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International, Empire and Dominion Co-operation

BY HIS EXCELLENCY VISCOUNT WILLINGDON, G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.B.E., etc., Governor-General of Canada,*

COL. ARTHUR E. KIRKPATRICK: (President of the Empire Club): Your Excellency, and Gentlemen of the Empire and Canadian Clubs, it is a great honor that is being paid to us today, and we feel it a great honor to be allowed to pay honor to His Excellency as the representative of His Gracious Majesty the King. You, sir, following as you do in a long line of illustrious predecessors, must necessarily feel a certain amount of anxiety as to just how you will find the people of Canada, and how friendly they will be. I am happy to say, sir, that right here in the City of Toronto, in this audience, you have a group thoroughly representative of the real Canadian spirit—a group of men who I believe could be equalled nowhere in the world in their true loyalty to King, Canada and the Empire. You, sir, have had a very distinguished career. His Excellency, gentlemen, has held many political and national positions of importance. He has been a member of Parliament, Junior Lord of the Treasury, Governor of Bombay and Madras, and has been a Lord-in-Waiting to His Majesty the King. His Excellency has one attribute which I have discovered for myself, the delightful attribute of attracting people to him personally by his own friendly and kindly magnetism. That is a magnificent attribute, to be able to capture a meeting as he did the other night that of our Sergeants of the City of Toronto. I have had as many years'

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experience as most men in handling men and when I saw the response of those men I knew that he who went in as a friend came out as a close personal friend of everyone in that audience. That is an attribute which we value, and I prophesy that His Excellency will make many firm friends in Canada, and today you will all feel that you yourself have been added to his personal circle of friends. Your Excellency, we wish you the happiest career in Canada. We will watch with the greatest interest your progress through the country; and to you and Lady Willingdon we all here express our hopes that the whole period of your tenure of office in Canada will be one of joy and progress. Canada, I believe, sir, is on the verge of the greatest progress that has ever been made in her history—and I believe this is peculiarly a time when you will realise and fully enjoy the opportunity of growing with us. Gentlemen, I now introduce His Excellency; give him a right royal welcome.

HIS EXCELLENCY VISCOUNT WILLINGDON: Col. Kirkpatrick and gentlemen, may I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the extraordinarily kind and generous way in which you have recommended me to this large and distinguished audience. There is only one criticism I would like to make in regard to your own speech, and that was that you said I had one attribute. I hope profoundly that in the future you may find that I have several more. It is a very great pleasure to me—I need hardly tell you that—to meet and make the acquaintance of this large and distinguished audience which I see before me today, members of two great clubs in this city which I understand hold a large and great influence in the social life of the whole of Canada. But I confess at the outset of my remarks that I have had considerable difficulty in selecting a subject on which I should address you this afternoon, owing to the curious limitations—I think the necessary limitations—which are placed upon me on account of my official position.

I noticed in the press a few weeks ago that my predecessor, Lord Byng, in a speech which he made at a dinner given in his honor at the Canada Club in London, is reported to have said that he had made eleven hundred

speeches while he was Governor-General, all about nothing, because the Governor-General really has nothing to say. Those of you who have heard Lord Byng's speeches will, I am sure, agree that this is altogether too gloomy a statement, but if there is any truth in it at all, the prospect before me is certainly alarming, almost of a dangerous character, particularly so having regard to my previous activities in public life.

In the early days of my public service, I was for ten years a member of the House of Commons, with full liberty to express my opinion on all political subjects. When I became Governor, first of Bombay, then of Madras, I was, it is true, removed from party politics at home, but was, besides being Governor, head of the Executive Government and practically Prime Minister, with again complete liberty to discuss great political questions as they arose.

But now, in my present official position, I am, perfectly rightly, bound to keep myself clear of the discussion of any political issue, and I am sure you will therefore understand that this fact puts considerable limitation on the subject matter for any speech. I intend, believe me, during my life here to keep strictly to the narrow path of virtue in this matter, but if, owing to my previous experiences, I ever stray from the narrow way, I trust that some sympathy and consideration may be shown me, owing to the difficulty I may find in getting rid of old habits.

Well, now, having explained to you my limitations and difficulties in the matter of making a speech, I want to give you today, from the point of view of a newcomer, my first impressions on my arrival in Canada.

My first and most vivid impression is the wonderful kindness and the evidences of friendship which I have been shown, since I arrived here, by every class and community of Canadians whom I have hitherto met. In Quebec, in Montreal, in Ottawa and here in Toronto, I have been received everywhere with every evidence of the most generous goodwill. I am perfectly aware that the reason for this is largely due to the fact that the loyal citizens of Canada recognize in me the personal representative of our beloved Sovereign King George; but I do feel that you

have taken this stranger into your family circle. Such kindness has warmed my heart to you all; has made me feel entirely at home here; yes, and has made me determined to spare no endeavour on my part to help you on the path of progress and prosperity which I see stretching out before you.

And the next impression I want to give you is as to the general feeling and spirit of the people of this country, now that I have had some opportunities of forming an opinion after discussion with various individuals during my short residence in your midst. I remember that, when I was given a dinner by the Canada Club in London before I left England, I made a speech in which I stated that, as a result of my trip across this continent in January, when I was on my way to China, I had formed the strong impression that the spirit of the people of Canada was full of optimism and confidence in the future. I do not know whether Governors-General are allowed to be this, but I am almost becoming a superoptimist myself. My reason for this is that on my return here, after a ten months interval, I find that spirit more fully developed than it was then. Believe me, I am getting thoroughly inoculated with that spirit myself, for I feel certain that you can look back with satisfaction on the fact that you have weathered the storms, you have withstood the years of depression in the past, which were largely due to the immense sacrifices you all made, both in men and money, in the great war, and that you can look forward to a period of advancement, development, and increasing prosperity in all your public activities during the coming years.

It is a truism to state that the prosperity of our country very largely depends on the successful results of the harvests, more especially from our vast grain-growing areas in the West, and although we must all regret that weather conditions have been frequently trying, I am glad to learn that the harvest this year will be of a fairly satisfactory character. This fact must reflect on the general economic condition of the country, more especially on the receipts of the great railway systems, which from published accounts appear to be showing increasingly good returns. Certainly

the speeches which I have recently read, of the heads of our two great railway systems, display an optimism for the future which should be a tonic for us all.

I have already had some opportunities, and hope to have many more, to inspect some of the great industrial projects which are being developed in parts of this country. On this matter I can naturally say very little, for I don't know enough, but my first impression most certainly is that in all its parts our commercial and industrial developments are progressing in a most sound and satisfactory manner.

I have already been here long enough to know that there are some people who have or have had gloomy forebodings as to Canada's future, owing to the fact that much of its development is being financed through the enterprise of our neighbors in the United States. I trust I shan't be considered to be straying from the narrow path of virtue, of which I spoke just now, if I say quite frankly what my first impressions are on this important matter. We want our great industrial schemes developed. We would be glad to see the development undertaken through the agency of the brains and enterprises of the people of the British Empire—but if these for the moment are not forthcoming, I have already lived here long enough to be able to say with all confidence that I do not anticipate any of the serious effects which some seem to think will be the result of the fact that our American friends are ready and willing to promote these remunerative enterprises in our country, which give employment to our people, more trade, and in consequence a more widespread prosperity to all our various commercial interests, and which will greatly benefit all classes of our citizens.

You may have seen that in the first speech which I made in Canada, on my arrival in Quebec, I said that I was going to take one word for my motto while I lived here—the one word "co-operation." It has been my good fortune, during my life, to have visited many different countries of the world, and the longer I live the more I am convinced that, if we are to secure a better feeling among nations, we must so work that the spirit of co-operation and good understanding takes the place of the spirit of want of con-

fidence and distrust, which one observes is so general everywhere. And surely this should be easier to attain now than it was in the past, for, owing to scientific developments, both in communications and means of transit, all the countries of the world are in much closer touch today than they were ever before.

I want you, if you will allow me, to say a few words on three aspects of the word co-operation, as they strike me today. They are in the first place, international co-operation; then there is co-operation within the British Empire; and in the third place, co-operation within this country itself; all three aspects very important in their own particular way.

With regard to international co-operation, there can be no doubt that much is being achieved through the great and valuable work of the League of Nations. I had the privilege of attending one of the meetings of the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva some two years ago, as a delegate representing the Indian Empire, and was much struck by the co-operative spirit that was shown by the delegates of the fifty-four nations who were there represented. There can be no possible doubt that the mere fact of the delegates living side by side at Geneva, discussing in a friendly spirit, during the three or four weeks of work there every year, many important questions which arose, and meeting at various social gatherings where they got to learn much better than in any other way the individual characteristics of the different nationalities, has done much to rub off corners and to produce among nations the spirit of co-operation, and has got rid of many difficulties and disagreements which may have existed between them before.

I come next to co-operation within the British Empire, and as to this, of course, the periodical meetings of the great statesmen from all parts of the Empire have had the most satisfactory results, and I sincerely trust that the Imperial Conference, which is now sitting in London, may prove of great value and have the effect of producing a spirit of closer co-operation and understanding between us all. But I think we want more than this, we want, each of us

individually, to get a more intimate personal knowledge of all the Empire's different parts. Our first duty is, of course, to that part which is our own Motherland, but I think we should never forget that we have some responsibility in interesting ourselves in all other parts of the Empire as well. And how can we achieve this? There seem to me to be two principal ways by which we can secure this—one is by the establishment of direct telegraphic communication between all parts of the Empire, which will give the press of this country a much better opportunity of keeping us informed of what is going on elsewhere, and the other is by individuals of the Empire taking all the opportunities they can to travel, and gain experience and knowledge of the interests and requirements in all the various countries of the Empire, and by giving the results of their experiences to their fellow citizens on their return.

With regard to the former, you are doubtless aware of the great scheme for establishing an Imperial chain of telegraphic communication between all parts of the Empire, and this seems likely to be an accomplished fact before long; for you may have noticed that only a short time ago I received from the Secretary of State for the Dominions the first telegram ever sent by that marvellous new invention, the Beam system, which seems likely to help towards a solution of this important problem.

With regard to the latter—and I can speak with some experience when I say this—there can be nothing more inspiring to any lover of the British Empire than to travel and to see for himself what men of our race have achieved in all its parts. Judging from the recent speech of Sir Samuel Hoare, British Minister of Aviation, I should think that very soon you will be able to fly for week-end trips to almost any part of the British Empire.

I may be biased, for I have lived and worked there for many years, but I would strongly recommend to anyone a visit to India, a wonderful country, where for long years some two hundred thousand men and women of our race, including the Army, have administered that great continent with its 320,000,000 inhabitants, and where you will find a loyal people satisfied with the fairness and justice of British

rule. But let me give you one word of warning, if any of you are inspired in the future to undertake such a visit, don't go without letters of introduction, and while it may be a rash proceeding, owing to the letter-writing it may involve, I am going to make you an offer, and it is this—that if any one does want to take a trip to India, he should apply to the Governor-General for letters of introduction, and I would be delighted to give him letters to some of my friends out there, in which case I can guarantee him the most generous hospitality and kindness.

With regard to co-operation between all the different parts of this country, I am delighted to see that this is fully recognized and is being seriously undertaken by both individuals and organizations in its various parts. I was only lately reading the most interesting report of the Annual Meeting of the representatives of the various Chambers of Commerce from all over Canada, held at Winnipeg last year, and noticed that in all the speeches the necessity for co-operation was strongly and forcibly emphasized. In a great country such as this is, where conditions of life and interests must vary in its different parts, common knowledge and common understanding of those interests and conditions will, I am certain, produce a common effort to secure the best results for the general good of the country.

And the last of my first impressions is a conviction which is common to us all. We want capital, we want people. You have in Canada undeveloped resources of all kinds, which (and I use the word advisedly) are practically incalculable, a country where young men and women with grit, courage and determination are bound to make a success of their lives. Most sincerely I hope that my countrymen will seize their opportunities in regard to both these matters, and thus bring mutual benefit and profit both to Canada and the Motherland.

In conclusion let me thank you once more for inviting me to meet you. You will have observed that I am already a complete optimist as to the future of your country. I am proud to be here to help on your progress, and trust that the coming five years may bring peace and plenty and increased prosperity to this wonderful part of our Empire.

Mr. G. H. Sedgewick (President of Canadian Club) :— May it please your Excellency, and gentlemen: In expressing, on behalf of the Empire Club and the Canadian Club, our thanks to His Excellency for coming and speaking to us today, may I say that while we believed, from what we had seen and heard of his Excellency's career, that he would be equal to the best in the long line of worthy representatives of His Majesty who have been here in years gone by, now, having seen him and met him and heard him, our faith is lost in sight, and we know that he is of that great tradition. May I say to his Excellency that I think he has expressed, in regard to international and Empire and Dominion co-operation, the very ideals that the Canadian Clubs and Empire Clubs are seeking to achieve in Canada; and that if he will come to us in future years we will give to him, either together or separately as he may choose, a welcome that will be equalled only by the capacity of the room in which we may assemble. Therefore may I on your behalf once more thank his Excellency for his address.