

(September 19, 1928)

Address*

BY RT. HON. HUGH P. MACMILLAN, P.C., K.C.,

PRESIDENT DALY, of the Canadian Club, introduced the speaker:—Gentlemen, In this country we have always had respect for the fine scholarship and culture which is the product of the Scottish Universities and Schools of Law. It is a particular pleasure to welcome here today one who so worthily upholds the best traditions of these famous seats of learning and who has reached the highest eminence in his profession. His ability and skill as an advocate are recognized not only in the British Isles but throughout the Empire. In Great Britain when Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was forming his cabinet, he went beyond the limits of his own party to choose Mr. MacMillan to fill the high and distinguished position of Lord Advocate for Scotland. In Canada our Department of Justice could have paid Mr. MacMillan no higher tribute than to enlist his services as advocate on many occasions of the highest importance to this country. We are very glad indeed that he has been able to pay this visit to his client and that he has found it possible to speak to us today. I have the greatest pleasure in introducing the Right Hon. Mr. Hugh P. MacMillan.

MR. MACMILLAN:—Mr. Chairman, Prime Minister, members of the two clubs whom I have the privilege of addressing today. An English friend of mine one day went back to his place in the Highlands and next morning went down to the riverside to see his gillie and ask him about the fishing, and having reached the riverside he found the old man and he said, "Well, Donald, and how is the world treating you?" And Donald answered, "Very seldom." Gentlemen, that has not been my experience as your guest in Canada. Do not misunderstand me. I make

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no reference whatever to the admirable revenue system of Ontario. But I am glad here in this loyal City of Toronto to take the opportunity of thanking you all for the welcome you have given me. I know that you don't care for conventional adulation. Neither do I. On the other hand I think you may care to have from me a few reflections by the way, and in the last 48 hours there have been a series of incidents in my life which together seem to me to be typical of the life of this great Dominion.

The first one is in a note of pathos. As our train, a couple of nights ago, drew in on Sioux Lookout, a name itself redolent of the romantic history of Canada, I observed a coffin being carried along on a porter's barrow and put in the train. I asked about it and I was told it was the body of a young Scotsman in the service of the Hudson Bay Co., that body misnamed The Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay. And this lad had only come out from England a few months ago, gone up country, and had met his fate in a canoe accident on the river, and his body was being taken back to Scotland for burial. It seemed to me rather striking that one should have brought so vividly before one at this day the perils and the adventures of the early days in Canada in that dramatic form. And I realized although here we meet with all the appurtenances of civilization in a great city, yet, close at hand, the love of adventure and pioneering is still going on, the life which has made so many of the great heroes of Canadian history.

Within a few hours I visited one of the great paper mills in the north of your province and there I saw the processes whereby the immemorial forests of Canada are being converted into newsprint. I think hereafter we shall have to regard spruce as being the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You will recall I suppose that the word for a book, *liber*, is itself derived from bark, the old books of the classical period or pre-classical period were written on bark. But I observed that the first thing today was to shred all the bark off and now it is the wood itself that is reduced to pulp, reduced to those wonderful rolls of paper which are thereafter rendered more, or perhaps less, valuable by what is imprinted upon them. And it gave me

really a thrill to see there great train-loads of paper pulling out, going in this particular instance to the States for the purpose of carrying the news throughout the whole of the world.

Then the next episode was a visit to one of your gold mines, and in no time whatever I found myself precipitated into the bowels of the earth and making my way around an underground route reminiscent of nothing so much as the pictures with which Doré illustrated Dante's *Inferno*. I need scarcely say how interested I was. I have been down coal-pits before but never a gold mine. I was a little disappointed. I thought I would see gold nuggets sticking all over but I merely saw some quartz which looked uninteresting but which I was told contained the precious metal. I was not trusted with any of it. And I realized from that visit and from what I heard of the other great mines developing how very soon it would be that South Africa would have to look to its laurels, and Canada become, not as I think it is about to be, the second; but the first gold-producing country in the world.

My next episode was to a copper mine and there I saw one of the most, to my mind, dramatic industrial exhibitions I ever saw, when I saw the ore passing through the furnace and the copper issuing in a stream into the crucibles and ultimately it was run off into pigs or ingots of copper. A magnificent process being carried on with the greatest possible efficiency.

Then again a little later we passed a wayside station. My eye at once caught up the beauty of that station garden. There in the wilds was a beautiful garden, full of old English roses, gladioli, and a little green lawn; and I asked my companions about it, and I was told the man there was a great lover of gardens. I saw him gathering a bouquet of flowers and in five minutes he was up and handed my wife a beautiful bouquet of old English flowers. That was a very charming incident and I was happy to see in a region developed so actively on the industrial side that there was still a place for those simpler and more charming pleasures of life. And a little further down I was taken into a conservatory where I was shown many plants being brought on. These plants were being brought up

for stations along the line in order that the men could take an interest in them and cultivate flowers. Well, I am going to tell the old country about that, and we have competitions there as to who can produce the best bowers. And I think this idea is an excellent one.

And then my day ended with a magnificent drive through the primeval forest, along the road which I am glad is worthily associated with the name of my friend the Prime Minister, the Ferguson Highway. If all his works of public utility are as great as that, then I congratulate you on your prime minister because he certainly gave me an afternoon of undiluted pleasure, as we drove through that magnificent national heritage, preserved and so worthily preserved for the future, with the autumn tints appearing on the trees, beautiful lakes shimmering in the rays of the sun. I said this is indeed a good land, a goodly heritage, and you do well to preserve these for the future. We in the old country are trying to recover the results of industrial destruction. You are taking time by the forelock and arranging the appropriate provinces of pleasure and toil. We are only trying to sort them out again because we set out with no original plan. And one of the most interesting things to me has been to see how you are allocating the different provinces of pleasure and industry.

Then, in forty-eight hours, I had had an incident which recalled the old pioneering days of the Hudson Bay, a visit to the most up-to-date and magnificent mine, a great paper-producing mill, and then a little human incident, concluding with a magnificent drive through magnificent scenery. Was there ever a better epitome of Canada—sentiment, adventure, industry and enterprise, admiration for the beautiful? I felt today that it was only due from me, in common gratitude, to express the sense of appreciation which I felt in having thus represented to me within the span of only forty-eight hours; these characterizations of this great Dominion.

After all, there is a tremendous lot in sentiment. It may seem almost indecent for a lawyer to speak about sentiment but lawyers themselves are as sentimental as anybody else, and I feel that sentiment that doesn't degen-

erate into sentimentality is probably the biggest thing in the world. We may pretend to be above it but we are not. I remember standing outside the palace wall at Westminster this summer and a large number of newly enfranchised women had been brought up to see the House of Parliament and to learn their duties and to be impressed no doubt by the members of parliament who were looking after them. But at that moment a carriage and pair drove past and in it was Princess Elizabeth, and I can assure you not one of those women gave a single thought to politics after that. Their whole interest was in the little princess and her carriage, and I felt the same way, I am bound to say. That is not childish. That stands for something very big indeed. It stands for our recognition of the bonds that bind us together, the bond of sentiment and loyalty which is very difficult to attach to a committee or president or chairman but which you can attach to a throne.

There is one thing I would like to say that is of a direct nature. Here am I among you. I have come not to impart knowledge but to acquire knowledge, and through your hospitality and generosity my education has been advancing by leaps and bounds, I am bound to say also at the rate of about forty miles an hour for the last six weeks. And the feeling I have about it is this: that we want more interpreters of each other to each other. Many members of the press have interviewed me. I have said to them this: I miss very much indeed in the papers at home an adequate reflection of the light and interests of the Dominion. It is not because there is not a welcome for material of that sort in our press. It is because the material isn't provided. You gentlemen in this country are perhaps too busy doing things to talk about doing things. In the old country there is perhaps more leisure to think about those in other parts of the Empire and what they are doing and I should like very much indeed to see more articles upon the dividends paid by your gold mines, excellent things as they are, or upon commercial matters, but upon the real spirit of the country. I am inarticulate on the subject. I do not think I should do it. There are peo-

ple like my friend John Buchan who I think has addressed you here who can write about what they see, and I am satisfied from my knowledge of my old friends at home that they not having been privileged as I have been to come amongst you, haven't the least idea of your life or interests and history. I say that in no disparagement of them. It is because the material is not put before them and I think some of you might do well in the cause of Canada if you were to enlist not merely penny-a-liners but a few of the greatest writers of the age who can write truly and well on the things that matter in Canada, not merely the great financial interests, but upon the things that interest you, which are always capably chronicled, the objectives of Canada and the intellectual development of Canada, which is developing so rapidly.

And I will give you an instance. This spring I saw in the best part of *The Times* an article which at once got my attention. It was on the mounted police. Hitherto I had only known in a vague way about the great North West Mounted Police. I had heard of their gallantry and knew very little about them, and yet I am a comparatively well educated Scotsman. I read a column and a half in *The Times* which inspired me at once. I said this is magnificent. I hastened to ask my clerk to apply to Canada for a copy of the last report, which I may say I read with the greatest possible interest and found that romantic history is being made in Canada at this very moment. If it had not been for that article I should not have known about it, except in the vaguest possible way. Now I know a great deal about it because I have bought half a dozen books and I am prepared to pass an examination with any gentleman in this room.

That is only one instance. It is a matter of intense interest, a case where the best interests of our country have been upheld full of romantic drama. We ought to know these things. And what I should like to see would be your other interests treated in the same way, brought home in constructive and interesting articles. And may I say, the thing ought to work both ways. I have rather missed in turn in the press of your country intelligent articles telling you about affairs at home. You can always

hear if there has been a murder trial or a divorce case. While it is quite proper to chronicle these matters there are matters of much more importance than murders and divorces and I should like to see on the other hand the presence in the Canadian press of more articles written by people who understand Canada and who can reproduce the common history of affairs at home in such a way as to make it interesting to the people of Canada. There is no link so valuable as that and it only wants doing. There is lots of material and lots of men who can write well, and the press is always alive to what the public wants, and if you could show the press you are anxious to have that side developed, the press can rise to the occasion and lay in contribution the greatest minds of the day.

Another thing is related to it. I said the position at home isn't always so well presented here, just for the reason that interpreters are wanted. We have been having a very difficult time at home, but it is not so bad as those who would like it to be bad are making out. I have gathered together one or two figures which I venture to offer you. Since Mr. Baldwin took over office 360,000 more persons have entered registered employment in the British Isles. More millions of men and women are employed in the old country than ever before and on a higher average level of well-being. Britain still owns one-third of the world's shipping and builds one-half of the whole world's ships. And the old country pays all its debts. It hits us pretty hard. It hits us in taxation on a scale which you would regard as almost shattering. I put it myself in this way that for practically five months out of twelve I work exclusively for His Majesty's revenue. That is not an exaggeration. If you work it out it comes to about that, that of every pound you make you hand over four and six pence to His Majesty; that is nearly 25 per cent. And in addition to that if you have more than ten thousand a year you have to pay super tax on a very severe graded scale, up to about ten shillings in the pound; 50 per cent. It is no exaggeration to say that a reasonably successful lawyer—not on the American scale—is in point of fact for four or five months of the year working exclusively to pay the debts of the nation and to keep the head of the

old country up in the financial world. And the result is London is still the financial head of the world and Wall Street has failed to secure it.

There is of course a difficult side. It is true we have over a million unemployed. These are the surplus which our industries have not been able to develop fast enough to overtake. We have maintained as I say the output of our industries, maintained the number who are laboring at our industries; but we have not been able to absorb the excess natural increase of population by a corresponding growth of our industry. And that in turn has been due largely to the decrease in the basic industries of iron and coal. I am not going into these economic questions here but I am hopeful the tide is turning there also. Mr. Baldwin has devised a method which will go a certain distance. It will not be a panacea but a palliative, to help the basic industries in this way. It is giving a certain measure of relief from local taxation to the railway companies on condition that they reflect the entire amount of that rebate in a diminution of their freight charges for certain of the basic industries. The railway companies are not themselves to benefit by the rebate in tax. They are to reflect it absolutely in a diminution of the freight charges. Consequently we may be able in that way to take a few pence off the ton of coal and every penny we can take off means an advance of say fifty miles into the European continent. The economic frontier which we are up against ranges in Europe according to the price at which we can export coal and every penny we can take off the ton enables a little advance to be made in competition with the coal fields of Germany, Poland and France. Some relief undoubtedly will come about from it and improve the industrial spirit.

Time is going on and I know money is being lost every moment you gentlemen are kept back from your legitimate businesses but I would like to give you one concrete instance. I do not think I am being indiscreet but if I am I do not care a bit.

This spring one day in my chambers in Westminster in London, just opposite Victoria tower, I was waited upon by a deputation, the most interesting deputation I ever received, composed of four or five trade union leaders and

four or five employers. They represented the great shipbuilding industries, the painters, carpenters, fitters, etc., and all these men engaged in our shipbuilding industries, one of the most difficult industries economically and one perhaps that has suffered more than any other. On the other side were perhaps half a dozen leaders in the shipbuilding industry, representing wealth and these firms in the shipbuilding federation. And they produced an agreement and they said, "Mr. MacMillan, we have entered into an agreement that there shall be no strikes in our industry until the question at issue has been discussed between us at local conference where the trouble has arisen; if agreement cannot be reached it is to go to a larger conference; and if agreement is still not reached by conciliation it shall go to a central conference, where the whole trades shall be represented by three trade union leaders and by the leading employers. And," they said, "we provided for an independent chairman. The Minister of Labor is to appoint the chairman to mediate if we cannot agree." And this is not told you in a spirit of egotism, I was very proud when I was told: "employers and employes have agreed in asking you to be chairman."

I am telling you that for this reason. I was more moved than I can say by the spirit exhibited on that occasion. One man there I had known through some of the worst trade union disputes. He said to me: "We mean this. This is not eyewash. We have come to realize that strikes and strife mean loss to us all and we hope that through this medium we may be able to diminish the element of strife and eliminate the grit from the machine. We did not make you arbitrator. We have not reached the stage of compulsory arbitration. We think sometimes that is a mistake. We do think if we can have it out in the presence of someone, that if we do not reach an agreement under these circumstances it must be that it is because the thing is unsusceptible of agreement. And we are sure machinery of that sort will go a long way to eliminate the senseless disputes which often arise from mere lack of comprehension." And I think that is the truth.

We know the trade union congress recently has given whole-hearted approval to the policy of industrial recon-

ciliation. All strife is loss not only for employers but employes, and the sooner that is realized throughout the world the better. I am happy to be able to report to you from my own small experience and the much larger experience of others that great progress is being made and that we may look forward, not to the millenium, because no trade union and employes are going to grow wings all of a sudden; I am not sure that would be advantageous. But in the infinitely more reasonable relationships between capital and labor, workman and employer, that has marked the past year, lies great hope for us all. You have had, I know, industrial crises here. Perhaps they have not been so acute with you because this is the land of opportunity and you do not suffer as we do from a large surplus population. Not of work-shy men. Men of ability, the great bulk thwarted by the lack of opportunity in the old land. There is no use in sending to Canada people who are failures at home, [From the audience: "Hear, hear." The speaker: "I thought that would get through."] if their failure is due to want of ability. But if their failure is due to want of opportunity, what then? And I am satisfied that there are among the surplus men of our country, especially the younger ones, thousands and thousands who would be useful citizens of this country, men eager and ready to work and suffering from the most depressing of all things, the thwarted desire to make good in this world, due to the fact the old country cannot offer them an opportunity. Not due to any fault of their own. Here opportunity awaits them and, I am convinced, a goodly welcome to those who come to you with that old spirit, ready to endure hardships as the old settlers endured them, a spirit that could ensure the brilliant successes and prosperity which I see around me today.

MR. ROBERT FENNELL, President of the Empire Club, expressed the thanks of the clubs:

Right Honourable Sir, and gentlemen: It is my very pleasant duty to extend to you the thanks of the Canadian Club and of the Empire Club for your address. Yesterday most of us here knew you as an international figure, a great lawyer and a Scotsman who took keen interest in the public life of the British Isles. Today all of us have

come to know you as a great advocate, a humorous, able and eloquent speaker. Tomorrow those who come after us will read with pleasure and instruction an address which will become a valuable contribution to the printed records of both these clubs. You have, sir, interpreted some of England's problems to these clubs. We would like to appoint you our Lord Advocate to interpret Canada and some of our problems to the British Isles when you return. May I, therefore, on behalf of the Canadian and Empire Clubs extend to you our appreciation.