

At last, however, there came a day, perhaps the most significant, certainly the darkest day that ever dawned in human history, the morning of the fourth of August, 1914, and on that day the people of Canada, perhaps for the first time, began to dimly, half-consciously feelingly discover one of the deepest truths in political psychology. On that day Canadians everywhere began to recognize the human truth: that no country can always live by allegiance to itself alone, that geographical isolation is no sufficient reason for human isolation, that the claims of humanity are always paramount over those of any single, isolated, independent state, that international feuds and grudges and wars are relics of uncivilized unreasoning tribalism, that human intercourse, human intertrade and inter-marriage as a matter of fact pay precious little respect to arbitrary international boundary lines, that, phrase it how you will, my neighbor's rights are as real as my own rights and should be so regarded by me and defended by me, although my neighbor happen to live in South Africa, India or the Southern Seas. Why, then did Canada take the prompt action that she did in 1914? I am not now even saying that her action was justifiable. Why do so many of our people take the interest that they do in the Covenant of the League of Nations? I will even admit too, that this interest is misdirected and misplaced and that the future of the League is hopeless in its present form. Perhaps there were many reasons. But it has always seemed to me, that the attitude we took towards these two great events, one of war and the other of peace, was dominantly derived from that larger sense of world citizenship and responsibility resulting from our being a member nation in that great commonwealth of free nations, hitherto called The British Empire. Was that the deep-seated reason why we entered the war three years earlier than the completely self-governing federation of British colonies south of us? Is that the reason why we joined the League of Nations so hopefully and they did not? Was it really an echo, a tradition of 1775? I for one think it was. Traditions, allegiances have much to do with human policies. Human history is, after all, only an endless train of traditions. If there are ancient hates there are also ancient sympathies guiding the life of the nation.

And now, in consequence of what I have just said, when the war is over, or at least begins to show some symptoms of subsiding for the present, the people of Canada find themselves almost overwhelmed by a distinctive sense of destiny all their own. I need not recite to you what has so often been so well said by others, that Canada is the natural keystone in the long arch of Anglo-American friendship upon which the peace of the world must be chiefly made to depend in the future. Neither need I point out to you that Canada occupies the vast middle northern marches between a troubled Europe and a troubled Asia. What for example, would be our position should hostilities occur between Japan and the United States and we should be called upon to defend our neutrality on the Northern Pacific as Belgium was called upon so unexpectedly to defend her neutrality on land in 1914? You see the pressure of history meets us at every angle, and no proud people can escape from the pressure of history. That way lies shame and national dishonour, and that way we refuse to travel. Such then, seems to be our present position in world politics, so fraught with destiny for the future. Fundamentally our present position remains much the same as it was previous to the world war. We retain alike our affection for the Motherland, our allegiance to the British Commonwealth and our friendship for the United States. All three of these sentiments have however, been greatly intensified as a result of these years of tragedy and unrest, and certainly all three have taken on a vast new significance in relation to the future destiny of the Canadian Dominion. Most thinking Canadians will now wholly agree, I think, that complete political isolation from the Motherland and from the Empire on the one hand and annexation of the United States on

the other are both at last closed incidents in Canadian history. Most of them will also wholly agree, I suggest, that our future national destiny points at present clearly in the direction of increasing autonomy and fraternity within the British Commonwealth. Just by what constitutional devices these relations of autonomy and fraternity are effectuated is after all a question of mere practice and not of principle. Let us now turn to look at this question from a purely internal point of view.

Perhaps the present position of Canada in World Politics from an internal point of view may be best revealed by a concrete illustration. Every student of international relations knows that rivers have a very powerful influence in international affairs. Great rivers and river systems often form the boundary lines between separate states. They often also form great highways of international trade and commerce and determine the location of great commercial cities trading overseas. One of these great systems is the St. Lawrence River and Waterways System. No one, so far as I know, has yet written a really readable, authentic and full account of the splendid history of how Great Britain and Canada, acting in concert on the one hand and the United States on the other, settled by peaceful methods the boundary line and boundary privileges between these two great powers all the way by land and water from Cape Race to the Aleutian Islands. Here, then, for example, is a national service for some student to do which ought to be well done. Every free, educated, intelligent people should be familiar with the facts of its own history, and especially with facts of an international character such as this one, out of which grave problems may arise at any moment. But I wish more particularly at this point to refer to two other rivers very remote from each other on the map and very unlike in every way, but which may, nevertheless, serve to teach a very significant lesson in human history. I am thinking about the river Rhine and the river Ottawa. Across the blue peaceful waters of the Rhine, Mediterranean and Teutonic peoples, represented by modern France and Germany, have been carrying on cruel, destructive, barbarous war almost constantly ever since the earliest dawn of European history. Across the waters of the Ottawa, in many ways equal to the Rhine in natural beauty, these two same races, although profoundly influenced at the beginning by all the three great ancient grudges of Europe, based upon difference of race, language and creed, have nevertheless lived together in peace and happiness for now a century and a half past. What a lesson for the tribes of Europe! I regard the fact I have just mentioned as one of the greatest, certainly one of the most significant achievements in the political history of the world. It is an achievement which should make every Canadian, whether English or French, walk with a proud, high head wherever he may travel among the civilized nations of the world.

But we have no right to take more credit to ourselves than we really deserve. We must not forget that for the happy result to which I have referred we owe a great deal indeed to the considerate, kindly offices of the Motherland. Let me explain what I mean. Suppose Canada had become an independent nation, say one hundred years ago. Is it going too far in that event to imagine that these two great rival races and civilizations, the French and the English, might have fallen to fighting? Indeed, remembering their differences in

Centre & Hanna Ltd.

Established 1893.

PERFECT FUNERAL SERVICE

Seymour 2425

1049 GEORGIA ST., WEST, VANCOUVER, B. C.