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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.

The addresses made by Sir Vincent Meredith and Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor at this week's Bank of Montreal annual meeting, both laid emphasis on the necessity of foresight in regard to economic and financial probabilities in Canada subsequent to the war. That these warnings are gravely necessary will be readily conceded by careful students of the existing situation. Within the last few months undoubtedly, a feeling somewhat hard to define, but which may be described in general terms as one of blind confidence, has made considerable headway in some quarters. Probably the great activity in certain lines of industry through the demands for munitions and other supplies, and the maintenance at almost unexampled prices of an enormous demand for Canada's agricultural products, have been the originators of this feeling. True, as a result of the war demand for her products and manufactures, Canada on the whole is probably immeasurably better furnished with liquid assets than she would have been had the war not taken place, though prosperity is by no means generally distributed. But the war has for Canada a debit as well as a credit side and the debit side, with its 14,000 lives lost, 45,000 casualties and a money expenditure of over \$354 millions, has been overshadowed thus far, to some extent, it may well be, by the statistics of our trade expansion and the high prices of wheat and butter.

Unfortunately, while the debits in Canada's war balance sheet are permanent, the credits are merely temporary, and it is in the failure to recognize this fact that the chief danger of present blind confidence lies. That our war debit, already fairly large, will eventually reach formidable dimensions, goes without saying. Sir Vincent Meredith pointed out that while the public debt of Canada is now about \$700 millions, ere long it will reach a billion dollars, involving an interest charge of not less than \$45 millions annually. No dependence can be placed upon a continued buoyancy in revenue, and the probabilities are, therefore, that taxation

will necessarily be upon a heavy scale. Its scale will be the heavier should immigration not attain large dimensions following the war—and it is at all events arguable whether or not there will be a large immigration. Moreover, once a temporary rehabilitation of Europe has been completed, our manufacturers and traders will necessarily have to meet the keenest possible competition in the markets of the world. When the factors of the case are thus brought into line, the hollow character of the claims for present-day complacency can be readily seen.

Both speakers agreed in their recommendations for immediate practical action with a view to safeguarding the future. Economy, production and immigration are the necessities. "Thrift and immigration," said Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor, "are closely allied, for only by practising national and personal economy or thrift can we reduce our high cost of living—that most effective barrier to immigration." "If Canada is to escape the disability of being made a dear country to live in," said Sir Vincent Meredith, "the strictest economy in Government expenditures will have to be practised and all demands for public aid involving new burdens be held severely in check." The difficulty in regard to this matter is that while some progress has been made by Governments and municipalities in the important matter of restriction of expenditures, no one in public authority has yet taken the trouble to encourage the systematic instruction of public opinion in regard to the present-day duty of thrift. Thrift and economy are not uncommonly confounded with meanness and very naturally, the majority of people dislike their practise. What is wanted at the present time is simple, common-sense instruction on the why and wherefore of the duty of present-day thrift, somewhat similar to the instruction which has been given in England, but, naturally, adapted to Canadian conditions. Possibly, when the new campaign by the Dominion Government to tap small savings for war purposes gets really under way, we shall have some business-like efforts to instruct Canadians in the present-day duty of looking to the future.