

[March 17.]

## Canadian Sentiment.

BY HONOURABLE FRANK OLIVER.

DRESSING the Canadian Club on the subject of "Canadian Sentiment," Hon. Frank Oliver said:  
*Mr. President and Gentlemen,*—I will not delay you by referring to the too flattering terms of this introduction by your president, but in saying this I must add that it is a matter of regret to me that I am not able to "Control the West." We have been discussions in the West of which you probably have heard in your newspapers, and these are evidence of fact. Allow me to express my pleasure at this opportunity of meeting so many fellow Canadians in this capital of the Province of Ontario.

Nothing has tended to better the Canadian spirit from end of Canada to the other than the Canadian Club movement, and I only regret that on this occasion the Canadian of Toronto cannot be better entertained. I would like to speak to you in regard to the West—in regard to the Canadian West. After your president invited me to address the Club, he asked me what I was going to talk about. That is an entirely different matter to accepting his invitation, and when I came to think of it I had lived the important part of my life in the West, and since I came east my business has been entirely with the West, so on looking over the subject it didn't happen to me that I knew enough about anything else to speak on except the West.

When the West has been talked up, talked down and talked by many hundreds of people. But on the other hand the subject is so large and has so many sides that I might like to bring some new line to bring before you to-day.

You have heard, no doubt, perhaps you are tired of hearing of the magnificent possibilities of the West, of its vast

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Hon. Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior since 1905, has had oversight of the Immigration and Dominion Lands Departments of the government service. He has lived in Western Canada since 1873, and since 1883, when he was first elected a member of the North-West Council, he had represented the West, in local affairs and in the House of Commons to which he was elected in 1896.

area and its great resources. I won't trouble you with these particulars to-day. I take it for granted that they are well known throughout Canada, and nowhere are they appreciated more thoroughly than here in the city of Toronto. The fact that the West is now so well known in regard to its material resources indicates the progress that has taken place in the Canadian idea that this country is worthy of some attention.

If Canada is to be the country we want it to be—and we want it to be a great country—if it is to be a great country, it must be great not only in possibilities, but it must also be a united country. In order that there may be unity of sentiment there must be a comprehensive knowledge of conditions all over the country. Let me suggest to you that the existence and development of the prairie west, as we understand and know it has been, and is, and will be the greatest influence in establishing a Canadian sentiment from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Until the West was known and appreciated Canada consisted of her Eastern Provinces, and a man was a Nova Scotian, a New Brunswicker, an Islander, a Quebecker or an Ontario man rather than a Canadian. But when there was a common object to be achieved, when there was a common aspiration to be reached, when there was a common purpose to be made, as was the case in connection with the opening up of the northwest, then Canadians from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, from the Island, from Quebec and from Ontario—then all these had a Canadian national aspiration, all were Canadians as all are Canadians now, and not provincial. It is well within the memory of many who are here that a man from Nova Scotia or a man from New Brunswick would resent the statement that he was a "Canadian," and it may be news to some of my friends to know that the same condition prevails to a considerable extent in the far western territory of the Dominion—in the province of British Columbia.

I am claiming for the opening up of the Northwest and the development of the Northwest, which is of interest to the members of the Canadian Club, that it has been the means of establishing and of increasing a Canadian sentiment throughout all Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

What about the Northwest itself and what about Canadian sentiment there? I know that many who are here to-day are well acquainted with the conditions of the Northwest and I assume there are many here who are not so well acquainted with those conditions. Judging from what I have read in the newspapers and have heard from the lips of a great many

men, I think there is a wrong impression as to the conditions of life in the west, as to the condition of the Canadian sentiment there. May I say to the people of this city, the capital of this great Province of Ontario, that if they want to know Canadian sentiment, if they want to know Imperial sentiment, without question, without argument and without doubt, go west of the great lakes, and you will see it, you will meet it in every city, in every town, in every village and in every school house from Lake Superior to the Pacific coast.

If there are people in the Northwest to-day, if there are cities and towns and railroads and all the appliances of civilization scattered over a thousand miles of prairie, how does it come about that these are there? It is because the Canadians of Eastern Canada have chosen to stand by Canada and by Great Britain, if you like, have chosen to cast their lot in the western prairies rather than in the prairies of the United States. There are more Canadians resident in United States to-day than the total population of the three prairie provinces west of Lake Superior amounts to. That is a startling fact which our people here seem to have lost sight of. The fact is that the increase of population in many years in the Eastern Provinces found its way across the line, but the man who chose to stay on the Canadian side of the boundary between Manitoba and Minnesota, while this movement was in progress, did so because he was a true Canadian and wanted to help build up a greater Canada. It is true that to-day we offer in our western country better advantages and better facilities, and that there is a better field for active and ambitious men than can be found in the prairies across the line. I do not know that I could give any greater emphasis to that, but I might give this one instance. I think the supreme test occurred during the South African war and was an object lesson to all empire builders. At that time I was sent as the representative of a single western constituency to parliament. It is true it was a large constituency, but the population was not as large as in some of the eastern constituencies. There were more volunteers from that constituency for service in South Africa than I am sure from some of the eastern constituencies. Looking backwards to that fact, that these men were willing to leave their property behind and risk all that they had, even their lives, in the service of the empire—I say if you want to find Canadian sentiment, absolutely and unquestionably, a sentiment which has been tested during years of trial, go west and you will see and feel it.

Now conditions are changing in that country. For many years progress was slow. There had to be a seed time before there could be a harvest. There had to be a demonstration of the possibilities of that country which could only be brought about by the taking of risk, by the taking of chances and by the suffering of adversity. But that is past, and now the possibilities of the country are established and the country is open to the west and to the north; it is no longer a matter of question and the world is ready to come in and take possession. I notice that some of our friends are afraid that in this act of taking possession by the world we may lose us a large amount of Canadianism. I am not a prophet; I cannot tell what may occur. I can, however, give you the facts as they are. Of the number of homesteads taken out in the Northwest during the past ten years when we have had our doors open to all the world, when we have been spending large sums of money to attract attention to that country, to bring people into that country, more than one-quarter of the homesteads that were taken out have been taken by native born Canadians. I have not time to go into the details of this question of homesteading to show that the returns do not give an absolute statement of the conditions, because some people stick on a homestead better than others; but when we consider the different classes of Canadians, and those from the British Islands and from United States and from continental Europe, I need not say that whatever may be the case in regard to other nationalities the Canadian is the man who sticks and makes good. He is able to and he does. Of the remainder of the homesteads, one-quarter are taken by people from the British Isles. Another quarter, or slightly less than one-quarter, have been taken by people from United States and the other quarter by people from continental Europe.

Now that has to do with the rural districts, but do not forget that while one-quarter of the homesteads have been taken by Canadian settlers, the population of the towns is almost entirely Canadians; that is to say the men of business and the men of finance, also the lawyer and the preacher—the men who direct the thought of the community—are to a very large extent Canadians. In every city, in every town, in every village, in every hamlet, yes, in every schoolhouse, it is Canadian sentiment that is taught; what else could occur under the circumstances than what has occurred, than what obtains in this Province of Ontario where the people are one for Canada.

You have in this Province of Ontario nearly as many foundation races as we in the Northwest, who to-day are all

Canadians. You have certain fixed ideals, certain standards of social life and government. It is just the same in the Northwest. Is it not a fact then that our Canadian sentiment is a Canadian sentiment that is backed up by British sentiment and by the sentiment of the people from the United States, who are of the same blood and race and ideals as ourselves. Under the circumstances should there be any question that these Western Provinces will be just as Canadian as the Province of Ontario is Canadian? I would be sorry to think this would not be the case. I believe that it will be the case and think we have every reason to be satisfied with the conditions as they are. We have had a rate of progress in that country which has not been equalled by any other country in the world. It has been progress under such conditions as have never before existed in any country in the world, conditions which existed because they were backed by Canadian sentiment. The difference between conditions on the Canadian side and conditions on the United States side in regard to railways, and government, and social life, and law and order is so marked that I will not deal with them. It is a fact of which Canadians may feel justly proud that a handful of people should go into that western country, take hold and develop it—develop an entirely new country—and that they are able to maintain the conditions of social life and respect for law and order and conduct the public and private affairs just as perfectly as could be done right here in this City of Toronto.

It is a great thing that Canada has such an area in that country; it is great that it is a fertile country, that it is a productive country. We brag about our 125,000,000 bushels of wheat last year and our 10,000,000 acres of cultivated land. We have 330,000,000 acres of land in that country, which is a larger proportion of good land than is found in any other country in the world. We have 10,000 miles of railway in those three Prairie Provinces. We have nearly 3,000 post offices in those three provinces, and we have had a natural development which has been felt in all parts of Canada. And it is only the beginning of the development that must take place. But that is not all that we have to be proud of. It is because we have been able to achieve that development under the conditions that have prevailed, and because Canadian ideas and Canadian administration have been good enough to achieve all this stupendous work. And do not forget gentlemen that this achievement did not come by chance, it was

not by accident, it was not without sacrifice, it was not without doubt, dismay at times. In the years ago when times were hard and taxes seemed high and money was scarce and every expenditure was scrutinized closely, it is something of which every man has a right to be proud that money was voted by parliament year after year, that the sound sense of the people's representatives kept the Mounted Police in charge throughout these great prairies to maintain the conditions of law and order—it is something I say of which every man in Canada may be proud.

That was good business, but it was not done because it was good business alone; it was done because it was necessary to maintain the Canadian ideal in control of public affairs. In all the vast rush of emigration and in this stupendous development, as in the days before it took place, we have a right to be proud of those who stood for the upholding of the Canadian ideal. Let me say now that that which seemed to be a sacrifice at the time, a sacrifice for sentiment, for an ideal, has turned out to be not only a noble sacrifice, but it has turned out to be the best possible business judgment, because of the development which is taking place in these Western Provinces to-day. That development could not have taken place so profitably and so beneficially had it not been for the maintenance of those conditions. What is good business is good politics and what is good politics is good business. The Canadian ideal of life and government finds its beginning in the British ideal of fair play.

I do not know how far these thoughts have affected some of our people. I am afraid they have not affected some of them very much. But is it not worth remembering that in the light of actual present conditions our policy and our ideal are away ahead of those of any other nation or country?

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