

(November 18th, 1935)

Reciprocity of Ideas

BY THE HON. NORMAN ARMOUR.

COL. A. L. BISHOP:—I do not suppose anybody would believe it, but the presence today of the American Minister at Ottawa, at the Canadian Club, is not something preconceived and pre-arranged on the day when the terms of the treaty between our two countries were published. It is an absolute coincidence, and a very happy one. Reading the papers as I came along this morning, there appeared to be a division of opinion on the subject of the treaty.

In 1926 at the Imperial Conference of Prime Ministers, under the chairmanship of Lord Balfour, the form was laid down for the Commonwealth problem; and Canada appointed her ministers to Washington, Tokio and Paris. These countries reciprocated by sending their ministers extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Ottawa. We have had at Ottawa since then—first the Hon. William Phillips, followed by the Hon. Hanniford McNeider and the Hon. Warren Robbins, who, unfortunately, passed away when in office. Today our guest of honor is the Hon. Norman Armour. His experience abroad at many of the American embassies—at Paris, Petrograd, Tokio, Amsterdam and, before coming here, as minister in Haiti, gives him a background which is truly notable to anyone who follows a diplomatic career. Relations between Canada and America are so cordial with the common bond of our inheritance and language that I think it must be a very easy task and, therefore, given by way of a reward for past service. He is going to discuss today, not reciprocity of commodities, but reciprocity of ideas. It gives me very great pleasure to introduce to you Hon. Norman Armour.

THE HON. NORMAN ARMOUR:—Mr. President, distin-

guished guests and members of the Canadian Club of Toronto, it is a great pleasure and honor that you have done me in inviting me to be your guest here today. I have heard from my predecessors here in Canada of the great pleasure it has given them to come here to Toronto and I esteem it a particular honor to be privileged to follow in their footsteps.

My pleasure in coming to Canada, if I may put it that way, can only be minimized by the sad circumstance, under which I come, in the death of my distinguished friend and, I know, the friend of you all, the late Mr. Robbins.

Your president, I think, has truly said that, the burden of proof, as our legal friends would say, is probably on us to show that my arrival here, coinciding with the publication of the terms of the trade agreement between Canada and the United States, is a coincidence. As a matter of fact, had we had an opportunity to plan it, I could not have wished it to have turned out better than it has. There is no place I would rather be today, with the publication of this agreement, than here with the members of the Canadian Club of Toronto. Aside from the very great benefits that, I am convinced, will accrue to both our countries from this agreement, I feel sure that if you gentlemen could have been with me as I assisted or rather was present at the signing of the treaty last Friday, could you have seen the atmosphere of cordiality, good feeling, friendship and fellowship that prevailed at the signing, I am sure, as I am sure you do now, you would have agreed with me that this agreement is going to have an inestimable benefit in improving even further those friendly relations that exist between our two countries.

I make no pretense at being a speaker. In spite of twenty years in the foreign service I have managed pretty successfully thus far to avoid the platform. But here in Canada, even in my brief stay, I have noticed that you all seem to be good speakers. I wish you could give me the recipe. Some years ago—many years ago now—I was stationed in Russia, I remember they had a very interesting custom there that when someone was speaking and had a story to tell, it was the privilege of anyone present who had

heard the story before to put a knife on his glass. I was once telling one of my old favorites that I hoped and thought had not penetrated across the Russian frontier. I was somewhat disconcerted to find a knife on every glass. I was told that is bogey or even par for that particular story. Today I have taken the precaution, or your president has taken it for me, of waiting until the knives have been removed before venturing to speak.

In coming to you today, I have been wondering on what subject I would speak to you. I do not feel that my three months' stay in Canada entitles me to give my impressions of your great country, even though this is not my first visit by any means to Canada. In the United States we used to say if anyone came for a week he wrote a book, if he stayed for a month he wrote an article, and if he stayed a year he did not write anything at all. I should hesitate even to try and tell you anything about the United States. Not only are you almost within sight of that invisible line which I like to think binds us together rather than divides us, but you are actually within hearing distance. For, since the radio, we have no secrets from one another. We are subject to the same ingratiating propaganda that tells us what tooth paste will keep our teeth from falling out and what cereal will send us to our offices asking for work. We listen to the same music, and during intermissions we both learn that it is to a beard-conquering shaving cream that we are indebted for the pleasant hour we have spent. And while we are still pondering over the connection between beards and Debussy, Toscanini's magic wand calls us back again from shaving to Schubert. But this also applies to the more serious side. We hear our mutual problems discussed by leading statesmen, educators and men of affairs of both countries. Many of these problems, very many of them, we share in common, and we are each in our own way, seeking a solution to them. I cannot, however, leave the question of our boundary line without mentioning an outgrowth of it which is, I believe, unique in international relations. I refer to the International Joint Commission. Whereas we are all agreed, the boundary between Canada and the United States differs from virtually any other international line,

nevertheless the statesmen of both countries have wisely faced the facts and realized that, from time to time, disputes must necessarily arise and questions come up for determination which, were there nobody qualified to deal with them, might well become issues out of all proportions to their original importance. For this reason in 1907 and 1908, negotiations were entered into at Washington between Canada, represented by Lord Bryce, then British Ambassador to the United States, and for the United States, by Mr. Root, the Secretary of State, and in 1911 the treaty was signed which provided for the establishment of the International Joint Commission. This Commission, while at first regarded as an international experiment, has now borne the test of time and has become one of the most important factors in our joint relations. It has very well been designated as "an insurance for peace." Not only does the Commission perform an important function in settling disputes that may arise, but the very fact of its being there makes of it what has been referred to as "an international safety valve."

And that brings me to the consideration of the imperative need for a more thorough knowledge and understanding of Canada and Canadian questions and conditions on the part of the public generally in the United States.

The story of Canada long ago captured the imagination of my countrymen. The romance of its history has always had a great appeal for us. Your early history, so intimately connected with our own; those great explorers whose names are commemorated in so many of our cities, the early struggles about the old fortress at Quebec, the founding of Upper Canada, the conquering of the great northwest; all this is or should be familiar history to every American schoolboy in the United States. But that is not enough. Our people should know even more of modern Canada. The role you are playing in the realms of thought, music and art, as well as finance and economics, should be more familiar to us. Canada's approach to the problems confronting the world should be studied at first hand.

I would not wish to give the impression that such a study on a very considerable scale is not being made. It is

and great progress has been made indeed. At the present time, more than twenty-five universities in the United States are giving courses wholly devoted to Canadian history. Furthermore, the Canadian Constitution has been the subject for special study. As long ago as 1916, Justice Riddell of Toronto, was invited to lecture at Yale on this subject, while at the Institute of Politics at Williamstown, at St. Lawrence University, at Chicago and other round table conferences, Canadian questions have been well to the fore. Also our great newspapers have at last awakened to the importance of securing Canadian news at first hand and several of them and of the news services now have their special correspondents in Canada.

On the other hand, I have been told that at the Round Table Conference held last Summer at St. Lawrence University at Canton, New York, it was evident that the Canadians who took part in the discussions were better prepared and had a more accurate knowledge of conditions affecting both our countries than the Americans present. This, I understand, was due somewhat to the fact that many of the Canadians who took part had at one time or another studied in American universities. That is as it should be, but it is only half of the question. More American students should be coming to Canada to study at your universities. They should be entering into Canadian life, exchanging ideas with men of their own age, and forming those contacts and friendships which, in the final analysis, are the real bonds that unite countries. It is all very well to speak about friendship between nations, but nations, after all, are composed of individuals and it is the friendships between the individuals of those nations, that is what counts and really makes for true international understanding.

A year ago last Summer a group from my own university, Princeton, came up to Canada and spent a most profitable two months. They received a more than hospitable welcome. They had an opportunity to visit the various parts of Canada and had a particularly warm welcome here in Toronto, where the authorities of the University of Toronto took care of them. They talked over all sorts of questions and returned to Princeton convinced that such a

visit had not only been most profitable, but should be repeated. Personally, I should like to see a plan worked out along the lines of the Rhodes Scholarships, to enable more American students to come to Canada to study, as well as more Canadian students to go to American universities. This last is already provided for, I believe, but only on a limited scale, by various scholarships established for Canadian students desiring to study beyond the borders of Canada. Among these are the Commonwealth Foundation Scholarships (established through the generosity of the Harkness family, which has done so much for American universities and hospitals), also the Carnegie Foundation, and the Harvard Law School Scholarship. I hope the day is not far distant when we may see some similar arrangements made on a broad scale to enable many of our American students to come to your universities. There are various fields of study they might most profitably pursue: mining, agriculture, forestry, economics, transportation; and in the field of graduate study, law and medicine. Your faculties in medicine are particularly strong, and with your splendid hospitals and medical centres, fine opportunity for practical study is offered. But above all, here in Canada our students would join with the young men of your country in an exchange of ideas. In many things they would see eye to eye; they would probably discover also many points on which they disagreed (and what a very dull world it would be, if we did always see eye to eye), and they would each seek with the enthusiasm and everlasting vitality and optimism of youth to convert the other to their point of view, sometimes with success and sometimes, we hope, without success. And finally together they would learn to appreciate and reverence those great institutions which are our joint inheritance from the Old Country.

His Majesty The King, in his reply to the addresses of the Lords and Commons in the Palace of Westminster last May, did us the honor of including the United States in his reference to your own community of peoples. May I quote to you a paragraph from that address, pronounced by a universally respected Sovereign, whose Silver Jubilee we in the United States have joined with you this year wholeheartedly in celebrating:

"This, my palace of Westminster, in the mighty heart of our Empire, is the very cradle of our envied Parliamentary institutions. Here is the anvil whereon our common law was forged, to become the joint inheritance of the United States of America and of our own community of peoples. Beneath these rafters of medieval oak, the silent witnesses of historic tragedies and pageants, we celebrate the present under the spell of the past."

Those great institutions are—and ever will remain—the basis, the bulwark of our American nation. They are of the very fabric of our democratic structure. But in many of our states, through the passage of local statutes, laws and other procedure necessary to meet new conditions and circumstances, the simple, rugged lines of the common law have become somewhat obscured. Knock away the plaster and you will find—beneath—those mighty rafters of medieval oak. But for the purposes of study in its practical application, here in Canada it stands out in bolder relief—in greater simplicity, if you will. You are closer to the source or rather, shall I say, you go more often to the source.

In the larger field there is no reason why there should not be programs of co-operation worked out between Canadian and American universities. Goodness knows, we have problems enough that need solution, and if we could take certain of these mutual problems and have our universities co-operate to find a solution to them, this surely would be work in the international field, which—in the work itself, as well as in the results achieved—would bring together understanding and benefit to both countries.

I understand that a survey of Canadian-American relations is now in process of preparation by a group of outstanding Canadian and American scholars, under the direction of The Social Science Research Council, headed by that distinguished Canadian-American scholar, Professor James Shotwell of Columbia, whom John Dafoe has well described as "a citizen of North America whose career has conferred distinction on the country of his birth and the country of his adoption." We shall await their report with interest.

I met a Canadian student recently who told me he was going to a university in our far south. He explained that the majority of Canadian students are apt to choose colleges in the northern states as more accessible perhaps. His thought was a good one. You cannot have an idea of the United States by knowledge of any one section alone. Take the University of Virginia, merely as an example. With its great traditions, and its beautiful architecture — it was founded by Thomas Jefferson who, himself, designed the buildings—it represents all that is best in our Colonial and American life.

In travel, too, they will find that words, which are after all but vehicles for conveying thoughts, do not always carry the same thought or meet with the same reaction in certain parts of the country.

A subject for study that offers a fascinating field for common effort between us would be the influence on our respective countries; how the institutions that come to us from the old world have been transformed in the transplanting, with particular reference to their influence by the frontier. By the frontier I do not mean the common boundary line between our two countries, but that fringe of wilderness which, until comparatively recently, has always been at our threshold.

In my own country, from our earliest days, that is, from the settlement of America, until about 1880, there was no time that we were not influenced by the frontier. It seized upon European civilization as it arrived at our Atlantic seaboard and shaped it to our Western world.

Professor Turner, in his interesting book on the frontier in American history, has shown us that as the frontier moved slowly westward it became more and more American. It meant a steady movement away from the influences of Europe into the great wilderness that stretched to the Pacific. From the beginnings of New England and Virginia this effect of the frontier in developing our democracy was evident. As the settlers penetrated further into the wilderness, as the frontier was gradually pushed back, communications had to be developed, while the demands of those, who had dared greatly and had succeeded, became more

insistent. The qualities, developed by the struggle with the Indians and the wilderness, had given them a voice that made itself heard, and the Conservatives of the older eastern sections had to give heed. The contacts with the wilderness, the loneliness and hardness of their life, brought out in these pioneers strongly individualistic and democratic qualities. As an army must keep up its communications and contacts with its base, so the needs of these pioneers for supplies from the coast and the eastern factories caused roads, and finally railroads, to be built. But by maintaining those contacts, the cool breeze of the wilderness, its virility, its democracy, its individualism—yes, and its nationalism—comes back to affect profoundly the older, more conservative and sophisticated east. Turner states that "the rise of democracy as an effective force in the nation came with western preponderance, and it meant the triumph of the frontier." It reached its peak in Lincoln. In him were embodied the greatest qualities of this pioneer life. He was the real frontiersman, or, as Emerson has stated, "He is the true history of the American people in his time."

The year 1880 has been set as the approximate date on which the frontier ceased to exist and the free lands, in the larger sense, were no longer available. With their going went certain forces that had contributed a strength, a vitality and a freshness and individualistic originality to our American democracy. With their going we lost also our compensatory insurance against the losses resulting from waste, inefficiency and inexperience. But what was perhaps most important of all, those independent souls who in the past had felt unable to put up with the restrictions of society; who had chafed under the bonds of civilization and refused to submit to the limitations imposed by government, preferring to carve out for themselves some new domain, from now on had no choice other than to remain and become part of society and to play their part in the upbuilding of the nation as they found it.

The years that followed the closing of the frontier were largely devoted to an assessment and exploitation of what as a nation we had acquired. To this period belongs the

great influx from abroad. Almost over night we were changed from a more or less homogeneous race—at least in the sense in which we had begun our independent life—into a commonwealth composed of many nations. This was a period of material and industrial development, of assimilation, of digestion—in short, of materialism. After all, in the case of the nation, as in the individual, the process of digestion is not conducive to the process of thought. The frontier spirit seemed for the moment dormant; with the removal of Lincoln the impetus, which he had brought, seemed to have departed.

Though the Civil War had settled for all time the relationship of the States to the Union, the war with Spain saw us for the first time a really united nation. The decision it brought extended our frontiers beyond the seas and gave us possessions even in the far distant Pacific. Curiously enough, this extension of our physical frontiers abroad, our emergence into world affairs, coincided with a brief but vigorous return of the old frontier spirit to our national and political life.

Lincoln had been a natural product of the frontier; Theodore Roosevelt was a child of the frontier by adoption. Going west in his early cowboy days, he had caught the spirit of the frontier while it still existed. By his rugged personality, his breadth of vision, his love of the great open spaces, his exponency of the vigorous life, he gave to the years during which he occupied his high office, to the political thought of his time, a new vigor and a fresh strength.

But this was still the spirit of the physical frontier. It remained for the World War to break down the physical barriers that confined us and transport us into the new dimensions. Woodrow Wilson was the pioneer in this new realm of thought and spirit in our national life. He opened up a new frontier, he blazed a new trail, which was destined in a very real sense to influence our democracy, even as the old physical frontier had done.

With his going, as with the going of Lincoln, we seemed for a moment to fall back once more within ourselves. The pioneer spirit which he had represented, during these next years found its widest expression, not so much in the politi-

cal field, as in the fields of letters, invention and aviation. It was at this time we found our wings, at last, and sought to use them to the full. But at home barriers were erected, the false glitter of prosperity, the mica that we took for gold, brought self-complacency, which in turn brought self-sufficiency, and self-sufficiency led us inevitably to isolation.

Then came throughout the world the economic depression which spared no nation. And the only cure our twentieth-century imaginations, with all our science and progress and formulae, seemed capable of inventing was a new disease which we called economic nationalism. And in no country were the symptoms more pronounced than in our own.

You see we Americans have been submitting ourselves to a pretty severe self-examination during these past five years of depression. The hair shirt is perhaps most effective when it replaces the silk shirt. We are humbler than we were—not in a “Uriah Heep-ish” way, but I like to think, in a way that all strong nations should be, when they pause for a moment, half way up the mountain, to gaze below at the path they have come, and then looking up, see above them the great heights toward which they are aiming.

Our democracy may no longer have those sources of strength to draw upon which the physical frontiers offered. But have we not greater reserves in the realm of the mind and the spirit with which to meet the challenge which that last ascent to the peak presents? Here may I quote to you the eloquent words of the Governor-General, Lord Tweedsmuir, in addressing the Canadian Club in London last May? :

“The economic tempest of recent years has smitten every land impartially, the new as well as the old. Now, we old countries have for a long time had to husband our resources and think hard about our future. We have suffered so many set-backs that we have become skilled in the technique of disaster. But to the younger nations the problem used to be simple. Push the frontier a little further back—so ran the answer—strike out new lines, develop new wealth; the wealth is there; it only wants hard work and enterprise to win it. The situation is changed today. In a very real sense there are no frontiers left on the physical map. They

must be sought in the world of the mind and spirit. A fresh economic and social mechanism has to be created, and the new countries are in this difficulty as compared to the older ones—they have less experience of this kind of creation, and they have to improvise in a brief time machinery which the old lands may have already constructed at their leisure.

"That is the problem of the United States today. It is, in a large measure, Canada's problem."

These words of your Governor-General bring to mind the quality, so remarkable in the Britisher, of developing amid time-tested institutions, a vigorous originality in thought and practice which results in the effective adaptation of their secular forms of government to the changing requirements of the modern age. The problem of pushing forward the frontiers of the spirit is being met with insight and courage in the United Kingdom.

Lord Tweedsmuir, whose intimate knowledge of the United States is known to you all, has well stated our common problem. Let us try to solve it together, to make it our joint problem—you, an independent nation within the framework of your great Empire, we a commonwealth ourselves, one nation composed of many. Courage, which is our common heritage, given us by the wilderness, we share in equal measure; and courage, as Barrie told the Red Gowns of St. Andrew, "is proof of our immortality, greater even than gardens 'when eve is cool'."

We have taken the first step together. In the words of my President, spoken on Armistice Day, before the tomb of the unknown soldier at Arlington:

"It is fitting that on this Armistice Day, I am privileged to tell you that between us and a great neighbor, another act cementing our historic friendship has been agreed upon and is being consummated. Between Canada and the United States exists a neighborliness, a genuine friendship which for over a century has dispelled every passing rift.

"Our two peoples, each independent in themselves, have a common heritage; our standards of life are substantially the same; our commerce and our economic conditions rest upon the same foundations. Between two such peoples, if we would build constructively, for peace and progress, the

flow of intercourse should be mutually beneficial and not unduly hampered. Each has much to gain by material profit and by increased employment through the means of enlarged trade, one with the other.

"I am, therefore, happy to be able to tell you that the Canadian Prime Minister and I, after thoughtful discussion of our national problems, have reached a definite agreement which will eliminate disagreements and unreasonable restrictions, and thus work to the advantage of both Canada and the United States.

"The power of good example is the strongest force in the world. It surpasses preachments; it excels good resolutions; it is better than agreements unfulfilled.

"If we as a nation, by our good example, can contribute to the peaceful well-being of the fellowship of nations, our course through the years will not have been in vain."

COL. BISHOP:—Mr. Armour, for one who disclaims any knowledge or experience in public speaking, I think that you have excelled yourself. We are deeply grateful to you and extend to you a very cordial welcome to come back to us again. We deeply appreciate the thoughtful speech you have given us today. You exemplify, in the very truest sense of the word, in the words of your illustrious president recently, that you are an ambassador of the "good neighbor."