

(March 19, 1909.)

Canada's Relation to the Empire.

BY HON. JOSEPH MARTIN.

ADDRESSING the Canadian Club on the subject of "Canada's Relation to the Empire," Mr. Joseph Martin, late of Vancouver, said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen: It appeared to me when asked to speak to you upon this subject by your President, that the contract was a reasonable one for me to undertake. In a few days more I shall be more directly a British citizen, and if, on the eve of my departure from Canada, I can say something with regard to the relations of Canada to the Empire, I regard it as a privilege.

Am I an Imperialist? Well, before answering that question I want to know what is meant by an Imperialist. Am I a believer in the Chamberlain ideals? Again, I want to know what is meant by the Chamberlain ideals. My ideal of the relations which should exist between Canada and the Empire has been the same ever since Lord Durham made his report in 1842. It is entirely satisfactory and I would advocate no change. There are many propositions. The newspapers and the English press have made all kinds of proposals. Many of these suggestions connected with trade ideals are not put forward very definitely. It is not easy to grasp their meaning. A man gets up and declaims about being an Imperialist, but he doesn't give us more than his mere statement. He should tell us what he really means.

Now, there are two matters intimately connected with the relations that must exist between Canada and Great Britain. First, there is the question of the political relations between the two; and, second, there is the question of the trade relations between the two. And a great deal of confusion arises from confusing these two matters, which have no connection with one another. I have seen statements in the English press—statements of Canadians in the English press—that, unless some change is made to effect Canada's trade relations, she will be driven to trade almost solely with the United States. I emphatically dissent from such a proposi-

tion. There may be changes between Great Britain and Canada, as far as trade is concerned, by negotiations between us. So, too, we may make changes in our relations with the United States, but, if we do so we will not do so in pique, but we will do absolutely and entirely in what we deem the interest of Canada. We are not considering the questions from their standpoint, but from ours. This position obtains all along the line. It is out of place for Canada to suggest to the people of Great Britain their trade policy.

I read the other day a telegram from Sir Hugh Graham, of the *Montreal Star*, in which he undertook to tell the Empire, concerning the matter of defence, that if Great Britain did not do more than she is doing Canada might do something curious. What right had he to say a word with regard to its defence? It seems to me a gross impertinence. If we were paying part of the cost it would be all right—and very different.

As to the United States, as a matter of fact, trade between Canada and the United States is larger than trade between Canada and Great Britain. It has been growing steadily in favor of the United States since 1873. The other day the United States made public new tariff overtures. They offer reciprocity in regard to coal. It has been much discussed in your Toronto press, and the keynote of the discussion was: What effect will it have in dollars and cents? There was no idea in the mind of the electors that it would have any effect upon the political relations of Canada and the United States.

Chamberlain's proposals are these: Should there be a sort of trade arrangement between Great Britain and the colonies, if I understand it aright, England would put a tax on grain and then take it off so far as Canada is concerned, conditional on Canada taking the tax on manufactured goods off in favor of Great Britain. One could agree or disagree with that—I should say not—but it would be no indication of dissatisfaction as far as the political relations were concerned. The tariff laws of the Canadian people are in the hands of the Canadian people. They are the absolute judge. We have no part in the question of what the future political relations are to be. I would advocate that these remain as they are. I believe it to be in the interest of Canada to maintain them, even if occasionally undesirable, as a question of sentiment.

We are glad to be part of the British Empire, to share its history, its progress, its civilization and its religious liberty. That is a part of our national life that is above questions of trade and tariff and dollars and cents.

In addition to that, I believe that, quite apart from our feelings of loyalty and the connection of blood, that it is to the material advantage of Canada to belong to the British Empire. What do Canadians mean, I ask, when they write to the *London Times* or the *Standard of Empire*, that if Great Britain doesn't do this or that it will lose Canada? As a Canadian citizen I do not take much stock in that threat. The taxpayer in the old country can look on with equanimity. As Canadians we can do the worrying. Where are we going to go, and what are we going to do with ourselves? Would we give up our portion in the greatest nation on the earth for nothing? We have protection from war that costs us nothing. What are we going to do? We know something of the struggles in portions of the old land. We have read of the terrible amount of poverty and the submerged tenth. England has her own needs and Canada should be ashamed of the people who call on the old land to do something. Canada needs nothing. What right have we to say we want you to tax your food in order to swell the pockets of our Canadian farmers.

It doesn't become us, either, to be too independent. If we throw off the old country and tell them to take away their navy and army protection, how long would Canada last in that "independent" position?

Then, there is that other threat: that Canada will join the United States. Ever since I was old enough to remember the annexation sentiment was heard when times were hard. Some people declared that there would be advantages in connection with the United States, but you hear very little of that kind of thing now. Any arrangement between Canada and the United States must be to the material advantage of Canada. The most satisfactory of trade relations can be arranged without joining the two countries. We think—rightly or wrongly—that our laws, our institutions and our constitution are better than those of the American people. In so saying I am not casting the slightest slur on the American people. Next to the British Empire, they are the great exemplar of civil and religious liberty. In some

ways I think they have recently shown themselves the superior of the Canadian people. There has been a serious wave of corruption sweeping over the whole of the American continent. In the United States great men have come to the front to grapple with this evil. Roosevelt has gone unflinchingly after all graft and corruption. He has gone after public thieves and the great corporations, and he has had the backing of the common people of the United States. Canada has not been fortunate enough to have had such a man.

But quite apart from the question of loyalty to the Empire, it would be unfortunate for Canada to become a part of the United States. Back of the question of sentiment lies something solid—the benefits Canada receives from the Old Country. There is the protection of lives and property, and the enormous expenditure for the navy and army, for which we give nothing. When the task of defending the Empire becomes too big the Mother Land will call on her colonies. A joint system of defence has been proposed with the colonies represented. I'm afraid we are getting into deep water here. No such connection could operate satisfactorily because of lack of control. The colonies could only have a minority representation. We would be bound by what the other representatives might do in the teeth of our own representatives. There is no reason in the world why Canadians should like to join in the imperial army. The Imperial Government have sole jurisdiction over that.

We have, in many respects, the ideal system of government. Our anatomy is what it should be. We put into power Laurier and Whitney—and the same power that put them in can put them out.

There is, I must not forget, one more great advantage in our imperial connection. It is the right of every citizen to go with his case in court to the judicial committee of the Privy Council without a dollar of costs to us. No contribution for this purpose is asked from Canada towards furnishing or keeping up the court. Here in Canada, party feeling often runs high. On many questions of a constitutional character the parties of the day take a stand. Our courts are constituted too largely of ex-politicians. No matter how high their local attainments it would be unfortunate if their judgments could never be controverted. If there was no other reason, that in itself, is a strong enough one for our remaining a part of the great British Empire.

It has been a great pleasure to address you. You may not agree with all that has been said. They are my own ideas. I am proud of being Canadian born, and of the fact that my parents were both born here. If at any time or for any reason you ever cease to be a part of the great Empire, I trust you will always be true to the great principle of religious and civil liberty.