

(April 15, 1929)

Australia

BY MAJOR J. J. SIMONS *

MR. EAYRS, President of Empire Club, was in the Chair and introduced the speaker, who was greeted with loud applause and spoke as follows:

MAJOR J. J. SIMONS:—Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, since I have been in Toronto it has been my privilege to make so many speeches I almost wonder that it is possible to still get an audience. However, it is a very great pleasure for us to assemble under the auspices of the Empire Club and the Canadian Club. Our boys, as you know, have been brought together from nearly seventy schools throughout the Commonwealth, and four schools in the Dominion of New Zealand. Today, therefore, we have an outward sign of the unity and consciousness of brotherhood which is existing between the three great parts of the Empire, when we see these assembled together. It is one of the great miracles of colonization and statesmanship that a gathering such as this should be possible, that in spite of the miles that separate our homes we can come together with no other link than that of a common heritage, and feel that we have lived with each other all our lives. We spontaneously give expression to feelings and to sentiments which meet with an equally spontaneous approval, all of which goes to show that there is something holding the different parts of the British Empire together which is stronger and more binding and has greater endurance than all the parchment constitutions which have ever been written. The British Empire is kept together, not by force, not by compulsion, but by the silken bonds of a beautiful understanding, bonds which we believe will be

*A joint meeting of the Empire Club and the Canadian Club, at which were entertained 160 boys of the Young Australia League.

unbreakable, unfrayed, and so far from being weakened by time, will become stronger and more enduring. And we believe coming together as we do that we are making just a little stronger those influences which make for the power and the majesty of the British Empire.

We rejoice to be able to witness the development of Ontario. We were in Ottawa the other day and we bared our heads in the Memorial Hall; we inclined our ears to listen to the sweet music of the bells in that great Tower of Remembrance, and we felt, as the bells sent out their tune, and as we became enveloped in the atmosphere of that memorial chamber, that we were shareholders in all this grandeur and in all this beauty. We have travelled thousands of miles, not to see a strange people, nor to see a strange country, but to see something which we knew belonged to us, because this great miracle had been performed, a miracle the efficacy of which had not been destroyed by time nor effaced by distance. Some have said, "What are the invisible links of the British Empire?" Gentlemen, we belong to that school which believes that the greatest power, the greatest forces of life are the invisible forces. There is something almost undefinable in the spirit which keeps the British Empire together. Our boys respond to it just as Canadian boys respond to it. There is an eternal well, an eternal fount through which that force is ever flowing, which gives us a sense of security stronger than all material things which can be brought into existence or to which we may draw attention. Australia, we believe, is playing a large and worthy part in that great partnership. Canada is playing a worthy and noble part, and we are witnesses of the part that Canada is playing. Australia must progress, and so must Canada. Both countries have youth on their side. While they have not got the deep long traditions to look back upon, so far as the immediate country is concerned, yet they have the tradition which goes back into the ages, from which they draw inspiration from the Motherland; and coupled with that they have virility, knowing that their nations are yet at the morning of their greatness, yet at the beginning of their grandeur, a grandeur and a greatness for which the sons

of Canada and Australia have built strong and enduring foundations.

Our emblem, as you know, is the kangaroo; your emblem the beaver; both are animals with adorable qualities. I think there was something in the minds of the early colonists of your dominion and ours when they selected peace-loving animals for their emblems, not animals that tear and claw and devour the other fellow. Take the kangaroo, one of the most graceful creatures which God ever made; it never kills a living thing in order to live. It is peace-loving; it never fights unless it is forced to, and when it has to fight it puts its back up against a forest tree and then the fight is worth looking at. And, gentlemen, the natural historians tell us that the kangaroo is the only animal which the Lord ever made that cannot put its tail between its legs. And, gentlemen, it goes ahead by leaps and bounds. It is impossible for the kangaroo to move an inch; it has to go by yards. What a wonderful emblem to which to attune the progress of Australia!

And then I look at the beaver with its wonderful qualities. It is one of the few animals in the world which are capable of team-work. I have read how that small animal, because of its team-work can fell great forest trees across brooks and streams, and because of team-work can build dams which last for quite a long while.

There are two fine inspirations to draw from your emblem and ours. The team-work of Canada represents the great contribution to the progress of the British Empire, and we believe the qualities of the kangaroo, our emblem, which are seen in the progress of Australia, both give lessons from which mankind may learn much.

Speaking of the kangaroo, we have come to Canada to hear stories of it. I heard the other day from Mr. Roadhouse, a government official, of a Chicago man who was going to Australia to open up a business, and someone said, "You will meet a lot of kangaroos down there." He said, "I don't care, their money is just as good as anyone's." I am glad you like that story, but I have to acknowledge it is of Canadian origin, one of the best Australian stories we have heard since we have been on this side of the line. Over in the United States we attended

twenty-two dinners, and at twenty-one of them the Chairman told us the same story about the Australian kangaroo in a New York zoo, and in case you are tempted to tell it to any of our boys, I want to tell it to you now. There was an Irishman in the New York zoo. He saw a kangaroo and asked someone what animal that was. They said, "That is a native of Australia." "Great heavens," he said, "my sister married one of those." That was the only Australian story we heard in the United States in three months, and each chairman stood up and told it while our boys all kept straight faces, because they are well trained; and the twenty-first time they heard it they applauded louder than they did the first time. But I do not want you to tell them that story because they know it already.

Of course we have had Canadians visit Australia, and we find as long as they are pure Canadians they are all right. But we get some Canadians of the other kind, who have spent about seven or eight years somewhere along the Hudson River, and when they get to Australia they are not quite as attractive as they would have been if they had gone direct from Toronto. One of them was out on a big cattle station, or ranch, in our country. When an ordinary Australian merino sheep came across the landscape, the Australian said, "There is a big sheep." The other said, "Yes, but you ought to see the big sheep we have in Ontario." A little while later a cow came across and the farmer with pride pointed out the cow and said, "That is the biggest cow in the district." This man said, "You ought to see the cows we have over in Ontario; they would make four of that." A little while later they saw a pig and the farmer said, "That is the biggest pig we have got here, you have nothing like that in Ontario." He said, "One Ontario pig would make five of that." And in a few minutes a kangaroo jumped up, a great thing about seven feet high, and almost knocked the Canadian over. He said, "What is that?" The Australian said, "That is a mosquito; have you got anything like that in Ontario?"

We are very glad to exchange ideas about the problems of this part of the Empire. We know they will interest us, just as our problems should interest you, when the

boys of Canada and the other parts of the Empire have a deep consciousness of exactly what the Empire means. We are drawing lessons, as the Chairman has said, which are of very high educational value as we move from one place to another. In Australia we have patterned our constitution very largely on that of Canada. At the beginning we had our colonies with conflicting ideas and conflicting interests, and we felt that as people we could not worthily play our part in the British Empire and the affairs of mankind generally unless we came together as a united nation. We looked to Canada for many of the lessons which the confederation of this country had to teach. And when the necessity of building a federal capital was born, we took the experience of Ottawa, just as we took the experience of Washington, on which to shape our plans. Today in Australia we are creating, we are bringing into being and dreaming of a capital for our nation which will be the finest in all the world. When we saw Washington, and when we saw Ottawa, I know that each boy made a mental resolve. When they said at Washington, "This is the finest capital in the world," and when they said at Ottawa, "This is the finest federal capital in the British Empire," while good breeding and manners forbade the boys saying, "We know of a better one," away down in their hearts there was this resolve, "We know of a place where there is going to be a greater capital." When that capital is greater I know you as Canadians will not be jealous, because it is your capital just as much as it is ours. Your Ottawa, with the achievements which it makes manifest to the visitor, is as much our heritage as it is yours. That is the great lesson which our boys are drawing from this contact with the people of Canada.

Now we want that same sort of partnership, that same sort of comity and interest to be imported or introduced into our finance and our commerce and our other inter-imperial relationships. We believe that strong though the Empire is, its strength could be multiplied many times over if we had a clearer and a better understanding regarding trade. We have read a great deal about the balance of trade. There are a great many things being consumed in the Dominion which should be coming from Australia.

There are a great many things which we are using in New Zealand and Australia which should be coming from Canada. And the views we have are these, that every million dollars sent into Canada from Australia is a million dollars kept within the Empire and every million dollars you send to us is still in your family, and we know that there is always a sense of security that these millions of dollars will never be used to build any battleships or make any bullets that will be used against you in some hostile affair in the future. We have not been here long enough to advise Canada—it would be very bad manners if in our egotism we thought we knew sufficient to advise you. But we find that while there is a great leakage in our finance and commerce, there is also a great leakage in brains. We have found Canadians and Australians giving their education, giving their brains, to the building up of countries outside the Empire, which seems to be a wrong economy. We have met scores of Australians and hundreds of Canadians who have been educated at the expense of some government, some University within the British Empire, and just as their knowledge has reached almost perfection, just as it has reached that stage where it is usable and where it should be employed in building up the British Empire, it has gone out to some other country. That seems to us all wrong. We are only clever enough to diagnose the difficulty; we must leave it to our statesmen to ascertain the cure. But cure there must be if we only turn our energies and our mental forces towards its discovery.

Gentlemen, it has been a great pleasure for us to come into Toronto. We expected much but we have received more. I know of no welcome on our entire tour which has been more hearty, which has been more enthusiastic, or which will leave deeper or more abiding memories than what you have done for us here in Toronto. We will go back to Australia re-inspired in our love for that spirit of unity which is the basis of the British Empire. We will go back with an enhanced admiration for what the people of Canada are doing to build up this great Dominion. If I had the eloquence of your greatest orator I could not adequately express the gratitude which is in the hearts of the boys and the gratitude which I know will struggle to find

expression from the hearts of their mothers and fathers when they hear the story of all that Canada has done for our young ambassadors.

MR. DALY, President of the Canadian Club, expressed the thanks of the meeting as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN:—It has given us all the greatest pleasure to participate in this welcome today to Major Simons and the boys of the Young Australia League. To listen to Major Simons' address is to become convinced of the splendid services of the League and its leader in broadening the vision and quickening the imagination of these boys and teaching them to be citizens not only of Australia and the Empire but also citizens of the world. It would be difficult to imagine any course of training better calculated to be of service and educational value than the experiences and contacts which result from a tour such as our guests are now enjoying or which would better fit them for the responsibilities which later they will be called upon to assume.

I appreciate the privilege of expressing to you, Major Simons, and to your boys of the Young Australia League the very great pleasure it has meant to these Clubs to have you as our guests today. You will carry with you our best wishes that you all may have a safe return to your homes and that you may have the happiest recollections of your travels and a particularly warm spot in your hearts for Canada.

Mr. Daly also announced that through the courtesy of Mr. Eayrs, and as a souvenir of the occasion, each boy would receive a copy of Professor W. Stewart Wallace's First Book of Canadian History.

The Australian boys, numbering one hundred and sixty, gave two of their yells: a "Coee" for the Canadian Club, and a "Skyrocket" for the Empire Club.