

(September 21)

The Future of Greater Britain.

BY SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY.*

ADDRESSING a special meeting of the Canadian Club, on "The Future of Greater Britain," Sir George Doughty said:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I am deeply indebted to you for your great kindness in giving me this opportunity of addressing this splendid meeting of Britishers on this side of the water. I know that we all have one object in view and are inspired very largely by the same purpose in life, namely, the maintenance of the integrity and the future development and furtherance and prosperity of the British Empire.

We have inherited a very great heritage. We have had handed to us perhaps the greatest Imperial possibilities of greatness in the future that any race of men ever had the pleasure of enjoying, and as those who have given us these opportunities made great sacrifices in their day and generation for us to enjoy them, I do not believe there is a true Britisher in any part of the British Dominions who is not prepared to make sacrifices for the furtherance of these noble ends.

Now, Mr. President, I, of course, am not quite as free to speak here as I am in my own country, because there I say what I like whether they like it or not. I find as I have gone about Canada, whether those who listened to me quite appreciate some of the views I expressed or not, at least they have the courage and the kindness of looking upon me as desirous of aiming and doing the right thing.

Now, Mr. President, this great country appeals to me enormously. I have been right across from the east to the west. This is not my first visit here. Six years ago I went across from the east to the west by the Canadian Pacific Railway and enjoyed it very much. This time, I have been making a long sojourn. I suppose I have travelled twelve thousand miles already, embracing each Province of Canada. I am

* Sir George Doughty, Ex-M.P., Grimsby, England, has long been prominent in English politics. The London "Daily Mail" says that he is a main standby of the Conservative party at election time. "He is called the 'Demosthenes of tariff reform.'" The chief whip of the Conservative party insists on his going to wind up all by-elections. He is by common consent the last heavy shot in the locker."

intensely proud of being, if not an intimate citizen, at least of having the right to call myself a British citizen with some investment in all the great principles that are making Canada strong to-day.

Now, you have a great country; you have a great future. Probably in no part of the British Dominions are there such opportunities as I observe in every part of Canada. Wealth unbounded appears everywhere. It seems to me that God has blessed this land, not merely with bountiful soil and beautiful lakes and mountains, but with every other natural blessing that any other part of the world enjoys at this time. Therefore, in the government you have in the future that is before you, I would ask that you will look at that matter, not so much from the personal view and standpoint, but from the possibilities of your prosperity, making for the general advantage of the British race as a whole.

These great Dominions that are scattered about the earth, which have been called up to now British Colonies, but which I prefer to call British Sister Nations, these great Dominions have got what they have through British energy and enterprise and government in the past. But we have to look at the future and to ask ourselves "What is the future to be?" Are you desirous as a nation of becoming a separate people on the face of the earth, of throwing off your supposed allegiance to the mother country and to the islands of Great Britain? Well, I cannot find anybody, any serious-thinking man in any part of Canada that I have visited that is very keen on that aspect of the question. Of course, such has been the method of government from Great Britain that, if you were to decide to do that to-morrow, you are free to do it as you stand to-day. But, gentlemen, since the past has been good to you, has not the future greater blessing and fruitfulness for you within the domain of the British Empire?

I know that as a great nation grows in riches it brings around it the jealousies of other people who are looking about them for expansion, and as Canada becomes better known for its natural wealth, as its people begin to develop into richer citizens, if you have no power to defend yourself, what is the use of making dollars if you have no strong arm to secure your wealth? What will it avail you when the enemy comes much stronger than yourselves. Therefore, I submit, for the advantage of each and every part of the British Empire, it is essential that we should not drift further apart, but by every means at our command we should come closer together and bind ourselves together as the heart of one man, and then we

will be able in the future to meet any enemy, whatever and whoever he may be that might attack any portion of our great Imperial dominion.

And then, Mr. President, there is another aspect of this question which, I know, will appeal to Canadians as you become more advanced as a nation. As you become richer in natural wealth, as you become more world-wide in your influence, you will of necessity require a world-wide policy. While you may say "We will be insular"—we are like that ourselves—as your great interests grow, of necessity they will find some portion of their resting place in every part of the world, and either as your people go to other countries or as other people come to this country from others in the course of trade developments, just as these things take root in other countries, is it essential that you, as a commercial nation, should have some influence in the world policy, and in times of extremity that your voice may be heard, and that justice may be done to you as a consequence of the strong arm that may be behind you.

Why, I have been over a thousand miles along the Pacific coast. I have seen there the magnificent scenery and beautiful inland seas that belong to Canada, all along that coast line, up its wandering rivers, such as the Skeena and the Fraser. I have seen the most naturally beautiful scenery that I have ever beheld in any part of the world. It did strike me that if you had no strong arm behind you, if even a little country with great aspirations as to the future, such say, if you like, as the Japanese, if they were to land an army in one of your creeks or in some of those marvellous inland waters or harbours which nature has made there, if they were to land their people there, I want to know how you are going to remove them, I want to know how you are going to prevent any invasion like that under the present circumstances so far as Canada is concerned. I say this: You ought to have the power to make your position known more thoroughly in Great Britain as to the necessity for proper protection of the coast line of Canada. The Dominion of Canada, I am very glad to see, is doing something in the direction of a navy. It is a wise step. It is wise from the standpoint that it is time you were doing a little for yourselves. But it is also time for a much more important consideration, it is time for you to preach into the very soul of your children that youthful independence and spirit which will produce for you men that will man your navy and under extreme circumstances form some unit in the protection of the British Empire.

Mr. President, I therefore say that you ought to have a voice in the Government of Greater Britain in order that you may from time to time, through your representatives, put the case of your own protection before those who to-day are responsible for such protection.

But, sirs, I said a little while ago that we were held, as it were, loosely together by the bond of sentiment that binds us so happily together. The time has come when Great Britain must take another step, so far as every part of her dominions is concerned, because this is not the day of nations. When I was a boy we used to speak of other countries as nations, and they were intelligent to our minds by the area such a word represented. To-day, we are speaking, not of nations, but of empires. It was Prince Bismarck, that great, far-seeing, German, through whose efforts were created the German Empire, and it was through his marvellous statesmanship there came the adoption of the principle of tariff reform, the home market for the home workers. That laid the foundation of the German Empire, a great and powerful and mighty people, which I hope to see continue to grow in influence for good over every part of the world.

And then, sirs, you have upon your border line another great country, another great empire, I refer to the United States, whose greatness and power and influence in the world, speaking as they do the British tongue, is going on as a great, mighty, rolling wave for the protection of true civilization in every part of the world. You have the Empire of Japan, the Empire of China, the Empire of Russia. May I tell you the world is going to be governed in the future by empires? What are we going to be? What is the British-speaking people going to represent in the future? Are you going to be satisfied by the Nation of Great Britain, the Nation of Canada, the Nation of Australia, the Nation of South Africa, each a separate nationality, playing its part very much as Holland is to-day, without any great world influence, about whom great peoples excel them in all their glory and power. There is but one way for us to take, and that is to keep our place in the world, the greatest, the first, and I hope I may say the noblest people the world has ever seen, and we will do that, sir, if we continue to work out our common salvation through Imperial unity.

I see a great deal said nowadays about reciprocity—that seems to be the catch-word of the present moment in Canada—reciprocity. Well, you know your own politics better than I do, therefore I am not going to teach you, but I would suggest

to our friends across the border, "If you want reciprocity, why not start and lower your tariff to ours to commence?" I remember, you know, that example is better than precept, at least I believe the Inspector teaches that in the Schools. But, sirs, be there a great question to be settled, there will be those who will work for the best interests of Canada.

On other questions, I express no opinion whatever, but I do express a perfectly natural view that the natural line of reciprocity should, in the first instance be between the various parts constituting the British Empire. You in this country have freely given to the Mother Country a preference, which has had a very valuable influence upon the trade of Great Britain. We have given you nothing in return. We could improve that preference very much to our own advantage if we had the right to discuss it with your statesmen, but we have no right to discuss that question until we are in a position to offer you something in return for your trade kindness. Further, we believe in Imperial preference. And I would like to say to you gentlemen here that life in this quick country, quick lunches, quick everything—I would like to say to you, will you kindly remember that I come from a much slower country, that we do not in politics move as rapidly as they do in some cases, that the people of England take a long time to change their minds. They have to be assured of the step they take before they take it. But, be assured that although we move slowly, we move surely, we move on those lines which go to lay the most solid matter, the foundations of the Empire upon which we are trying to build. In every part of England, men are being converted by thousands to Imperial Preference and Tariff Reform. I ask you not to believe the fairy stories told every now and again against our great leader, Mr. Balfour, who is doing so much to forward the whole great question of Imperial Preference and Tariff Reform. These maxims are growing rapidly in the minds of the people of England. We are going to win at the next election, and we shall carry forward our great scheme, and in the near future there will be offered to Canada as a further step towards Imperial consolidation a preference of advantage to colonial products over any product produced in any other part of the world.

And now, Mr. President, my time is sliding away, and I know how particular you are as to time—as you ought to be—but there is just one other aspect of the question I would like to touch upon. It is, how is this great movement going to shape out in the end? It is easy to talk, as we are constantly talking, about Imperial federation. Well, Mr. President, there

is no other real solution of our great question, but that every part of the British Empire should not only enjoy the privilege, God over all, but the responsibility attached thereto, and, sirs, I admire very much the form of government which has been evolved on this side of the world. You have your Provincial governments, none of them cast in the same mould, but the people of each Province governing themselves as they want to be governed. Nobody cares enough so long as the government of that Province is trying to do the best for the people of that Province; and then you have over and above it all the great Dominion Government that covers the greater questions affecting the whole of the Canadian people. Now, I venture to say that but for a common flag you could never have done that. It was the flag that formed the unity under a Dominion government, under the great government, and under the illustrious men you have to-day.

Now, gentlemen, as the flag has done that for Canada, and as you have your separate Provincial governments, do you think it is beyond the bounds and powers of common British statesmanship that we are going to evolve an Imperial congressional power that shall have within its hands the interest of the whole of the British people? That is what I say we are working to. We are desirous of seeing a Federal Parliament established that shall have its direct representation from the Provinces of Canada—I do not say from the Dominion alone, but from the various interests representative of each of these Provinces. Do you not see how that would work in every part of our dominions, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, as well as in Canada, and in the midst a Federal Parliament representative of the peoples of the various countries in the various parts of the world. You have a big country and a small population. You are getting bigger every day, and if you are within the Empire, in that way, in my judgment, you could work out through that great Parliamentary interest many of the problems to the greater advantage of Canada than there are being worked out at the present time.

Now, Mr. President, it is said that that is all right, and probably we shall have something like that bye-and-bye; but you tell us, "You had better put your own house in order. Why don't you have provinces in Great Britain, why not a Province of Ireland and a Province of Scotland and a Province of Wales and a Province of England." Well, you know, we live in an old country, with old traditions and old ideals of government, and sometimes someone finds, I regret to say, that those who try to work certain interests have not the same

object in view that you have in promoting the Greater Britain here. I regret to say that Ireland has been a thorn in the flesh of the British Government for a great many years, and there is no man in England or out of it, who is a greater admirer of Ireland than I, for I married an Irish lady myself. None ever who has seen their grievances and realized the difficulties of the government of Ireland in the past but can understand; but I believe many of these have gone by, and beyond occasional desires for an independent country, and independent parliament and an independent executive, further extensions of local government would have been given to the Irish. I believe the solution is not far at hand, but it is not on the lines that some men would desire to carry it, namely, a separation instead of unification of the British Empire. Give us a fair opportunity in England to settle our grievances on the same pacific and happy lines that you have given your provinces, with the same spirit of loyalty and the same depth of character in its government, and England will not be behind-hand in meeting any difficulty of the character to which I refer.

Further, gentlemen, I ask you to do something in this matter. You can all do something. Since you have a certain investment in British character, British idealisms, in British love of liberty, in British determination in all its very great departments, since you have an investment in all that is past and future in the British life and character, I ask you to preach Imperialism everywhere. Do not think a cut and dried scheme can be produced in a day—it never has in any great problem,—and do not say it is impossible, because the man who cannot do the impossible is not much good in the world. We have in our great national history, myriads of instances in which our statesmen, our soldiers and our sailors have done the impossible, and we shall work out this great problem, and all its possibilities and difficulties will be smoothed with a great Imperial government which will cover effectually every son of Britain in every part of the British world.

Therefore, I ask you to do your part towards British Imperial unity for the interest of Canada, British Imperial unity for the benefit of the whole British peoples, and by doing that you will help on the cause and you will become one of the most important factors in making our great British Empire, with all its great past, brighter, stronger and more enduring in the future than anything it has known before.