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Canada's Best Service for British
Ideals.

BY MR. NORMAN ANGELL.*

AT a special meeting of the Canadian Club, held on the 2nd June, Mr. Angell said:

You know of course, that we in the Old Country are coming to take a very lively interest in Canadian politics, for a very good reason: you are beginning to dictate ours. It has become a matter of quite tremendous importance in England what Canada thinks, and if as in favor of any given measure it can be shown that Canada approves it, then the opponents of that measure might just as well quit, right there. (Laughter.) No one in his senses in England will oppose anything that the colonies approve. I suppose it is because we realize that the future, if not the present, is in your hands; that the potentialities are under your control; that finally the pivot will shift from the parent to the children.

So we are naturally interested to know what you are going to do with us—(laughter)—what sort of empire you are going to give our children. I don't suppose we are worrying very much about the actual constitutional forms, ex-

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cept in so far as they express an attitude and a state of mind, because we have learned that it is not form which matters. Venezuela has, I believe, the same constitution as Canada, and as I happen to have spent some time there I think I can say that you have a better society here than in Venezuela. And you have so infinitely better a society because your underlying convictions are so different, and it is that which counts. And I think the most pregnant question for our common future is this: Is your influence going to be thrown on the side of the extension of those underlying ideas in the world, or is the result of your influence going to be the extension of what one might almost call the Venezuelan idea? I would like, if I had the time, to develop at some length all that is implied in the difference between the two great civilizations of the Western Hemisphere: the English and the Spanish. I should astonish you perhaps if I were to say that the Spanish is based on force, and the British on consent and understanding. Yet that happens to be true. I have not time to argue it in detail, but just look at the result; Spanish America split into an odd score of rival communities, that have at bottom no more real cause for quarrel than Ontario and Manitoba; each possessing quite imposing navies and armies; nearly everyone of them having universal military training, conscription—each one afraid of the other (and perhaps rightly so), each one piling up armaments against the other, and, where they are not fighting one another as states, busy cutting one another's throats as political parties.

Such are the results of a belief in military force as the fundamental fact in society and government. I wonder if we realize how different is the British conception, how far the British imperial development of the last fifty years has got from it. You know there are some people who declare that permanent peace between the nations is impossible, because there must be an international police force to impose the will of the majority upon the minority, and that that will mean war. I wonder if it has struck these people to consider that the five nations of the British Empire—it would be really more correct to call it fifteen or twenty—have got no policemen to impose the will of the majority on the minority. However much the British Government may disagree from any line of action that Canada or Australia may care to take, you are perfectly aware, of course, that it would never attempt to support its own view by force. It is an accepted principle of practice between Great Britain and her daughter States that she shall not use force against them.

You may say this is all very well in the domestic field of British politics or as between British States like Canada and Great Britain, but it won't do when you come to foreigners. Well that depends to what extent the foreigners in question are roughly guided by the same principle. I imagine that some of you are apt to deem your neighbors the United States none too nice at times in their foreign relations, and not of an especially altruistic or self-sacrificing disposition. (Laughter.) Yet you are eventually prepared to base your relations with them upon the same order of principles—upon the assumption that whatever your relations are to be they are to be settled by mutual consent, since you have left the long frontier which marches with theirs for thousands of miles quite undefended.

Now some of us in Europe are trying to see whether this essentially British principle cannot be pushed a little further. We believe that the British Empire is destined to teach mankind what the relation of civilized groups must be; that the principle which governs the relationship of British States should govern the relationship of all States, that what is possible with five is possible with ten, and that if one can make that plain we shall have done a service not merely to mankind but above all to our Empire, and shall have achieved its final security in the only way it can be achieved. (Applause.)

Well, what role is Canada going to play in that matter? Is she going to help or hinder a movement of that kind?

When I said just this minute that you would largely determine the kind of Empire we should have, I was quite serious. Your influence is bound to increase, you will be taking your share in the Empire's foreign policy, your weight will often decide the balance between one line and another. Indeed, I think it may be doing that already.

In order to make plain what I am driving at, I want to give you an idea of the sort of conflict which is confronting us in Europe. The picture is this: Here are two men, both very angry, both talking at once, neither knowing what it is all about, and both flourishing revolvers. What are they to do. We say—I speak of those concerned in the particular propaganda in which I am concerned—they should find out what it is all about. We don't believe there is any real cause of disagreement at all, and that if they do fight—which possibly they may—it will be from sheer misunderstanding, and the only way to clear up a misunderstanding is to understand it. But the other people say: Don't worry about understanding it—give both another revolver! (Laughter.) Fighting is inevitable anyhow; men are natural enemies and these

two have an insoluble cause of quarrel! Now I want you to note this: supposing for the sake of argument that this is a misunderstanding, that these men have no real cause of quarrel at all,—nevertheless, they will fight if they refuse to examine the matter. If each says "Oh, hang all argument, just see that you are stronger than the other fellow," why, there will be a scrap, not necessarily because there is any real cause of quarrel, but because each thinks there is, and because each refuses to see whether there is or not. To refuse to examine the grounds of a quarrel is to make the quarrel inevitable, unless the other party is a poltroon who can simply be frightened, and I don't think that any sensible man assumes that to be the case here.

Now Canada's action so far in this quarrel—in helping to provide pistols and in doing so far nothing else—has had the effect of supporting those who deprecate the examination of the causes of quarrel, and who favor the policy of pure force.

Please don't misunderstand me. I am sure that that was not the intention of your policy, but it may possibly have been part of its result. To furnish aid to the British Navy at this juncture, is in any case a splendid act, and may, for all I know, be a wise and necessary one. Personally, I believe in self defence. Those ships may be needed; Germany may, for all I know, one day attack us. But if she does, it will be because like others of us, she is laboring under a monstrous error.

By joining the party of force I mean joining those who believe that these international conflicts are not misunderstandings to be cleared up, but real collisions of interest which can only be settled by force.

Now certain indications seem to point to the fact that Canadian opinion, as a whole, inclines to that view, and will re-enforce that part which supports it in the Counsel of the Empire. Of course, if it is a sound view and war is inevitable in any case, it will not matter, but if it is not a sound view and war is, in the fine phrase of Mr. Bonar Law—one of the finest phrases ever pronounced by a British statesman—"not inevitable, only the failure of human wisdom"—(applause)—Canada's action will in that case have helped to lead the Empire into a disastrous policy which greater wisdom might have avoided.

Admitting for a moment that Mr. Bonar Law is right, and that war is the failure of human wisdom, it is evident that our policy should be of a two-fold nature; to retain our relative armament *and* insist that we also do our share towards a better understanding. (Applause.)

You may say that that is very vague. Well, this thing that we call public opinion is vague. Yet a thousand years of warfare—the warfare between rival religions—was brought to an end by just this vague thing—by the fact that the people who counted got rid of a few mistaken ideas. It is one instance the more of the ultimate fact which distinguishes Canada from Venezuela—the force of a few prevailing ideas.

What are some of the ideas which need clarification, if we are to come out of this squabble without catastrophe?

I will try and indicate a few.

A great fat book has just appeared in England to prove that Germany is bound to fight the British Empire, because Germans must get food for their ever-increasing millions. This coming conflict, is, we are told, in the last resort the struggle for bread—Germany will fight because Germans need the wheat of Canada.

Well, now I put it to you—cannot Germans have the wheat of Canada—by paying for it? And could they get your wheat without paying for it, even if they did change places with Great Britain as "owners" of Canada? We, the British, are supposed to "own" Canada, in the meaningless phrases that still obscure the discussion of international politics. Does that mean that we can get a single sack of Canadian wheat without paying for it? Don't you see that the fact of conquest is not going to change the bread problem for Germany one way or the other.

But, you may object, although the economic position would remain the same, Germany would like to turn Canada into a German colony, a place where German law, German speech and German Government prevail.

Have you ever thought what the permanent conquest of a virile modern civilized community really means? I imagine that you deem a Canadian as good as a Boer. Well, in order to reduce a population of about 100,000 adults, inhabiting a territory which could not support them the year around, it took 400,000 of the finest soldiers in the world three years and cost two billion of dollars. Just work it out by rule of three, and see how much money and how many men it would take to conquer a population just as virile and twenty times as numerous inhabiting a still larger territory, perfectly able to support them the year around. (Laughter.) And will you also note this: that even where conquest has taken place, it has generally been impossible or inadvisable to stamp out the language or laws of a civilized community,—that was the case of French Canada when French Canada meant a few thousand

farmers. How impossible, how unthinkable, therefore, would it be to stamp out the language, law, literature of a great self-governing community, possessing a great press, habits of self-government, a cheap literature, and so on! What is the truth in this matter? If we could imagine a physical impossibility—the German conquest of Canada—Germans would get pretty much the same Canada that is open to them now. And for this reason, Germans—the nation which certain of our more timid friends are so fond of representing as quite wickedly shrewd and self-seeking—will not attempt anything so foolish. God has made Canada one of those nations which cannot be conquered and cannot be destroyed, except by herself. (Applause.)

What are some of the other ideas that need a little examination? One is the idea that most of the Empire's wealth can be obtained at the cost of a single naval victory. If that is true, the fact is a standing temptation to foreign nations. And our statesmen are busy proclaiming it to the nations.

A British Minister once declared that "the whole fortune of our race, treasure accumulated during so many centuries, would be swept utterly away if our naval supremacy were impaired." And a Canadian one, that even without war the mere possession of stronger power by a rival nation would take from us "the sole guarantee of the Empire's continual existence." A great British general has declared that we carry on our trade merely on sufferance until another nation has greater power unless we had preponderant power; and Mr. Frederick Harrison says a naval defeat would mean bankruptcy, starvation, chaos. These phrases were terrifying and portentous, but quite without meaning—fortunately for those among others who have money invested in that Empire and desire to attract more thereto. If Germany, as the result of a naval victory reduced Britain to bankruptcy she would herself be bankrupt; if half of our population starved, masses of hers would starve also. If Germany prevented Canadians sending us in England their wheat they could not buy German goods, and could not be a German market. If Germany prevented us selling our goods we could not buy the Canadian wheat, which would come to the same thing. If Germany wanted to profit by her victory she would have to allow us to carry on our business as heretofore—and she need not conquer us in order to do that. If a nation could not carry on its overseas trade unless it had preponderant naval force, how comes it that Germany has for twenty years been gaining on us in overseas market, although all that time she had been

inferior in power to us? How could we have used our power to prevent that competition? Trade depends on having things to sell and knowing how to sell them, not in having more force than someone else. Though we destroyed every ship Germany possessed sixty-five million people would go on working and competing with us in the markets of the world! Where these high-sounding phrases of the statesmen are not meaningless they are monstrous absurdities, old notions and old political "axioms" which we have inherited from conditions long since passed away. It is in the false principles laid down by British statesmen that German aggressive policy found its justification. So long as English public opinion condones these ideas we cannot reasonably look for sounder opinion upon the continent; and as long as such represents the foundation of political ideas in Europe it is impossible to arrive at a better policy.

Well! again you may say "where does Canada come in, what can she do to help in the better understanding of these things?"

Now the truth is this, that while you have done your part towards giving everybody another revolver, have you done your part towards helping to finding out "what it is all about" You are a nation, you have come to man's estate among the peoples of the world. You take your share in the Empire's policy by adding to its military force, are you also fulfilling your share of this other part of the work, contributing to a better understanding of these problems, using your influence to see that the Empire's attitude shall be one that makes understanding possible, that it shall be not only strong but right?

I will try to make clear what I mean by taking one instance among many.

There is a movement in England at the present moment among the more informed commercial classes, and among the best legal authorities towards the abolition of the right of capture at sea—towards putting private property by international agreement in time of war at sea on the same plane that it has been placed on land. (Applause.) Now Canada has a very special interest in that—it would in large part secure from interruption in time of war those cargoes of food stuffs destined for England which it is to your interest to sell and England's to buy. Your neighbor, the United States and most of the great nations, are in favor of this world reform, but England has mistakenly, as so many of her people are now coming to think, so far, for special reasons—obsolete reasons

so many think—opposed it. Now, when the offer of naval help was made to Great Britain, did Canada even express any desire as to the attitude the Empire should take on this matter? You may say that she properly could not do so, that it would have been an impertinence. But as a matter of fact, your right to express just such opinion is specifically recognized in the very first resolution of the last Imperial Conference. By the very fact of this offer of help, you are taking part in her military policy, consequently you are giving support to her general policy. Are you not concerned with what it is? Shall you strengthen her progressive party—those who are trying to create a civilized law among the nations, or are you going to support the party which is indifferent to that and which bases everything upon sheer force? And let me say again, that you can furnish help to the Empire in the shape of ships or money, and still be in favor of the party of law as against the party of force.

I have mentioned the immunity of private property at sea, but that is only one of the many reforms that progressive people at home are hammering at. There are all sorts of plans of international co-operation, conventions to make loans by neutral states illegal, to frame working arrangements with reference to rendering judgments of the courts of one nation operative in others—plans which are very hard to carry through because European Governments, dominated by old diplomatic conceptions, refuse to concern themselves with these things. But the younger and more vigorous nations are free from these preconceptions. Why not use your influence to see that some of the more modern methods in international relations be given at least a trial? If Canada can make a present of thirty-five millions for battleships, could not a fraction, say two per cent. of that sum, have been set aside for aiding the work of international co-operation, for helping these international conventions designed to build up a body of real international law, to subsidize such work of world organization as the International Agricultural Bureau? The moral effect of setting aside even a fractional sum for such purposes, or still more of expressing a favorable view of such efforts as those to secure immunity of cargoes from capture would be enormous—it would probably suffice to turn the balance in the case of the British Government.

And more important perhaps even than this, is the question of what your educational institutions are doing to contribute to the understanding of these things. Does there exist in Canada a University Chair of International Relations

established for the purpose of enabling the whole problem of the conflict of nations to be studied systematically, scientifically? These things are difficult questions—difficult, however, mainly because they are overlaid with all sorts of false theories which the past has bequeathed to us—and we shall not go straight on them unless we take a little trouble. The newer nations have, of course, the greater chance of going straight on them, because they are less hypnotized by the past. But are those newer nations taking the trouble?

In any case our future is in your hands. More and more are we looking to you. I repeat the question with which I started, "What are you Canadians going to do with us?" (Long applause.)