

The Teaching of Patriotism in the Public Schools

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:—

As a comparatively new and certainly not very active member of a Patriotic Society I feel some diffidence in addressing this body, representative as it is of the various Historical and National Societies, but I trust that the short paper in which I shall deal with this subject from the teachers' standpoint may contain something of interest, some suggestion which may bear fruit in the various localities here represented. Your President was kind enough to comment favorably upon a paper written by me for the Hamilton Teachers' Association and to request me to prepare something along the same lines for this meeting. That paper was the result of a discussion caused by recent events which agitated our country from end to end.

We had during our recent Parliament the soul-stirring patriotic speeches of our prominent men of all parties and creeds, speeches which have called forth words of approval from the press and people from one end of the country to the other, and have elicited enthusiastic comments from the press of the old land we all hold so dear. We must view with regret the fact that other nations have adopted an unfriendly attitude to our beloved Mother-land, but this attitude has been useful in showing the world that Britons whether at home or in the colonies are at one in feeling; and on this continent the detractors of Canada have been taught that the heart of Canada still throbs responsive to the great heart of Britain and come what may we are still resolved to continue part and parcel of the greatest empire the world has ever seen. We thank God that the cloud that seemed so dark a short time ago has been dissipated. We must indeed be gratified to find that the great intelligent people of the United States are not in favor of the fratricidal war and that the clamor of opposition to Britain is only that of demagogues and irresponsible persons. As an American friend put it "There isn't to be any war between us. We, the *people* of the United States, will not allow it." To the teachers is intrusted the instruction of the future citizens of Canada and they shall indeed not have done their full duty if they do not instil into the minds of the children lessons which will enable them intelligently to perform those duties of citizenship which they must soon assume. They must be instructed in the history of Canada and Britain, and in the duties of citizenship. They should be able to tell of the greatness of our country and empire, should know something of our great men, should understand our system of government and should be taught to revere the flags of Britain and Canada.

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