

THE POLITICAL CLEAVAGE OF NORTH AMERICA

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

THE HON. GEORGE W. ROSS

At the 49th Convocation of the University of Chicago. Dr. Harper, President of the University in the Chair. Mr. Ross was introduced in very kindly terms by Mr. James B. Forgan, President of the First National Bank.

Mr. President, Members of University, Ladies and Gentlemen:—

IN my observations this evening I propose considering the causes which led to the division of the North American Continent between the two nations by which it is now so happily occupied in friendly rivalry for national pre-eminence.

By right of discovery, North America was for many years in the divided occupation of Spain, France and Great Britain. Early in the last century Spain and France sold their possessions to the United States, thus practically leaving Great Britain and the United States sole occupants of the Continent. It is my purpose to show how this division of the Continent has been ever since maintained amidst the conflicting interests of European and American diplomacy.

My narrative begins with the capture of Quebec in 1759. At that time Great Britain owned the Eastern slope of the Atlantic from Nova Scotia to Florida. This vast territory, 1,700 miles long and three hundred to five hundred miles wide, was occupied chiefly by people of British origin, possessing a large measure of self-government and enjoying a degree of prosperity which was constantly attracting fresh settlers from the Mother