

SPEECH.

Mr. President, Hon. Gentlemen and Gentlemen :

I desire to express my sense of the honor you have done me in inviting me to be present at this magnificent demonstration ; and in asking me to address so distinguished and representative a gathering upon the subject of the relations between the United States and Canada, present and prospective, commercial and political ; and this I am expected to do from a Canadian standpoint.

The phraseology used by your President in communicating to me the subject upon which I was expected to speak, implied a reference to what you understand on this side of the line as Annexation or Political Union ; and I ask your indulgence while I touch briefly upon this point, first of all, assured that you will not misapprehend me if I speak with all candour and plainness.

To thoughtful Canadians the word

ANNEXATION

has an ominous and unattractive ring, conveying to them an impression of a confession of failure in the mission committed to them by their forefathers as to the future destiny of their country—an impression that they are adopting voluntarily in despair, the only course open to them, if they are to escape irreparable disaster, or an impression of coercion and force at which their whole nature revolts, and which they are bound to resist.

I think I correctly describe the prevailing sentiments of Canadians generally when I say the word Annexation is extremely distasteful to them. You would probably despise them were it otherwise. The tie that binds them to the Motherland is a silver thread that can be broken practically at will ; but their affection for the land of their forefathers is a feeling which is, and always will be, predominant in their breasts. British Canadians cling to the glories and traditions of the race. They hope to be able to preserve all the characteristics of England's prosperous polity. They have neither sympathy with, nor encouragement for, the enemies of the British Empire.