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## Things that Make a Nation.

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I beg to thank you, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, for the honor you have done me in inviting me to this goodly meeting. I do not suppose there is any gathering in the country like it, and I do feel most sincerely that it is an honor to be present with you, though I do feel also that it is a very serious responsibility to attempt to speak to you on matters with which, as practical men, you are more intimately acquainted than I can be. My own department is somewhat remote from the actions and thought of the business world, and yet I declare to you that I would not hold the office I do hold if I believed that it were simply a sort of back water in the great stream of national life; my belief is, my hope is, my whole energy is to make my own work, ecclesiastical though it be, tell, humbly indeed, but not indirectly, upon the life of the nation as a whole.

Now, we are here together to-day to spend a few minutes in thinking about "the things that make a nation." We each one of us are realizing, I believe, that we have a task laid upon us, the task of citizenship, and if are to understand what our task is, and if we are to labor at it intelligently, we must have some idea of what we wish our nation to be. We must be regulated by some general conception of what the nation is to be, and of how Canada is to fulfil the promise of its splendid youthtime.

Now, in one word, my conviction is that a nation is made by its ideals. Out West you will find that material things are thrown into your face at every turn. You sit in the smoking compartment of a Pullman car, and you will hear nothing but material things talked about from Winnipeg to the Coast. There is the wheat belt, and in that it will be wheat and nothing else; through another belt it will be ranching, and again in another it will be minerals and mining, and still again it will be lumber, and you will wind up at the Coast with fish, and all the way over the line the supposition in men's minds seems to be that the nation will be made by the abundance of those things which it possesses. My own profound persuasion, gained by observation and experience, is that a nation is made, not by these things, but by the ideals of the people who compose it, and I think that that is the most practical power that can be applied in directing the history of a nation; it is the ideal that men have formed that governs them; and by this the nation is made.

Now, just let us run over a few of those ideal things, and first of all is the commercial ideal. You will not expect me to speak very much about that, because you are all in the thick of it, and know more of it than I do. But we are all agreed that a nation requires wealth, and in one respect the wealthier a nation is the greater it will be. Now, wealth may be, often is, a very base and vulgar thing, and a very debasing thing in the make-up of a nation. But it need not be so. It may also catch the sunlight of a great ideal upon it, and it may be transfigured into a crown of glory. If wealth be real, if it be the register of the actual resources of the people, and if it be acquired by diligent effort, if it fills its real function in the commercial world, and if it be distributed, I will not say equally, for that is impossible, but if it is equitably distributed and without any artificial restraint, and in order to be used nobly in the service of humanity in the providing of things that are pure and good, and in the providing, I will dare to say, of luxuries, supposing those luxuries are such as make life nobler, more splendid and more magnificent, I think we have there a commercial ideal.

Then another ideal is the social ideal. I think that in the make-up of that ideal there are two elements which are certainly not contradictory, though they, at the first glance, are not identical. I mean "individuality" and "organic unity," and both of these are endangered by the prevalence of democracy, and there is no more democratic community, I suppose, on the face of the earth than this Canada of ours. Now, individuality is essential in the social ideal; there must be room for the many phases of individuality, for individuality in character, individuality in energy, individuality in enterprise, in ambition, and in independence. You must not crush individuality under the iron rule of trade conditions or labor conditions or the political conditions of democracy. We shall make a very poor nation of it if Canada presents nothing but a duplication of city after city strung out across the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It will be a miserable country to live in if you have simply men in it who are copies of one another. You must have men who think originally, who act independently, and who have their own conception of how to make themselves great. And along with that you must have organic unity, because it is very possible to have an individualism that will be destructive of national life. But the tendency of individualism in this direction must be checked by the independence of all lives upon one another. We must have fraternity, not as a mere adornment of the idea such as the Revolutionists approved and placed over the facade of Notre Dame; you must have fraternity strengthened by the common needs, made intelligent and strong and disciplined by the pursuance of common ideals and the service of the commonwealth. Put these two things together and you have a society that has room for men, and a society in which men are members one

of another. Thus you will have pretty nearly an ideal society in Canada.

Then again, you must have an educational ideal for citizenship; for the task of citizenship you must have educated men. That is to say, you must have men who are in living contact with things of the mind; the kind of men who are in contact with a universe that is not limited by space and time, a universe that is constituted by the great realities of mind, realities that belong to the spiritual life of man, using that word in the very broadest sense. You want education to make man effective as a workman. I was very proud of one of my students in Manitoba College, a young lady; she was in a railway car with Premier Roblin, and Mr. Roblin said, as, of course, he had every right to say, that education was of no use to anybody. She replied that if a man was to drive a post he would do it better if he did it with a trained intelligence and a trained intellect, and she answered rightly. And education is not merely for the workman, but, of course, it is needed for all those who are to be captains of industry, as I take it many of you are. It is wanted that a man shall be educated, I do not say in school alone, certainly not in school alone, but it must have its powers enlarged by experience and contact with the great quickening forces which are actuating the world to-day. Then, again, education is wanted to prepare citizens for the solution of great national problems, and I take it you and I are well aware that there is no country on the face of the earth to-day where there are greater or more complex problems than those which we have to face in this Canada of ours. I do not think we ought to be content with telling one another how great our resources are, but we have to tell one another that we are face to face with problems which, if we give them the go-by, or if we fail to solve them, will wreck our civilization. I do not need to go into details; you all know and realize that when you have an enormous mass of humanity cast down upon our great North West from all quarters of the globe, people of different races and different ideals, then this great country of ours is up against the very gravest possible situation. There is going to be ruin unless you can handle that situation, and you cannot handle it unless you have men who have been trained to think, and unless you have men who have passed through the discipline of facing great questions.

Then, again, education is wanted, of course, to develop a spirit of patriotism. You cannot solve these problems, you cannot believe in your country, or labor for its future, unless you have read and pondered the record of its past. This record in the case of Canada is not merely the history of the two centuries in which it has existed, but the whole history of the two principal races which constitute its population, as well as of those complex people that are to make up the nation of the future.

Now, then, we have got to be an educated people, and I take it you are all aware there are certain foes of education rampant in our midst just now, and though I may be saying things that you do not agree with, let me say them as frankly as a man can. I believe that the great foe, the one great foe of education in this country is denominationalism. I do not mean at all that we have not educated Methodists, educated Anglicans, and educated Presbyterians—of course all Presbyterians are educated—but what I do mean is that you are not to educate men to be Methodists, or to be Anglicans, or to be Presbyterians, or to educate them to be Baptists, or whatever other sects they may belong to, but I do mean that they should be educated in the first instance to be citizens. An educational system that is contrived in the interests of any denomination, however big or however strong its claims may be is, in my judgment, a profound political and organic mistake.

Then another grave foe of education is over-specialization. This is a somewhat detailed question that we have not time to go into just now. But by way of illustration I will tell you what the head of one of our great educational institutions in Canada said to me the other day. There was a certain position vacant in his university, and among the applicants was a young man from south of the border, and he was an expert in that particular department in which the vacancy existed. He came laden with certificates from I know not what institutions in the South, and yet my friend said to me that they had not talked ten minutes together before he knew that the young man would not do for the place, simply because he was not an educated man; he had begun to be a specialist before he had acquired a trained intelligence, or had become a broad-minded or cultivated gentleman. That is what we want. And then, and this applies more to the public school, we have the foe of what you might call mechanism, in which you have a code which stifles rather than stimulates mental energy.

Another ideal is the moral ideal, and here we get into a great question, but I would direct you to two great authorities upon morality, one is the great philosopher Plato, and what he will teach you is the predominance of justice. There must be justice to make a community, and by justice he means that there is a place for every man, and that every man is to fill that place with the honest endeavors of his whole heart and soul. He has got to feel his vocation, his function in the community, that no man is to oppress his fellows, or try to occupy his place. Now, I take it this community of ours must go back to elementary conditions; there have been things happening in our midst, not so long ago, which have been burning that into us the principle that there must be justice if there is going to be a permanence of our civilization; if there is no justice we shall be rotten before we are ripe, and we shall go to pieces.

There is a terrible possibility if justice be forgotten, a terrible possibility, of precisely those conditions and those qualities of which I have been speaking turning into more than possibilities. We ought to have individual enterprise, but without justice it will become illegitimate speculation; we must have energy, but without justice it will be mere unscrupulous scheming. We must have individual independence, but without justice it will become reckless disregard of honor and truth, and a defiant invasion of the elemental rights of man. We must labor, therefore, in this community of ours to see that in its organism every man is fulfilling his function and the whole is working together in the harmony of one dominant conception.

The other great author to whom I would send you, you will pardon me alluding to him here, and yet I make no apology for it, the other author is the Apostle Paul. He will teach you about justice, he will say there is something more than justice, he will call it "love"; I do not know what other or better name to give it than that, and what he means by it is that the man is not merely to fill his own place, but that he is to consider his brother, that he is to believe in his brother's possibilities, that he is to secure for him the opportunity of devoting himself to his own part in the common life. What is wanted is more impartiality, but impartiality touched by a great emotion, and that emotion is enthusiasm for humanity.

There is a possibility, a possibility which some writers in the United States of America have said has been almost realized there, and that is of having a "virtuous materialism," that is to say, that you may have multitudes of men who are decent men, men who are not violating any of the laws of the land, men who are eating meals that no doubt they have paid for, and who are wearing clothes that they would pay for soon, and are behaving themselves with a fair amount of discretion, and yet within the whole four corners of their being there is no room for passion, no room for enthusiasm, and there is no room or possibility of self-denial. If you have a community in which there are multitudes of lives like that, you will have a community that I, for one, do not want to live in, for a longer time than to wait for the first train that will take me out of it. There is no possibility of living a great life where you have this virtuous materialism as the only ideal entertained by the citizens. I say, "God save the soil of Canada from being encumbered by earthy minded and selfish men, however decent fellows they may otherwise be. God send us any discipline, whether it be the blight of our harvests or the desolating march of the invader. God send us anything to shake us out of this absorption in merely material things." It is, among other things, by the stern discipline and experience of war that Scotland and Switzerland both have won for themselves the place that they hold among the nations to-day. It does not matter what the circumstances, but we must have this ambition, high

above our decent \$3,000 or \$4,000 a year, or whatever your standard may be, we must have this ambition before us as our dream and our inspiration, that we are to live for the men that are about us.

Lastly, you will allow me to say, that there is or ought to be a religious ideal. Now, all wise men are of the same religion, and no one is, in this place, going to discuss one religion as compared with another. But I take it, if we have been thoughtful men at all, if we have read and thought at all, we shall have arrived at this conclusion, that a nation is made, among other elements; by its religious ideals. Religion is wanted, for instance, in order to deepen the sense of political responsibility in the exercise of political rights. If you make a man simply a mere unit in an immense party, a party which takes the whole responsibility of it, that man is losing one-half of his rights, and his dignity as a man.

Again, religion is wanted to strengthen the individual against the tyranny of the majority. It was religion that enabled our ancestors to stand up against the bullying of king or council, and it will be religion that will enable us to stand up to-day against the bullying of party or of trusts. It is the belief that men are not simply units, that they are not simply bundles of flesh and bone, that men are allies of the Great Power that governs the universe, that they are linked together in one common cause. That is the faith that will make men free, that has made them free in ancient times, and will do so in these days of democracy. It is religion that will establish in the citizen, the conviction that will give him the assurance of the inherent worth of men. The vindication of this fact belongs to religion, for it is religion alone that warrants us in believing that the ultimate realities are spiritual and personal.

Now, gentlemen, we have not time for much more, but let us take these ideals, let us take these things that you and I have thought of, and ask what is to be the upshot on your lives and upon other lives? Let you and me in our respective places in life so toil for the realization of those ideals that we shall bring them to bear upon the things we do, that we shall bring them to bear upon our study of history and of politics; that we shall endeavor in every possible way to strengthen those institutions which make for the realization of those ideal things; such institutions as are wrought into the very fabric of society. First of these is the home. Threatened as it is by invasion from many quarters, this sacred unit, this nursery of citizenship, this source of the strength of nationhood must be kept inviolate and pure in our land.

Second, there is the public school, and the public school must have for its service the very best thought. I believe that very many of the evils under which we are laboring just now have begun in the public school, or, at least, they might be corrected there. The other day I ventured to say, what some, perhaps, might reproach me for, that

the evils of Canada were not so much gross fleshly sins, not so much drunkenness or uncleanness as mental sins, that is, sins of unreliability, sins of want of trust. I may mention that a head master of one of the public schools, whom I do not know at all, wrote me from Winnipeg, having seen what I had said in the paper, and said: "You have said the exact facts regarding the evils of Canada," and he went on to state that in the public school in which he was a teacher the greatest difficulty they had was to convince the boys and girls of the necessity of speaking the plain truth. He laid the blame largely on the mixture of our population; I do not know what it is, but whatever the cause may be we have to see to it, that the purpose of the public school shall not be considered as ended when you have stuffed these boys and girls with all sorts of facts; but that it is meant to be a training school for citizenship and for public morality.

Another great institution to which, I dare say, some of us have but very imperfect allegiance, but I will deal with it here, is the Christian Church. If you will look back upon history you will find that this has been the instrument for the amelioration of the lot of man, and that it was ever against the proud forces of materialism that the Church has stood. I am holding no brief for any particular church, but I am saying I believe that Jesus Christ knew what he was about when he founded the Church on the earth, and you and I will be failing in our duty as citizens unless we are loyal to that religious institution to which we may happen to belong.

Then there are two institutions which are potent in our land to-day, potent either for destruction or for elevation, just as you and I make them. One is the daily press and the other the political party. It is by these institutions that this country is going in a great measure to be made, and it is the business, not merely of the editor, or the reporter, or statesman, but it is the business also of the citizen to see to it that the press and the party are educating this nation of ours in what constitutes real nationhood. You will not for a moment misunderstand me. I do not care two straws to what political party you belong, but that party may be made from your service to it, either a power for uplifting or a power for degradation. It is up to you to say which it is to be.

Now, these tasks are required from us, by the future that awaits us and the generation that is yet unborn; and this obligation, this task of citizenship is laid upon us also by the heroic past.

"We must be free or die, who speak the  
tongue that Shakespeare spoke,  
The faith and morals hold, that Milton held."