

(January 21, 1929)

National Co-operation

BY MAYOR CAMILLIEN HOUDE, of Montreal.

PRESIDENT DALY:—I think I am correct in saying that this is the first occasion in the history of the Canadian Club of Toronto when we have had the pleasure of receiving as guest of honor the presiding mayor of the City of Montreal. This country offers an example unique throughout the world of two races of outstanding genius but of different origin and culture living and working together in harmony and co-operation, and we can make no more valuable contribution to the public life of Canada than to stimulate and foster and perpetuate those feelings of friendship and mutual confidence and respect which at present exist. The presence of His Worship Mayor Houde here today is a friendly gesture between the two great cities and the two great races of this Dominion. I have much pleasure in welcoming to the Canadian Club of Toronto His Worship the Mayor of Montreal.

MAYOR HOUDE:—Mr. Chairman, Your Worship, Gentlemen of the Canadian Club of Toronto, In thanking you for the signal honor you have conferred on me in inviting me to address you this afternoon, let me in the same breath assure you that, dangerous though a subject like National Co-operation may seem, I do not propose to discuss any kind of co-operation that might be made the basis of a political argument. Strange as it may appear to some, I have come to Toronto with the preconceived intention of enjoying myself thoroughly, and my first step in that direction is to take a complete holiday from what many people, rightly or wrongly, claim to be my principal occupation in life.

The subject just naturally suggested itself, as soon as I received your kindly invitation. It seemed to me that

when, under the auspices of Canada's national club, the greatest city of Canada entertains the Mayor of Canada's greatest city, there is every reason to discuss and to exercise the spirit of national co-operation. And in this spirit of national co-operation, there is something that goes deeper by far than any of the controversial aspects of the question.

Let us, like good logicians, commence by defining our terms. The executive secretary of a rather powerful organization in my province gave me one definition of co-operation not so long ago. The organization had met in convention, and the members had talked a great deal of co-operating with their secretary in various things he was trying to put over on their behalf. During an interlude in the proceedings, he whispered to me, "I'll tell you what co-operation means in this society. These fellows do all the coo-ing, and I do all the operating."

I forget, for the moment, who the humorist was who some years ago defined co-operation in another way. "As soon as the crowd decides to move the piano, I pick up the piano stool. I am co-operating with the minimum effort."

Another way of co-operating that I will only dare to mention, because it suggests so many concrete examples in political, religious and other debatable walks of life, is the very common one that, whenever it is decided to move the furnishings, we all, in our enthusiasm, scramble and fight for the privilege of carrying the heavy pieces.

To get a definition of the subject which will fall in with the idea that I would like to develop, we must go deeper than the act of co-operating, and examine the mental attitude, the frame of mind which inspires the co-operation. And then, I find a very excellent definition, although in a sense a negative one, in the writings, if my memory serves me right, of Marcus Aurelius.

"That which is harmless to the community cannot possibly hurt the individual."

Translating into more positive terms an already somewhat free translation of the ancient sage's words, I might I think with justification claim that similarly, that which

is beneficial to the community must, eventually, benefit the individual.

In our cities, that message can well be impressed on every citizen. I understand you in Toronto are strong on the civic spirit. We are very energetically preaching to the citizens of Montreal the idea that the whole city can only progress effectively, insofar as every individual ward is progressing. And I think our people are becoming daily more imbued with that idea. But let me not adventure into details of civic government, lest I lose sight of the forest while thinking about the trees.

Our cities, too, are individuals, as are each and all of our towns and villages. Whatsoever, therefore, is beneficial to Canada as a whole, is by the same reasoning beneficial to each and every individual city, town or village. Any measure which is calculated to bring increased trade, increased prosperity, increased comfort and happiness to the people of Vancouver, must eventually redound to the advantage of Halifax, St. John, Montreal, Toronto and all the other cities and smaller individual communities of our Dominion. That is, provided it is not a measure to penalize the whole of Canada to the advantage of one individual section.

And similarly, every province is an individual to which the same rule may be applied. If something can be done in Ontario which will have the effect of adding to Canada's collective prosperity and wealth, let no man jealously suggest that Quebec or Manitoba or Nova Scotia is losing out, because the development took place in another province, and not within their own territory. Or if the development is in Quebec, New Brunswick or Alberta, let no man in Ontario voice a jealous complaint that the development should have taken place in his province.

The spirit of co-operation dictates that every man's standard, by which he will judge of all new things, whether in politics, religion, trade, commerce, industry, sport or anything else, is the question, "Is it to the advantage of Canada and Canadians as a whole?" If it is, I will favor it, no matter what part of the Dominion is to derive the first benefit; if it is not, I am against it, even though my

province or my city stands to gain millions thereby, at the expense of our fellow Canadians.

For these ideas, I claim no originality. All that has been said before. Perhaps in different terms. Probably in clearer, better, more appealing terms than I can find in my limited vocabulary. But I want to ask you to join me in digging still a little deeper into the subject, in search of a spiritual wealth that is not to be found on the surface.

National co-operation on the public platform, is like religion in the pulpit, very nice to listen to, but worse than useless if it stops at only listening. If your religion goes back into the cupboard with your Sunday clothes, you know, you would probably be just as well without religion. And if national co-operation is only to be brought out for an airing once in a while when representatives of different cities or provinces meet together, and then is put back on the shelf until the next state occasion, it would be better left on the shelf all the time.

If I could be sure of what people say when they meet around a table at the club, in the home, in the tavern or whatever takes its place in those sections of the country where there are no taverns, at the street-corner or in the offices and factories of our Dominion, I would not care what anybody said on the public platforms, when the radio and the reporters are on hand to tell the world that Mr. So-and-so said so-and-so.

There is where we want to get the idea of national co-operation. Get it rooted in the minds of the individual Canadians from one end of Canada to the other, so that it underlies the tone of their conversation when they meet together in twos and threes in everyday life, whether they are in the east, the west, the centre or the frost-bound northlands.

If I offend someone by saying so, I am sorry, but I cannot help expressing the profound conviction that any man who either expresses or applauds, in a public meeting, at banquet or luncheon, sentiments of national co-operation and all-Canadianism, and then goes to his office, his club or his home and talks disparagingly of "those darned Westerners", "those doggone Easterners", "those low-down French-Canadians", "those high-and-mighty

Englishmen" and so on and so forth, is in my humble opinion a hypocrite, whatever his rank, position or station in life.

Education comes down from above. The father imparts it to the son, the teacher to the pupil, the educated man to the uneducated. If we, you and I whom fate has for the moment at least elevated to more or less leading positions in our sections of the community, are seen to set the example, in our words and deeds spoken and committed in the privacy of our homes, offices and clubs, of that all-Canadian spirit of co-operation which will insist that the man in a lonely outpost of the Yukon is a Canadian the same as you and I and as much entitled to a square deal as we are, then that spirit of co-operation between Canadians of all classes, regardless of their social or geographical distance, will spread as those with whom we come in contact note our sincerity and consistency.

But if our co-operation speeches on special occasions are contradicted by our attitude on individual public questions as they come up, or by the tenor of our conversation, the public, ever quick to note inconsistency on the part of its leading men, will not only take record of our hypocrisy, but will discount the public utterances of others who may be more sincere.

And Canada will be ready for the most phenomenal forward movement, in things spiritual and temporal alike, in business, social, educational, artistic, sporting and scientific life, in every worthy sphere of activity that our geographical situation and the temperament of our people admits of, when people from one end of the Dominion to the other get it deeply rooted into their souls that a good Canadian has the same claim on another good Canadian, whatever section of this Dominion he inhabits, whatever language he learned at his mother's knee, whatever rites he may follow in the worship of our common God; when it will be an offence to speak in derogatory terms of an absent section of the Canadian community, and when the crossing sweeper in Toronto will have a broad smile as he sweeps up a Q.L.C. label, recognizing that it once enveloped the cheerful spirit of his Quebec fellow-citizens; when the prairie farmer will plough more

happily and more cheerily at the thought that someone in the east of Canada is enjoying the profits of his new plough; when the good Catholic Canadian in Quebec will think tenderly, sympathetically, as he goes out to skate on a winter Sunday afternoon, of his good Protestant brethren in Ontario whose scruples deny them that enjoyment; and when the good Protestant Canadian in Toronto will think just as sympathetically, as he goes to church at seven p.m. on the same Sunday, of his good Catholic brethren who had to get up at six a.m. to go to mass.

When we get that spirit imbuing the big majority of our Canadian citizens all over the Dominion, the mind reels at the thought of the progress and development that opens up to Canada in all walks of life during the years to follow. And the cultivation of that spirit must start with you and me. With me, because I have voiced these sentiments publicly, and in common decency I am bound to live up to them in all my public and private acts and words. With you, because you have been good enough to listen to and applaud these sentiments, and your leadership among your fellow Canadians depends in a large degree on the degree of consistency they see between what you endorse in public and what you do in private.

A friend of mine in Montreal, whose mother tongue is English, has in his office a card bearing the lines:

There's so much good in the worst of us,
And so much bad in the best of us,
That it hardly behooves any of us,
To talk about the rest of us.

I have been told by an authority on English literature that that is doggerel. But even so, it is very fine sentiment. And although I suspect the card was printed in the United States, the sentiment is as true in Canada as it is over there.

You probably have some bad in you, even in Toronto, I don't know what it is, but I suspect that there must be an odd defect here and there. We have our share of faults in Montreal, but if you don't know what they are, I am not going to tell you.

And if we do happen to find out something of each

others faults, let us not say a word about them. Because, if you talk sufficiently about anyone's faults, and think enough about them, you are liable in the end to find yourself imitating them. That is human nature. And so Toronto will find itself moving down to the level of Montreal's worst and Montreal will find itself moving down to the level of your worst.

On the other hand, I know lots of things in Toronto that are worthy of imitation. And if you cannot find any such qualities in Montreal, I will do my best to hunt some out for you. If we talk about and think about each other's best qualities, not only on public platforms but in our daily intercourse, we shall find ourselves unconsciously striving to imitate each other's best and thus raising ourselves and each other to higher levels. And that applies not only to Montreal and Toronto, but to every other province, city, county, town and village in the Dominion of Canada. Let us strive to look for the best in each other, strive to equal each other's best, be proud of each other's best and noblest attributes, stand solid together for a square deal for everyone within our community no matter how far apart they are scattered, and every day we shall find ourselves worthier of each other's pride and support, every day worthier of the high mission which fate seems to have called our great Dominion to fulfil in the life of the world which tomorrow will unfold before us. Gentlemen, I apologise for having detained you so long, and I thank you.

PRESIDENT DALY:—Gentlemen, you must agree with me in saying that the very obvious popularity and respect with which our guest today is regarded by his own constituents will now no longer be confined to the borders of the city over which he presides or of the province in whose Legislature he sits. May I on your behalf thank His Worship for this courtesy in coming here today and taking the time from a very busy life and his courtesy in addressing us in his eloquent English and thanking him for this very fine and interesting address.