

The lawyers of the three countries think for the most part alike. At no period has political divergence prevented this fact from being strikingly apparent. Where the letter of their law is different the spirit is yet the same, and it has been so always. As I speak of the historical tradition of our great calling, and of what appears likely to be its record in days to come, it seems to me that we who are here gathered may well proclaim, in the words of the Spartans, "We are what you were; we shall be what you are."

It is this identity of spirit, largely due to a past which the lawyers of the group have inherited jointly, that not only forms a bond of union, but furnishes them with an influence that can hardly be reproduced in other nations. I take my stand on facts which are beyond controversy, and seek to look ahead. I ask you to consider with me whether we, who have in days gone by moulded their laws, are not called on to try in days that lie in front to mould opinion in yet another form, and so encourage the nations of this group to develop and recognize a reliable character in the obligations they assume towards each other. For it may be that there are relations possible within such a group of nations as is ours that are not possible for nations more isolated from each other and lacking in our identity of history and spirit. Canada and Great Britain on the one hand and the United States on the other, with their common language, their common interests, and their common ends, form something resembling a single society. If there be such a society it may develop within itself a foundation for international faith of a kind that is new in the history of the world. Without interfering with the freedom of action of these great countries, or the independence of their constitutions, it may be possible to establish a true unison between sovereign states. This unison will doubtless, if it ever comes into complete being, have its witnesses in treaties and written agreements. But such documents can never of themselves constitute it. Its substance, if it is to be realized, must be sought for deeper down in an intimate social life. I have never been without hope that the future development of the world may bring all the nations that compose it nearer together,