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FOREWORD

A brief criticism of the following address in one of the Winnipeg papers was to the effect that I had said either too much or too little. The point is admitted. No doubt, whatever is said in such matters, is too much for some and too little for others. The object sought was less to state positively what shall be done, or ought to be done, as to the matters under discussion, than to state certain propositions, particularly with a view to having them discussed in the great public forum of the press.

To me, Winnipeg has always been more than the site of an important commercial community. It is the strategic point from which a great Canadian national movement could best be conducted. It is the link so to speak between our east and west. The Winnipeg press dominates the new west. It in consequence carries a great responsibility. I lived on our western plains for many years. I had three years in public life as a Member of the House of Commons and during that period especially I frequently urged our new settlers from abroad to take an interest in public affairs, my view being that so long as they would only do their own thinking, I was not particularly concerned about their politics. The reply occasionally received was, if we read the Winnipeg papers supporting both political parties, it leads us to one conclusion, namely, that Canadian public men are a bad lot. That charge applies practically to all of our papers, aggressively supporting one or other of our political parties.

The main foundation of the bi-party system today is the theory that there is no good in the opposite party. Now, starting out with such a false hypothesis, how is it possible to get the best service from men? Much of the energy of each side is wasted in proving that the other party is a menace to the country's best interests. Members of Parliament and legislatures are seated behind their leaders—the two parties are placed face to face—the whole situation is indicative of fight. They first have a wordy war over the speech from the Throne, extending usually over several weeks. The reply to the speech may have served a useful purpose at one time, but to-day it finds the two parties more antagonistic at the end of the debate than when it was started. Meanwhile certain of the press are carrying the refrain to the four corners of the country. I am not suggesting that an Opposition should not freely criticize the Government of the day, but the business has become so professionalized that the time has gone by when members of Parliament step aside, and temporarily or otherwise forsake their party. Again there is absolutely no