

PACIFIC PROBLEMS

(Notes of an address delivered to Vancouver Kiwanis Club)

(By M. A. MACDONALD, K. C.)

The subject of "Pacific Problems" is important primarily to the Province of British Columbia bordering on the great Pacific where East meets West, around whose shores dwell three-fifths of all mankind and to an almost equal extent to the people of Eastern Canada and the great Middle West, because we must not be narrow, provincial or parochial; we are all Canadians united by ties of sentiment and common interest from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Since I was asked to discuss this question the principal Nation of the Pacific—Japan—has been the victim of a great disaster, two of its principal cities being virtually destroyed and thousands of lives snuffed out in perhaps the greatest earthquake and fire of ancient or modern times. The genuine sympathy manifested by the whole civilized world and the ready assistance proffered from all quarters shows that the brotherhood of the Nations is not an empty phrase and that Japan is within the family of Nations entitled to the respect and consideration of mankind. One comforting thought can be extracted from the calamity. It shows again that the generous impulses of humanity transcend every barrier of race and the experience will show the wisdom of giving freedom to the same impulses in the solution of points of difference which may from time to time arise.

It is important, nay it is necessary that the people of British Columbia should study the problems more immediately confronting those who dwell on the Pacific slope, problems inherent to the strategic position of this Province as the gateway to the Pacific. Right at the outset I want to challenge your attention with the assertion and ask you to test it by study and research—namely, that as the Atlantic Ocean has been the greatest highway for the greatest volume of trade plying to and fro for centuries past, so will the Pacific—our Pacific yonder at our doors—be the still greater highway in the days that are to be for the future trade of the world.

Public attention in Canada has recently been directed to the great strides made in the last few years in trade development through Pacific ports and to the probability, aye, the certainty, that a large proportion of our prairie wheat will be shipped through British Columbia ports both to Europe by way of the Panama Canal and to the countries of the Orient. In the past ten years the number of vessels entering Pacific Ports has doubled, their gross tonnage has increased from about 2,000,000 to approximately 13,000,000. The Ocean shipping lines regularly operating in Pacific ports in this Province have increased over three-fold in that period. All this too is apart from any serious movement in the grain trade which is just commencing. Even at its commencement for the crop year ending June 30th, 1923, Vancouver shipped 16,361,000 bushels of wheat; over 200,000 more than the combined ports of Portland, Seattle and Tacoma. From the economic necessities of the situation the entire crop of Alberta, and much, if not all, of Saskatchewan, will be marketed through the various ports of the Pacific from Prince Rupert in the North to the Fraser River in the South, and when we contemplate the millions of acres yet untouched, particularly in the Northern parts of these Provinces, we may form some conceptions of the possibilities of the future, doubly so when we visualize the situation in a stabilized Europe which we all hope to see, and in the Orient, to which I will presently refer.

Pacific Problems then will loom large in the future history of Canadian development and just as we are sometimes urged as Britishers to "think Imperially" so without discarding the Imperial thought, I would say let us train our minds to "think Pacifically." If the term "Pacific" suggests thoughts

of peace so much the better, for the issues of peace are involved in the solution of these problems.

I have said that here the East meets the West. The great Mongolian race face us on the other side of the Pacific; we of the Caucasian race are on this side of that great highway. It is the fact that in nearly all recorded wars, whatever ostensible reasons were assigned for the outbreak of hostilities, the underlying cause of conflict has been the existence of racial antipathies which particular circumstances, often in themselves of trivial moment, have fanned into a flame. As civilization progresses, however, and the Western world recognizes its ethical responsibilities it may be hoped that these spurious grounds of conflict will be scattered before the effulgent beams of an enlightened "Public Opinion."

In the last quarter of a century we have witnessed a remarkable awakening of nations in the Orient, long regarded as in a state of somnolence, presenting a prolific field for commercial rivalries, but otherwise a negligible quantity in International affairs. How different today, as shown by the Washington Conference on Disarmament called in 1921, in the interest of World peace by the late and most sincerely lamented President Harding, when nearly the whole time of that conference of Nine Powers, sitting in session for several months, dealing with the world's unfinished business, was occupied with the problems of the Pacific. May I say in passing that I think it regrettable that our press does not to an even greater extent than at present familiarize our people with the great shifting currents of events in the Orient. It is a great gain to get the mental attitude of the people attuned aright so that prejudice may be reduced to the minimum and the view point of other races appreciated. We should visualize these great Oriental countries with their teeming millions and realize their great possibilities for profitable intercourse.

If I were an Artist I would with a few strokes of the brush draw a picture of the Rising Sun—the Sun rising in the East—just emerging over the horizon by the one-time distant land of Cathay, China (I say one time distant, for no lands are distant now) just emerging over the horizon of the Flowery Kingdom of Japan, now so sorely stricken, and the Australasian States of our own Empire and the Isles of the Southern Seas, casting its rays across the Pacific, as if, with beckoning hand it was inviting the peoples of the Northern half of this Continent to follow the gleam and explore the possibilities lying beyond it. It is a new Sun in a new Sky. But the picture would not be accurate if it carried with it any suggestion of the decline of Anglo-Saxon greatness either in commercial or international pre-eminence. The Anglo-Saxon race will not only continue to endure, defying the corrosion of time, but I am sure the star of its greatness, and of our Empire's greatness, will always remain at the zenith; for is it not admitted by leaders of thought in these Eastern lands—that the English language will, to an ever-increasing extent be the language of International trade. And language is like railways—it is a means of communication—one of the best. Language control is as important to commerce as railway control. This is recognized notably by the quick-witted people of Japan, who today are copying western civilization and teaching the English language in their schools, making it compulsory in their High and Grammar schools, so that they may be the better equipped for the commercial race. We can therefore approach the question without fear for the future of our own race and our own Empire. But having said that, I still assert that the picture is accurate when it suggests that the track for countless vessels of commerce leaving our ports in ever-increasing num-