing the waters which surround their territory, very much the same as residents of parallel thoroughfares attempting to maintain separate police organizations to take charge of

their respective streets, and half of the intervening territory—something that does not appear very practicable.

A superficial consideration of the subject of defence might incline us to the belief that for Canada to engage with the other members of the Empire in a uniform system of defence would involve us in greater burdens than if we developed our defence system independently. Combination usually means greater efficiency at a minimum cost. The term "Defence of the Empire" simply means the defence of our interests within the Empire, and it appears to me that that can be accomplished more effectively by co-operation than by independent action.

While I have admitted my inability to see the business co-operation that will eventually be worked out, and doubtless worked out slowly, within the Empire, still the existing situation is an impossible one, in that the representatives of the people of one unit—the British Isles—may by their act at any time plunge the others into difficulties with foreign powers. Of course, I realize that we have some who feel that we need not necessarily be involved in such troubles, but the other nations will have something to say about that and we would probably find ourselves in the humiliating position of either being forced to get busy or pull down the flag. I hold with others then that we must soon change that order of things and have a voice in the foreign affairs of our people as well as join in a uniform system of protecting our combined interests.

So far as a closer union is concerned, the general feeling appears to be that the Overseas Dominions must take the initiative, fearing that if the Mother Country did so, it might drive the offspring farther apart instead of bringing them closer together. In my judgment, that view is wrong. It is for the Mother Country to work out some simple partnership capable of being gradually developed into a sound business arrangement; and then to give the Overseas Dominions the option of entering the partnership with the clear understanding that if they do not do so their position in the Empire remains as at present. I venture the opinion that if such an opening was created the Overseas Dominions would soon be found within the closer circle. The first step in that partnership arrangement would be a voice in the foreign policy of our Empire, which must be brought about at no distant date, otherwise that counter sentiment to which I have referred may in gaining strength as time passes seek other arrangements, the nature of which I have no desire to discuss.

A great deal has been said about the formation of an Imperial Parliament to deal with the foreign policy as well as

matters of defence. The chief stumbling block appears to be the fear that it would destroy the autonomy of each unit having representatives therein, as it would have to decide what monies each Dominion should provide for defence purposes. Why, the question has been asked, should South Africa have a voice in fixing what the Canadian taxpayers should pay in defence? The same remark might apply to the case of the Maritime Provinces, which to-day have a voice in the responsibilities of British Columbia in Dominion matters.

The creation of an Imperial Parliament would naturally reduce the status of the British Parliament, but not that of those of the Overseas Dominions, as there is vastly greater work in the national upbuilding of new countries than merely looking after domestic matters in a finished country as in Britain. Of course the older country has greater social problems than confront governments in new countries. Therefore it would appear an impossible position to have a body representing, say, Canada in an Imperial House, fixing her responsibilities in the matter of taxation for defence and to have at the same time a Dominion Parliament independently imposing the necessarily heavy burden for developing the country. It looks as if there should be but one tax gatherer and that the local or Home Government. The scheme might have to be an Imperial Parliament partly elected and partly nominated by the Home Governments of each unit, so that the Imperial Body would largely be in sympathy with those in power in each Dominion; and further, Imperial measures should have more than clear majorities, as a means of protection to the smaller units; also, in attempting to fix the responsibilities of each unit, expenditures, as imposed by the Home Governments, for national development, would have to be considered as part of that responsibility. In other words, national development and national defence shall be bracketed together and dealt with at the same time.

The Imperial Conferences are certainly doing good work. Why should they not be held more frequently, and be perambulating in character? Surely each unit of the Empire has spare public men whom it can send abroad to discuss our larger questions. It is only by rubbing shoulders together that those complicated questions can be solved. Would it not be an excellent idea if each unit were permitted to have, say, three seats, without voting power, at its disposal in the Parliament of each of the other units, never allowing the same representative to occupy a seat in the Parliament of the same Dominion more than one session? That would keep a small stream of men

interchanging within the Empire, thereby giving greater breadth to our public life, something not only desirable but very necessary in young and progressive countries. The foregoing suggestions are but vague ideas, and vague ideas passing into the minds of others sometimes leave a germ which breeds a sound principle.

Now I have given you a few stray thoughts on Canada and the Empire. May I be permitted to summarize my conclusions. First, if Canada has the great wealth, which you and I believe she possesses, then in proportion to that wealth will be the desire to get within our borders. In the procession will be found the undesirable as well as the desirable. The standard of citizenship is as sensitive as the mercury in the glass. Let in the undesirable and down that standard drops, forcing upward our responsibilities—that is, increasing our burdens in maintaining those various institutions which the state has to provide for the unfortunate class.

Then our pride and pleasure in being Canadians will largely depend upon the extent to which the sieve is used upon our borders. And remembering that those coming through that sieve will, with their offspring, before many years outnumber the natural growth of Canada's population of to-day, may I use the simile of the chemist who does not wait till nature assimilates the different elements he finds within his mortar, but actively uses the pestle.

Canada is a mortar, and the pestle we need in order to work proper cohesion into the various peoples finding their way into this country, is British ideals. And likewise the pestle necessary to knit together the several units of an Empire, made up of various peoples, is business co-operation.

A few words more. The cementing together of British countries which circle the globe and upon which the sun never sets, is a magnificent task and in the best interests of humanity. To hold to that idea makes us none the less true and loyal Canadians. It will mean our own material advancement. Our Maritime Provinces will be brought more into evidence, and let me say we cannot congratulate ourselves for any active interest we have taken in their development. Their chief function in the Dominion appears to have been to produce good men for the rest of Canada.

In short, the perpetuation of the great British Empire, with its history, its glory, and its greatness, stands for the liberty and the advancement of mankind.