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## ESSENTIALS OF BRITISH EMPIRE DEVELOPMENT

### COMMERCE, COMMUNICATION AND DEFENCE

*An Address delivered by Mr. P. W. Ellis, Chairman of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Commission, to the Delegates to the Ninth Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire, at Niagara Falls, Ontario, on September 26th, 1920.*

**M**Y LORD DESBOROUGH and Gentlemen:—I have the privilege, on behalf of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Commission, of welcoming you to this beautiful and historic district as our distinguished guests. I greatly prize it.

You came to Canada from the Mother Country, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Ceylon and the Islands of the Sea, to hold the Ninth Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire. That congress has been held, and as was to be expected from the calibre of its delegates, it has been a great success. The imagination may well be stirred by such a gathering of distinguished men from the wide Dominions of the King. Tradition, history and the story of recent events record the rise and fall of many mighty Empires. But the British Empire remains, secure in the strength and peaceful ideals of her many loyal sons. May it ever so stand. To help to reconstruct its economic structure, which has been so battered and so nearly shattered by six years of criminal war, has been your great and splendid task. War has ever divided peoples and bequeathed its legacies of hatred; but it has also been great in uniting, and cementing the friendships of, peoples under the influences of common perils and common sacrifices. And so have the British Empire and many of its gallant comrades-in-arms been united by this last great struggle. The fabric which the enemy thought to rupture and destroy, has been unified and strengthened by the shocks of war; and now you set your hands again to the tasks of peace. It was the fashion in former days to look down upon vulgar commerce. These days, however, have gone. Commerce to-day engages the attention of the world. It has enlisted in its manifold activities the ablest of the world's great men. The development of British foreign commerce is itself one of the great romances of history. The dare-devilry of the great pioneers of the Elizabethan age not only revealed the sturdy fibre of Englishmen, but it begat a spirit than is yet, and ever will be, a living force among Englishmen.

I do not wish to talk slightly of governments. Men in high places have much to stand in these days and frequently suffer much injustice, but yet it remains true that tragedy has more than once been linked to the policy of British governments while the compensations of great offsetting achievements have been secured by the capacity and enterprise of British traders. In the closing period of the Eighteenth Century, the stupendous folly of a British Government lost an empire in the west—the great, populous, and prosperous country to the south of us; but at the same time the genius of British traders won for the British Crown a splendid compensating empire in the east—the great Empire of India. Some of the greatest