

SOME CANADIAN RE-CONSTRUCTION PROBLEMS

By SIR HENRY DAYTON, Minister of Finance, Canada, delivered at the Annual Convention of Life Insurance Presidents, New York, December 4th.

In the first instance may I express my very sincere thanks for the compliment done me by your Association in extending to me the pressing invitation, which has been extended, that I should be here today and that your consideration even went to the length of asking me to address you. Let me also thank you for the kindness of the greetings which I have received since coming to New York and say how much I appreciate the opportunity of meeting so many of the leading citizens of your great country.

I have been asked to prepare a paper on "Some Canadian Reconstruction Problems." I understand this address ought to be within the limits of half an hour.

The reconstruction problems of every country are diverse and many. To attempt to deal with them generally within the compass of a brief paper would be entirely impossible unless the treatment given were indeed superficial. Viewed from many aspects, the problems of reconstruction are moral rather than material. In so far as material resources are concerned, Canada has no need for concern. Over and above all present agricultural, mining, lumbering, and fishing activities the untouched natural resources of the country remain in volume and indeed in greater volume than they have up to the present been utilized. While it is true that Canada's debt today stands approximately at a total of two billions of dollars with heavy resultant interest charges, while it is true that the claims of the returned soldier, costs of pensions and disability claims are heavy, and will all in the

nature of things continue for many years to come, it is also true that the country and the people as a whole are infinitely better off than they ever were before.

It took the war to discover for us just what could be done and to realize to some extent, perhaps only to a small extent, the possibilities and greatness of the country.

To illustrate, in the year 1913 our export of food-stuffs and fodders amounted to \$194,930,254 and at the close of the last fiscal year to \$467,625,311. Our manufactured exports in 1913 amounted to \$43,692,708 and at the end of the last fiscal year to \$549,284,268.

The progress of Canada both agriculturally and industrially has been marvellous. But the great underlying principle of reconstruction as it appeals to us generally is rather that reconstruction which will make for a better and improved state of society as such, a reconstruction which, while preserving the right of initiative and proper incentive for effort, will at the same time to the fullest extent possible afford equality of opportunity for everybody.

There is, however, a material question, which in the conduct of our public business of the future I venture to think you, firstly as presidents of life insurance companies and secondly as American citizens, are interested in. In the first instance, as life insurance presidents I would confidently claim that you have a real interest in Canada and a constantly increasing interest. I note that in 1898 your insurance companies had in force in Canada \$105,708,154; in 1908 the amount of business in force was increased to \$193,087,126; but the extent of that business of later years has been much more rapidly increased, as your business in force in Canada in 1918 amounted to the large sum of \$619,261,713. Out of a total insurance in

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RECONSTRUCTION

THE man of wisdom owns a vacant lot in an Eastern city. He estimates the **COST** of erecting thereon a house, in every way the fac-simile **OF** one he had erected three years ago. He discovers that **BUILDING** cost have gone up 100% and therefore the replacement value of his present house **HAS DOUBLED.** Being a wiseman, he immediately increases the amount of his insurance.

A Continental policy will save you from shouldering the 100% increase in construction costs, in the event of your house burning down.

Continental Insurance Company

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