

CANADA

(Speech of John Boyd, in proposing the toast of "Canada" at the annual banquet of the St. Patrick's Society, held in the Windsor Hotel, Montreal, March 17th, 1920.)

Mr. Chairman and Fellow-Canadians:—

When I look around this magnificent room, when I witness this imposing gathering and see assembled here so many who are renowned for their wit, their wisdom and their eloquence, I am almost overwhelmed by the thought of the task which has been assigned to me, the more so after the very eloquent addresses, which we have just had the great pleasure of hearing. As my good friend, Mr. Frank Curran, who has worked so hard for the success of this gathering knows, when it was first suggested that I should address you this evening, I hesitated; but I felt that the invitation was one that could not well be declined, because the high honor of speaking under the auspices of the St. Patrick's Society is one that anybody should appreciate, especially when asked to propose the toast of "Canada". Whilst listening to the eloquent address of Mgr. Donnelly in proposing the toast of "Ireland" and to the masterly address of Prof. Pope in responding to that toast, it seemed to me that my hesitation was well justified, as it is now all the more difficult to do justice to the toast of "Canada". But I take courage, my fears vanish, the task instead of being a burden becomes a pleasure, when I see the smiling, kindly countenance of my good friend, the Chairman, your distinguished President, who has been altogether too kind in his remarks regarding myself, for which, however, I thank him, and when I gaze into the beaming, cordial Irish countenances of the many kind friends around me; for then I know that any short-comings of mine will be overlooked through the kindness of your warm Irish hearts, and I further take comfort from the thought that any imperfections on my part will be amply compensated for by the address of the distinguished Irish Canadian who will respond (applause).