

(September 28, 1928)

## Canadian Immigration

BY LORD MELCHETT, OF LINDFORD.

PRESIDENT DALY:—Gentlemen, the vast industrial enterprises with which Lord Melchett is identified and the magnitude of his achievements in the fields of science and industry are well known. For most men with equal accomplishments there would be no more worlds to conquer and no more energy to expend. Lord Melchett on the other hand, in addition to his business activities, has devoted his time and ability and wealth unspaningly in the service of the nation. His vision and imagination extend beyond the limits of his own commercial undertakings, gigantic though they are and contemplates the problems confronting industry as a whole and the larger realm of imperial and world economic policy. As on the occasions of his previous visits to this club\* we will listen to his words with great respect. I have great pleasure in asking Lord Melchett to address us.

LORD MELCHETT:—Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, It is some two years since you were kind enough to ask me to one of your hospitable luncheons and invited me to say a few words to you on some problem in which we were all mutually interested. On that occasion I endeavored to place before you some ideas regarding the future of the British Empire. I then pointed out how essential it was in this great complex of interdependent British communities that we should remain united, that we should begin to consider the Empire not in terms of single units, not in terms of separate territories, however vast they might be,

\*As Rt. Hon. Sir Alfred Mond on "Britain Under Free Trade," Oct. 3, 1910; "The Land Question in England," Oct. 14, 1913; "Our Imperial Future," Sept. 17, 1826. See Vols. VIII, XI and XXIV of the Canadian Club Proceedings.

but in the terms of one great economic unit. The encouragement which I got from your kind reception of my thoughts has encouraged me on my return to continue to pursue the advocacy of that policy. And although the road is long, the problems are difficult and there are many things to occupy our minds, I myself have not abandoned either my advocacy or my hope that some day this great ideal may be ratified and consolidated.

Today I have been wondering what to say to you on my somewhat hurried passage through Toronto in order to visit some properties which have created a good deal of interest both here and in other quarters, the properties of the Mond Nickel Co., of which I have been chairman now for very many years. And thinking of that takes me back to the idea that I am becoming a terribly old Canadian. It is more than twenty-eight years since we started our operations in the Sudbury field and it is something like a quarter of a century ago since I first came to the Dominion and I have seen naturally in that time the growth and change, development and progress which of course only those who have witnessed can believe. I have seen the City of Toronto grow and develop and every time I come I find it is still growing and developing some more. I have seen Canada grow and develop and I can assure you there is nothing that gives us in the mother country more genuine satisfaction and pleasure than the growth and development and prosperity of the Dominion of Canada. Its history! The sacrifices which have been made by those brave men who fell on the Plains of Abraham near Quebec are engraved deep down in the hearts of every Britisher and form a priceless chain of recollection of the enormous effort which has been made in order to build up this great Dominion, linked as it is today from ocean to ocean, with not merely one but two steel lines interconnected and communication will be much more rapid; as time goes on, by the development of air. And not merely communication but personal contact. Some of us, like myself, are far from home. I feel no stranger when I come to your shores. I feel like one who has worked with you in the development of the Dominion and glories with you in the prosperity you now enjoy.

What a wonderful picture you offer! A vast wheat crop, a record for all time, throughout the glowing prairies. The development of mineral wealth growing from year to year; the development in the hydro-electric forces, staggering in magnitude, developing new industry, growing in size and importance every time one comes. Since I last had the pleasure of addressing you, I have become interested still more in the Dominion as Chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries. I am also very much interested in the great organization Canadian Industries which many of you know, of which we are half partners, and to whose development we are devoting a great deal of thought and much interest. I am not merely a stranger with sentimental interest in this great Dominion. I have a direct interest and Canada's prosperity to me means enhanced profits for the corporations whose destinies I guide. I am glad to know that once more London has been lending money to the Government of Ontario and I am glad to think the Government of Ontario turned to London and not to Wall Street, and once more enabled us to show you that, whatever people may say of the Mother Country, we are still as able as we ever were to finance the requirements of our old Empire on terms suitable to those who require our financial assistance.

Gentlemen, when I look at that picture, there is only one point to which I wish to direct a little attention which I think is well worth the most serious consideration of those who are interested in the development of the Dominion and who care for the future of the Empire. That subject is the difficult, controversial and big question of immigration. Canada is a mighty Dominion and whenever I open a Canadian journal or magazine I see province after province putting forth their resources, notifying us of the fact that there is a huge amount of land waiting for willing hands to cultivate it; enormous territories unpeopled. And when I look at the figures of population it always seems to me an extraordinary disparity between the development of the country and the growth of its population.

Now gentlemen, in all seriousness, population has a deep significance because population means strength;

population means the power of defence against aggression; population means influence in the counsels and the history of the world; population means the closer gathering of people and therefore more cohesion; population means greater consuming power and greater internal exchange; population means greater production and therefore greater exports and more interworld commerce. And though population is often decried nowadays and there are those who we imagine must always have too many rather than too few people, it is of vital importance to a great Dominion like this, of vital importance to the Empire.

I stress this fact because it seems to me in spite of all the endeavors that are being made, and I know very serious endeavors are being made both by governments and organizations, there is a great hiatus between the possibilities of the population of this Dominion and the number of people who enter its shore and settle in its precincts. And when I am talking about immigration I want to earnestly impress on you that I think it is a very vital point that you endeavor to populate this Dominion as far as you can, even if at a sacrifice, with people of your own stock, people of your own language, people of your own constitutional ideas, people of your own civilization.

Gentlemen, it is not so many years since we were engaged in the most terrible struggle the British Empire has ever seen. There are seated around this room today on both sides of the table men who were engaged actively in that great struggle in the field, British and Canadians. When that time came, the great testing time of whether we really had an Empire, people proved willing to go and stick together and fight together and fall together. The world would never have believed it, the sacrifice, the patriotism, the readiness with which men far distant from a mother country traversed thousands of miles of unknown ocean to land on unknown shores, and devoted their lives and blood to the one common cause. Gentlemen, why do we always keep forgetting that great lesson? Why do we allow ourselves to slip back from the high ideal? We learned at that time that one man in the Empire who left our shores was worth ten men who went to another country. You also must have felt those who came from the

mother country here and were here, were the men who were most ready to go and share in the common cause. Do you visualize the future? While we all feel and hope from the bottom of our hearts that never again may such days return, it would be a terrible thing if our great Dominion became peopled with men who largely had no cause or occasion for home sentiment, that we might either be too proud to fight or too indifferent to take part.

That is why I say I think it is so essential that we should bring to this country men from the home country. And I don't want you to invisage, as many have done, the idea that we look on immigration merely as help and assistance for our unemployment problem at home. Assistance it may be, but that is not my fundamental or chief reason for speaking about it. All immigration has nearly always been in difficult times. Canada was largely colonized by men from the Highlands who, turned out of their crofts, having nowhere to make a living, came and made good here. The whole world, if you will look at it, has been populated by people who were either mentally or morally unhappy in their own country, whom economic needs drove to seek a living. It was therefore during a time of depression that this country, which required immigrant population, had to get it, and it ought not to delay in order to get it. These phases of industrial depression lift. The industrial depression of Great Britain lifts every day. Unemployment agencies find it more difficult to get people to root up their homes and take a chance somewhere else in a time of prosperity. You may say, well, isn't everything being done? What more can be done than is being done today by the various governments and organizations involved? The Empire Settlement Act was largely precipitated by a policy which I advocated when I was chairman of the unemployment committee of Lloyd George's administration. I was disappointed in the results we hoped to attain, but candidly confess that I thought at the time the amount of money in the treasury which was allocated was inadequate and I should never have been ready to believe they would never spend that money. But this sum appeared to me quite inadequate for the problems we had to solve, and it seems to me the whole manner in

which this thing has been handled has been on much too parsimonious a scale. One thing as to that. There seems to be a tendency today to ask too much of the immigrant and for the immigrant to ask too much of the country he immigrates into. You go back to the pioneers who built up the British Empire. They were not all patrons of the Sunday School. They were not all, I imagine, skilled at one particular job. Some of them had even some defects and vices but they were people of energy, of courage, of determination, and some swam and some sank, and everybody expected them to. Anyway they were allowed to come and try and make good. And I think today the somewhat particular care which is being exercised in the selection and rejection of emigrants, tends to discourage-ment. When people who want to come and who find themselves met, not with eager desire, but with acres of forms to fill out, like a declaration paper before you land at the docks of New York, about themselves, their grandfathers and relations, their past, their future and everything else, and are handed from one office to another, finally they give up the endeavor of trying to build up the Empire any further.

I think myself, as an example, of a scheme in which the land is provided by one government and the money required is provided by the other government, with a knowledge and anticipation and certainty that certain men of this many will not make good but that the large bulk of them will come through. That seems to me the kind of line on which a really big scheme could be laid out. I don't think it ought to be thought of in thousands. I think it ought to be thought of much more in hundreds of thousands; it ought to be thought of in millions, but at least in hundreds of thousands. It is a curious fact that while we demonstrated throughout the war that the resources of national credit were almost unlimited, we seem to have gone back to the entirely untrue finance that always looks on credit, not as a national affair, but as an affair of a few gentlemen engaged in banking.

I am perfectly certain that if a great scheme was worked out by the courageous people and taken out of the hands of red tape and handed to a body of business men

on both sides of the Atlantic, we should get a move on in this proposition which would be of inestimable value to the mother country and of the greatest possible value to the Dominion.

I am very glad to be among you again. We made this year a small experiment in sending some men to harvest in this country. There are naturally defects in organization in a new scheme, so naturally among a large body there are a certain number who will grouse and a certain number will not fill their jobs. But on the whole I am glad to hear the experiment as an experiment has been successful. I am certain that is one of the right lines to work on. Don't run away with the idea that because a man is a miner in England he therefore cannot be a land worker. A great many of the miners are people who were on the land before they went into the mines. Their brothers, fathers and relatives are on the farms today. Down in South Wales a great number of our miners own small farms. The production of our mines falls down in the summer months because they go and gather in their hay. A great many when they retire buy themselves farms. These people are not so far removed from the land that they cannot very speedily become land proprietors again. For the English industrial worker comes from the land. There are very few more than two generations away from the land. Therefore, I say, be a little more elastic; take a little chance and we will try and get our people to take a little more chance, and I am certain that on the solution of this problem within the next ten or fifteen years may lie the entire future destiny of this part of the North American continent.

Now, gentlemen, I know most of you are always interested to hear something from those who come across the Atlantic about the home situation. Naturally you are much interested, most of you, I am glad to think, in what is happening there. Well, gentlemen, I have had to say on former occasions, and I think on the whole my words have proved true, that you need have no great anxiety about the condition of Great Britain. We have struggled through very difficult times. We are not through all our difficulties yet, but on the whole our difficulties are

diminishing and the upgrade of trade and commerce and prosperity is proceeding. And one of the great factors, I think, which is going to help us on this upgrade is the recognition which has come to all of us after a disastrous strike year, that the progress of British industry depends not merely on capital; it depends as much as anything on the friendship and co-operation of all engaged in industry—managers, factory superintendents and all the factory operators. It is this recognition which has enabled me in the last few months to convoke a conference unique in the annals of our industry and remarkable in the results it has achieved. A body of employers, influential as we could obtain from the official representatives of our organizations, met in free and open conference and conclave to see if we could generally hammer out a policy for the future conduct of industry in Great Britain and try and generally solve the great problem of unemployment and other matters affecting the organization of industry. It was an adventure which few men would have cared to have embarked on and which I never would have, if it had not been for a sense of great responsibility and that some step of that kind had to be taken. The first interim report of that conference is today public property. The Swansea conference with the Trade Union organizations proved the defeat of the extremists and approved at the same time of those who had sat week by week around the same table in earnest discussion but in friendly relations. I think it is one of the greatest moves forward that has been made in the industrial history of Britain or the industrial history of any country. I feel great pleasure knowing now from experience that those mostly responsible for industry on all sides recognize that the prosperity of industry, the basis of economic progress, cannot be achieved if industry is to languish and be depressed with internal warfare, which results in nothing except the defeat of both parties. There is no more conquest to be obtained in industrial war than there is to be attained in international war. There are today no victors or vanquished. There are only sufferers on both sides. The results of this great effort I think will enable us to shape an organization and a policy which, I do not say will make

for eternal industrial peace, for human nature in frail and human beings are extremely stupid, but it will certainly tend to eliminate and bring to bear a moral influence on the part of neutrals which I am certain will prevent catastrophes like those we have had in the past. That is one bright spot for our future.

There is another. We are realizing more and more the necessity of co-operation among those engaged in industrial pursuits. The small unit is giving way to the large unit; irregular competition, price cutting, continue as formerly to lead to waste of capital by overproduction which is not required; want of foresight, want of ability, want of magnitude in research and marketing is giving way to national endeavor, organized industry, maintaining as we can maintain and shall continue to maintain Britain's industrial supremacy in the markets of the world. There is nothing that we cannot do as well as other countries either in the world of scientific development, in the way of chemical research, or in the way of electrical or engineering talent. We have no reason to be ashamed or alarmed at the capacity of Britishers. There is nothing we cannot do in the way of organization, salesmanship, which other nations are doing. And we can do something for which we have always stood, and that is the faithful execution of our promises; the goods that we supply shall be equal to the sample submitted; that a bargain once made is adhered to and is not gone back upon, whether the terms are well or ill.

Gentlemen, I have the greatest confidence, and I think I can speak with as great if not greater authority today than almost any man in industry in England, in the future development and future prosperity of Britain. Some people seem to think that our time has come and our glory is past. I would say that our beginning has not yet arrived and in a generation our people will wonder at the conditions we submitted to and our prosperity, far more wonderful, is only now on the upgrade and the future of our country, I am satisfied, is assured.