

(October 9, 1930)

Canada's Widening Horizon

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The chairman of this joint meeting, Mr. Frank A. Rolph, of the Toronto Board of Trade, in introducing Col. Woods, spoke in part as follows:—Ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to see some ladies, very glad to have them with us. This luncheon today is a rather unique one, being held jointly by the Canadian Club, Empire Club, and the Empire Board of Trade. We are met today to do honor to the visiting delegates of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce who have had their convention here for the past three days. I would like to express appreciation to the Canadian Club and the Empire Club, both of whom very gladly cancelled their regular weekly engagements this week for the privilege of joining with us in doing honor to this wonderful lot of delegates from all over Canada. We appreciate that very much, most particularly do I refer to the Empire Club, whose regular meeting was to have been held today. They were glad to join with us. I would like, if I may, as I have been elected to be chairman of this meeting, to ask Mr. William Burrell, who is acting president, just to stand up. I would also ask Mr. L. A. Henderson, President of the Canadian Club, if he will stand. These two gentlemen are always willing to co-operate in matters of this kind and I think it is a good thing. We are proud of those two clubs in the City of Toronto.

COL. WOODS:—Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, it would be needless for me to say how deeply I thank you all for the kindness of your greeting. Equally needless would it

*A joint meeting of the Empire and Canadian Clubs with the Empire Board of Trade.

be for me to express my pride in the character of this gathering where, under the auspices of the Toronto Board of Trade, two such great organizations as the Canadian Club and the Empire Club have joined in doing honor to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce as humbly represented by myself. It is but natural that I should feel embarrassed by so great a reception, but I confess that I always feel a sense of confidence in coming before my friends of Toronto. It is now more than twenty years since I left this City to take up my life in Alberta. And through all those years I have come back to undiminished friendships and to a warmth of generous welcome that has kept my heart warm in response. Surely few cities could retain in greater measure the affection of those who go out from her to help in the building of our country, and so I thank Toronto and I want to say how glad I am to be back once more in my former home.

My duty today is two-fold. This particular occasion was designated as the one upon which I should speak as President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce concerning whatever subject a president should speak about, of which I am not very sure. The wider character of the occasion, however, has required a broader theme, and therefore I will try to say something to you not only about the Canadian Chamber of Commerce but about the widening horizon of our country.

You have either attended, or read reports of, the sessions of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce that have been held in this beautiful hotel during the last three days, and I hope you have been impressed by the scope of its vision in surveying Canadian business and by the sympathy it has sought to show toward the varied aspirations of the Canadian people. Our Chamber is only four years old but in that time it has extended its influence throughout every part of Canada, has enlisted the membership of more than two hundred boards of trade, has attracted the sympathy and support of the great business interests of Canada and has, above all, secured the confidence and the co-operation of those who are leaders in the agricultural life of the country.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has linked agri-

culture and industry in a bond of union for the good of Canada and if it had done nothing else in the course of these four years, that alone would have justified its existence. And as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has cemented the confidence of the various sections of our commercial life, so it has attained to the confidence of our government, who recognize in it an impartial and intelligent mouthpiece of the business of the country and who thus take from it with respect and cordiality such views as it may express upon the great commercial problems that face our Dominion. With the recent federal administration our Chamber had the most cordial relationships and from the present federal administration it has received assurances of co-operation and support of the fullest character. In various provinces our Association has been of assistance to the government in the framing of provincial legislation, and in all these cases it has been recognized that our Chamber is working without party bias or political affiliations for the common good of all Canadians. On this high ground I commend it to you all as an organization that is doing a vast and useful work in the life of our country and is worthy of your utmost support.

I realize that in speaking to you as President of this great body on the commercial affairs of our country I am addressing many men who are better informed than I am myself, and whose judgment on these matters in one direction or another is much more valuable than mine. Yet there are certain things that all of us know if we will think deeply about them and thus, as an ordinary citizen, without technical knowledge concerning the varied interests of Canada, I speak with confidence as to the general situation within the Dominion.

The *agenda* of our present meeting is of itself an indication of the ever-widening horizon that faces us in our business lives. The channels of Canadian commerce were small and narrow not so many years ago. Today they have become broad and deep, so that even the vision of our fathers is exceeded by the realities of the present. We have been passing through a hard season, but the dawn is here. We are like those who have been walking through a tunnel

with the bright sunshine showing at the end of it. The spirit of our people has not faltered and does not falter in the face of troubles that have been somewhat intense, and the recovery of our people will be more rapid and more thorough than that of any other nation that I know of. We do not discuss the channels of our commerce as our fathers did. We look around us to the broadening opportunities within our own country and we realize that through the building of varied industries, through the growth of a solid and increasing home market, we are establishing a firm basis for our continued expansion into the great export markets of the world. In this work the Canadian Chamber of Commerce is taking a leading part among the institutions of our country and is receiving the whole-hearted support which bodes well for the success of its somewhat ambitious efforts. We have realized the importance of the Pacific Ocean in the future economy of Canada and we are realizing as never before that great people of Japan whose commerce is expanding so rapidly, whose interests are becoming so important to us, and so we are sending a mission to Japan. Forty of us, including ladies and gentlemen, will sail from Vancouver on the sixteenth of this month under the leadership of my friend John M. Imrie of Edmonton, our National Councillor for Alberta. The Government of Japan and our Canadian Ministry there are taking every means to make our party welcome and to facilitate its object, and we believe that through the medium of this journey much will be done to cement our relationships with trans-Pacific countries and to lay the foundations for a broad and important Canadian trade.

And we are going to South America with the same object in view. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce will send a delegation to the British Empire Exhibition in Buenos Aires next February, and for this purpose every possible assistance is being given by the Canadian National Railways, by the Canadian Government, by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, who are sponsoring this journey jointly with us.

Are not these expanding horizons? How long since we Canadians could organize and carry out these important

projects, these important missions of friendship and commerce to the great nations of the world? Truly, the sun is rising for our country.

There are difficulties and will be: we, for instance, are not the only people who have been shocked by the new conditions that face the marketing of food products, and as the months go by we realize ever more completely that our troubles in this respect were not due to local conditions or to local mistakes but that they have been and are part of a world change which will involve, in some measure at least, a reconstruction of the world's basic industry, namely the production of food from mother earth.

And in this regard I do not hesitate to speak to you about the pool system of marketing. I have no brief for the pool, nor any excuse or explanation to offer for any errors that it may or may not have made. Concerning these, I am not sufficiently expert to be a judge, but it is my firm conviction that the wheat pool is the greatest stabilizer of the morale of the farmers of the west that exists today. To it in great measure these farmers have pinned their confidence and their pride as masters of their own commercial destiny and, in my belief, the destruction of that confidence, the lowering of that pride, the psychological results that would inevitably follow upon an abandonment or even a partial abandonment of the system that they themselves have created, would be an injury almost beyond calculation. My information from home is that the membership of the wheat pool has never been more loyal to it than today, in these conditions of strain. Bootlegging of wheat there always has been, is and will be, but none today more than in the days of high prices and easy markets. Mistakes have doubtless been made. Whoever heard of so vast an enterprise being erected and conducted without mistakes, or so wide an experiment established without the admission of error? Pardon these references to what might be considered a controversial subject but my appeal is psychological rather than material. We are too apt to criticize one another to the extent of condemnation for errors that are no greater than we commit ourselves. And therefore I urge that we extend in greater measure charity of thought

and tolerance of judgment to one another in all branches of our commercial and financial lives, and look forward to the future that lies before us rather than turn our faces to the troubles that lie behind.

I bring you from the west, yes, may I say that I bring you from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, a message of undiminished faith in the integrity and future of our country, and undimmed confidence that, if we will but raise up our eyes unto the hills instead of looking into the valleys of doubt and despondency, we will see the true picture of what the future is for Canada.

The present outlook for Canada is not based upon accident or upon any transient condition. It is the inevitable result of a history which had its roots in the courageous years of the Elizabethan era, which has passed through the fires of discord and rebellion, which has shown resistance against pressure from without and foes from within; a history which has built up a great civilization from a wilderness, which has opened the secrets of nature to mankind, which has unrolled the map of half a continent and laid its treasures open to the uses of humanity—a history which has shown a marvellous development during three centuries and which is only now unfolding toward its perfect flower.

It is interesting to recall that by the end of the sixteenth century, before the first settlement of white people on the eastern coast of America, the English flag had been proudly carried into all the seas of the world, and it is our pride to know that, both by virtue of the early settlement of Virginia and through the gay bravery of the French upon the St. Lawrence and of the British who built the early structure of Acadia, we, both on the Canadian and American sides, were a part of this great adventure, by which the world was rejuvenated and new lifeblood carried through its veins. We have indeed many records of which we may be proud: the creation of responsible government with its first Canadian foundation at Annapolis Royal; the achievement of religious liberty among the different branches of our population; the development of constitutional administration under the British flag, won by Canada in travail and even in blood, and now the very basis upon which our Empire

has been built and will survive; the inspiration of the United Empire Loyalists, whose influence is almost as fresh today as when they brought into the woods of Ontario and New Brunswick the axes with which they hewed out their homes. The deep religious fervor and passion for liberty of French Canada, the courage of finance that built our canals and our first great railway systems, the fortitude of the settlers who followed the plow across our Western plains and even to the Pacific Ocean, these are the attributes upon which our Dominion has been erected, and but for them there would be no outlook for Canada such as, in the goodness of God, she possesses this day.

And of what does this outlook consist and wherein has it changed from the days of yesterday? It consists in part of our ever growing intimacy with one another, of the mutual knowledge and sympathy that we possess concerning one another's aspirations and one another's needs and it differs from yesterday in the breadth of vision we have attained, by which we survey with calmness and in speculation those other portions of the world with which we are coming into ever-increasing contact. Today we have in progress in London an Imperial Conference, where nation is speaking to nation in freedom and sincerity, and where the very freedom that inspires the utterances forms the closest bond of Empire. Let us not fear for Canada in this great Conference nor let us fear for any part of the Empire in so far as its fealty and good faith are concerned. We have learned to know our mother country as was impossible even ten years ago. Her difficulties are close to us, they are not abstractions. Her interests are in great measure our own, and to her our hearts turn in sympathy and understanding and in interest in a common weal. This is an outlook that is almost new to Canada, an outlook that will alter profoundly and beneficently our future dealings and relations with our own mother land.

And we are learning to know our brothers of the seven seas, those continents and islands that are scattered like jewels across the world, and that have comprised through centuries the foundations of liberty, the outposts of Christianity. We met our brothers in conference last summer.

We are recognizing as never before the difficulties as well as the advantages of close commercial relationships, and we know as never before how serious a task we are undertaking in seeking to bond together in any form of commercial helpfulness these varied and various entities.

Yet we know, as never before, of their affection for us, of their desire to trade with us and to eat salt with us, and we know of the deep conviction that rests upon them all that in some way and by some means they and we will protect our own Empire from commercial domination by any country or combination outside of it, and will present to the peoples a unity of trade and of finance which will make us in the future, as in the past, the greatest single economic force the world contains.

These things we know and these things are part of our new outlook. And we look out also upon our cousins to the south of us with clear and friendly eyes, clear and friendly, friendly but clear. We welcome with cordiality Mr. Julius Barnes, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. Mr. Barnes will speak to us tonight and we are sure that his words will bear evidence of the deep friendliness of his people toward us and will find a ready response within our own hearts. We are so sorry that Mr. Butterworth, the President of the United States Chamber, is not here; and we send to that organization and to his own family our messages of sympathy in the deep trial which is afflicting them through his very serious illness. We know today with definiteness that we have upon this continent a great mission to fulfil for the benefit of the world, a mission and a duty which the United States shares equally with us. And we know that, notwithstanding the ups and downs of commercial relationships, we will walk forward in harmony and friendship with that great people, seeking along with them to fulfil our duty.

There are other new outlooks that we possess—the advent of aviation for instance, has opened up a new field of importance for this country, greater in proportion than for any other. Canada is today as never before the great highway of the world. Indeed and indeed, we live on Main Street, we Canadians, and the chief traffic of nations, the

chief communications of nations, must inevitably pass through our country. Distance loses its terrors as our new routes are opened up. The development of our north land is proceeding with a rapidity such as never was imagined in days gone by, and the wealth and resources which are being uncovered will make of this country the most important producer and the greatest exporter of many useful materials and articles.

There was once a great English mariner who searched for the northwest passage and when he was told of the tremendous difficulties of ice that confronted him, he replied: "There is no land uninhabitable, and no sea unnavigable." So with our own country, where the northern boundary has been pushed back and is being pushed back, so that where only the mists of ignorance once hung, now the flowers are blooming and the wheat is waving and happy people are living and industry and commerce and transportation are developing a new inland empire.

This is a new outlook, and another is that the relations of mankind to one another are changing for the better. The bitternesses of religion, the bitternesses of politics, the antagonisms of capital and labor, the selfishness of east and west in their relations with one another, all these are changing, the partnership of capital and labor is with us today in one form or another. The sinking of antipathies in a common effort for the public good is becoming a part of our normal lives. We in Canada have a share in these changes and our country is developing under the most fortunate circumstances because, while its development is being achieved by forces of invention and mechanics that were not applied to the new countries of the past, we approach it also with a wideness of knowledge, an attitude of tolerance and an earnestness of spiritual purpose by which I hope will be erected a citizenship and a country of greater value to humanity, and a greater tribute to divinity, than any that has gone before.

We look throughout our country and we see our physical wealth and opportunity, but we see also, I hope, a people who have retained in the face of temptation the sturdy independence of their forebears, who have not lost, in the

face of temptation, the respect for good things, the observance of religion upon which alone can a country be built. And a people who, seizing opportunity as it arises, and the opportunities are vast, will go forward to make their country a better and a safer place for those who come after them, and will erect within its boundaries and as a portion of our Empire, a nation that will stand firmly for the ideals of its founders and will represent, in part at least, the great traditions of hardihood and courage which have made it what it is.