

If, on the contrary, some one had there said: "You are all mistaken; when the reign comes to an end, these colonies shall not be rebellious; they shall not have claimed their independence; they shall have grown into a nation, covering one half of this continent; they shall have become to all intents and purposes one independent nation under the flag of England, and that flag shall not be maintained by force, but shall be maintained by the affection and gratitude of the people."

If such a prophecy had been made, it would have been considered as the hallucination of a visionary dreamer—but, sir, to-day that dream is a reality, that prophecy has come true. To-day the rebellious colonies of 1837 are the nation of Canada—I use the word "nation" advisedly—to-day the rebellious colonies of 1837 are the nation of Canada, acknowledging the supremacy of the Crown of England, maintaining that supremacy, not by force of arms, but simply by their own affection, with only one garrison in Canada at this present moment, and that garrison manned by Canadian volunteers.

What has been the cause of that marvellous change? The cause is primarily the personality of Queen Victoria. Of course the visible and chief cause of all is the bold policy inaugurated many years ago of introducing parliamentary constitutional government, and allowing the colonies to govern themselves.

But, sir, it is manifest that self-government could never have been truly effective in Canada had it not been that there was a wise sovereign reigning in England, who had herself given the fullest measure of constitutional government to her own people. If the people of England had not been ruled by a wise Queen; if they had not themselves possessed parlia-

mentary government in the truest sense of the term; if the British Parliament had been as it had been under former kings in open contention with the sovereign, then it is quite manifest that Canada could not have enjoyed the development of constitutional government which she enjoys to-day. It is quite manifest that if the people of England had not possessed constitutional government in the fullest degree at home, they could not have given it to the colonies; and thus the action of the Queen in giving constitutional government to England has strengthened the throne, not only in England, but in the colonies as well.

There is another feature of the Queen's reign which is but little taken notice of to-day, but which, in my judgment, has an importance which we have not yet fully realized, and perhaps the term of which we have not yet seen. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, all the colonies of England in America, with the single exception of the French colony of Quebec, claimed their independence, and obtained it by the force of arms. The contest was a long and arduous one. It left in the breast of the new nation which was then born a feeling of—shall I say the word?—yes, a feeling of hatred, which continued from generation to generation, and which extended into our own time.

Happily we can say at this moment that this feeling of hatred has largely abated. I would not say that it has altogether disappeared. Perhaps we can still find traces of it here and there; but that feeling has so largely abated, that there is to-day between England and the United States of America an ever-growing friendship. What are the factors which have made this possible? Of all the factors which have made reconciliation possible, the personality of the Queen is doubtless the foremost. It is a matter of history

that from the day of her accession to the throne, the Queen exhibited, under all available circumstances, an abounding and lasting friendship toward that country which but for the fault of a vicious government would still have formed part of her dominions—a friendship which could not fail to touch the minds and hearts of a sensitive people. This was manifest in times of peace, but still more in time of war, and especially in the supreme hour of trial of the United States during the Civil War.

In the early months of the Civil War, as perhaps few now remember, an event took place which almost led to hostilities between Great Britain and the United States. An American man-of-war stopped a British merchant ship on the high seas, and forcibly abducted from it two envoys of the Confederate government on their way to Europe.

That act was a violation of the territory of England, because England has always held the decks of her ships to be part of her territory. It not only caused excitement in England, but it caused excitement of a different kind in the United States. The action of the commander of the war-vessel in making the abduction aroused a great deal of enthusiasm among the people of the United States, which was reflected even on the floor of Congress, and evoked many meetings and resolutions of commendation. Lord Palmerston was at that time the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and he was not the man to brook such an affront. He had a despatch prepared by the Foreign Minister, who, if I remember rightly, was at that time Lord Russell, peremptorily demanding the return of the prisoners and an apology.

The despatch which had been prepared was submitted to the Queen; and then was revealed the good sense and the kind heart of the wise and good woman at the head of the

British nation. She sent back the despatch, remarking that it was couched in too harsh terms, and that it ought to be modified to make possible the surrender of the prisoners without any surrender of dignity on the part of the United States. This wise counsel was followed; the despatch was modified accordingly; the prisoners were released, and the danger of war was averted. That act on the part of the Queen made a most favorable impression on the minds of the people of the United States.

But that was not all. Three years, or a little more afterward, at the close of the Civil War, when the union of the United States had been confirmed, when slavery had been abolished, when rebellion had been put down, the civilized world was shocked to hear of the foul assassination of the wise and good man who had carried his country through that ordeal. Then the good heart and sound judgment of the Queen were again manifested. She sent a letter to the widow of the martyred president—not as the Queen of Great Britain to the widow of the President of the United States; but she sent a letter of sympathy from a widow to a widow, herself being then in the first years of her own bereavement. That action on her part made a very deep impression upon the minds of the American people; it touched not only the heart of the widowed wife, but the heart of the widowed nation; it stirred the souls of strong men; it caused tears to course down the cheeks of veterans who had courted death during the previous four years on a thousand battlefields.

I do not say that it brought about reconciliation, but it made reconciliation possible. It was the first rift in the clouds; and to-day, in the time of England's mourning, the American people flock to their churches, pouring their blessings upon the memory of Britain's Queen. I do not hope,

I do not believe it possible, that the two countries which were severed in the eighteenth century, can ever be again united politically; but perhaps it is not too much to hope that the friendship thus inaugurated by the hand of the Queen may continue to grow until the two nations are united again, not by legal bonds, but by ties of affection as strong, perhaps, as if sanctioned by all the majesty of the laws of the two countries; and if such an event were ever to take place, the credit of it would be due to the wise and noble woman who thus would have proved herself to be one of the greatest of statesmen simply by following the instincts of her heart.

Sir, in a life in which there is so much to be admired, perhaps the one thing most to be admired is that naturalness, that simplicity in the character of the Queen which showed itself in such actions as I have just described. From the first day of her reign to the last, she conquered and kept the affections of her people, simply because under all circumstances, and on all occasions, whether important or trivial, she did the one thing that ought to be done, and did it in the way most natural and simple.

Thus, on the day of her accession to the throne, when she had to hold her first Council of State, when she had to meet veterans of the army and dignitaries of the church and the state, she performed all her duties in such a way as at once to win the hearts of all present. The Duke of Wellington expressed his gratification in the blunt language of an old soldier by remarking that if she had been his own daughter he could not have expected her to have done better. So it was on the first day, so it was every day, so it was on the last day of her reign.

She was a queen, she was also a wife and a mother. She had her full share of the joys and sorrows of life. She loved,

she suffered. Perhaps, though a queen, she had a larger share of the sorrows than of the joys of life, for, as Chateaubriand somewhere says, we have come to know how much there is of tears in the eyes of queens. Her married life was one of the noblest that could be conceived. It can be summed up in one word: it was happy. But death prematurely placed her cold hand upon her happiness by the removal of the noble companion of her life at an early age. From that moment she never was exactly the same. To the end of her life she mourned like Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be consoled. After the lapse of forty years time may have assuaged but it did not remove her grief; we can apply to her the beautiful language of the French poet:

“ Dans sa première larme elle noya son cœur.”<sup>1</sup>

She is now no more—no more? Nay, I boldly say she lives—lives in the hearts of her subjects; lives in the pages of history. And as the ages revolve, as her pure profile stands more marked against the horizon of time, the verdict of posterity will ratify the judgment of those who were her subjects. She ennobled mankind; she exalted royalty—the world is better for her life.

Sir, the Queen is no more, let us with one heart say, Long live the King!

I propose to the House that we should unite in a resolution to his Majesty the King, to convey to him the expression of our sorrow at the loss he has suffered—a loss which, we may say with every respect, is ours also.

I propose that we should unite in conveying to the King the expression of the loyalty of his Canadian subjects.

<sup>1</sup> “ In her first tear she drowned her heart.”

Only a few days ago his Majesty sent a message to his broad dominions across the sea, in which he said it would be his aim in life to follow in the footsteps of his great and noble mother. Sir, we did not want that assurance on the part of his Majesty to know that the wise policy and the wise conduct of the great Queen whom he has succeeded on the throne would be his guide. We have believed from the first that he who was a wise prince would be a wise king, that the policy which has made the British Empire so great under his predecessor would also be his policy, and that the reign of King Edward the Seventh would be simply a continuation of the reign of Queen Victoria.

On our part let us offer to his Majesty the King the expression of our loyalty—a loyalty which does not spring from any sycophancy or fetichism—but from grateful hearts, who duly appreciate the blessing of living under British institutions. Let us wish him godspeed, and let us hope that his reign may be as fruitful of good as was that of his wise predecessor.

#### THE BRITISH POLICY IN AFRICA

[Speech delivered in the Canadian Parliament, March 12, 1901, in reply to the pro-Boer speech of Henri Bourassa.]

I MUST confess, Mr. Speaker, that it is with a great deal of regret and with some surprise that I have seen my honorable friend persist in his determination to move the motion of which he gave notice some few days ago, and which he has now placed in your hands.

Well remembering the uncompromising hostility which he showed to our policy, nearly two years ago, of sending contingents to South Africa, well knowing from a long acquaint-

ance and a long friendship the logical mind of my honorable friend, remembering also that he had on more than one occasion announced himself as entirely opposed to what he called "imperialism," remembering also that he had somewhat ostentatiously and most persistently refused assent to the policy we advocated of sending to South Africa for the prosecution of the war, I must say I was little prepared for the present attitude of my honorable friend. I would have supposed that he would be a stalwart to the end, and that, having refused to send troops to South Africa, he would not ask us to send advice to England, but he has taken an attitude altogether different from that.

He would not allow us to offer troops; he now wants to send advice. He would not fight for the cause of England, but he is willing to sit at the council board in discussing the cause of England to-day. If this conduct is in keeping with his former well-known views it is a problem as to which I shall offer no opinion of my own, but which I shall leave for his own pondering.

As to the right on our part, asserted in this motion, of making representations to the Imperial authorities on all questions that may affect the British Empire in whole or in part, this is a right which is no longer in question. We asserted it now nearly thirty years ago, when, on the 20th of April, 1882, we passed a resolution in favor of Home Rule for Ireland. We asserted it again a few days ago, when we passed a resolution on the Coronation declaration.

The fact that we sent contingents to South Africa almost two years ago does not in any way affect our right in this respect. It is to-day what it was before. It has not been altered in any way. It is no larger and not smaller than it was. We have a perfect right to offer advice, and we claim

we have the privilege of making representations to the Imperial authorities. Therefore we can approach the question submitted on its merits and on its merits alone. The question which we have before us is not so much the speech of my honorable friend, which has no bearing on the motion which he has presented, but upon the motion itself. Shall we adopt this motion, or shall we not?

Before I approach this subject let me say that I care not to go into the long speech which my honorable friend has made to us. Eloquent, as all his speeches are, it yet has no relevancy to the question placed before the House, I care not to go into the question of the significance of the late election. I care not as to the attitude of any portion of the community, and certainly it is not fair nor right to judge any of the issues which have been involved in the last election simply by the comments of isolated newspapers. Why, my honorable friend himself has given us an idea of the little value which we must attach to the comments of interested newspapers on one side or the other as when he told us at the very outset of his speech that he has been misrepresented on both sides of the question—that on the very motion which he has now brought before us in which on one side he was represented as a demagogue and on the other as an imperialist. That being the case, he will permit me to say we can dismiss all the arguments he has brought forward to prove a thesis which he has not brought before the House.

The question before the House is: Should we adopt this motion? The conclusions of it are to be found in the last two paragraphs.

[Sir Wilfrid read these and continued:]

As to the first conclusion of this proposition, that there is no necessity for sending Canadian troops to South Africa, I

must say I altogether agree with him; not for the same reasons that have prompted him, but for the reason that the war is at an end. There may be still some guerilla warfare, there may be still some brigandage under the name of war, but the war is not longer at issue. Though he pretends to be very much in doubt as to the issue of the war, for my part, I am ready to leave the issue in the hands of the men who have it in hand now, and to say, with my honorable friend, that there is no necessity for sending Canadian troops to South Africa.

As to the other portion of the conclusion, that enlistment of recruits for the constabulary should not be allowed to take place in Canada, I ask him what reason can there be why the enlistment of men for this force should be put an end to in Canada? If there are men in Canada—I care not for what motive, whether high or low, whether dignified or undignified, whether because they desire to get a living, or from a spirit of adventure, or from the nobler impulse of fighting for their Sovereign—who wished to take service in the South African constabulary, on what principle should a Canadian government interfere and prevent their liberty being so exercised?

My honorable friend has spoken well and eloquently upon the cause of liberty, of which he has constituted himself the champion in this House, and almost alone. But I must ask him what kind of liberty is it which will not permit a British subject, if he so chooses, to offer his King to serve him, no matter what the capacity? I am a Liberal, as my honorable friend declares himself to be, but my idea of liberty does not agree with one that will not allow that freedom to every British subject in Canada.

But, sir, the gist of the motion is in the last paragraph but one, which reads in this way: