

Address at Commercial Club Luncheon

Halifax Hotel 1 pm. Thurs. July 29 1915

When your president invited me to address the Commercial Club, I at first thought of talking about the University with which I am connected, because I have always understood that you expected the shoemaker to stick to his last at your meetings. And I believe I could tell you a story of the running of an intricate ^{business} commercial machine that you would listen to. A university is one of the most highly specialized and economical factories that exists in the country. Dismantled in May, and all but its foreman lost, it opens in September with 4000 new hands, or old hands in new positions, and in 24 hours every department is in smooth running order, as if no dislocation had ever taken place.

You are business men, and I as a College man ^{am} ~~am~~ ^{not} considered a business man; but ^{a College President these days} I should like to speak to you ^{some time} of what the University has meant to the intellectual and business life of the city.

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I would hesitate to preach of your duty toward it, for the Halifax business men came forward to its support so energetically when called upon a few years ago, that it might sound forgetful and thankless on my part. The University adds much to the reputation of your city, and, as its beautiful new home is developed, it will be more and more your pride as years go by.

But the shoemaker cannot stick to his last these times, and our thoughts have but one centre from which they insistently radiate, and to which they return as to a focus. The war is all-absorbent, and you can't get away from it. I thought of saying something about the part of a University in the war; but it is of no use. What is our duty as citizens, and especially as Canadians? Gentlemen, we can't get past that thought, start off others as we will.

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What does it mean for us? What is our duty?
What are we doing? What ought we to be doing? What
does it mean if we fail in our duty?

In this hour of peril we hear appeals to our pride, to
our duty to the Motherland and to the Empire, even to our fears.
The Germans will get us; our accumulated wealth will go;
our modes of living will be changed; for a time our loved ones
may be brutally treated or ravaged or murdered. But the issue
is far greater than the loss of means, of comforts, of traditional
forms of Government, even of life. This is for the people of
Canada the ordeal by fire; it is the judgment day.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide
And the choice goes by, forever 'twixt that darkness and that light."

There are two points I am going to accentuate. We have
got into the way of talking of ourselves of late years as a Nation
(Am. Question). The idea seems to exist that a people can grow into

Dr Rob. Talbot

a nation. That propinquity and a common Government will in time cause an agglomeration of people to have a Common Soul. My reading of history is that no such thing has ever happened. No is Nationhood a gift; it is an acquisition from within through common suffering and sacrifice — and sacrifice is the keynote — Blood is the price. A people must be ^{fringed and} welded into a nation through the fierce heat of passion. Spiritual exaltation is the atmosphere in which with bitter pangs of labour the soul of a nation is born. An altar and a sacrifice must exist. The altar is the charter of our liberties made by the master-builders of the past since Magna Charta was signed. Our sacrifice must be our time, our energies, our thoughts, our comforts, our pleasures, our means, our lives. Each one must give his bit, whether it be part or all of these — whatever he has to give. Each must decide for himself; it is not for one of us to tell another what is his bit; but each has his bit, and it must be done if we are to win the goal.

(Aims of the Halifax Commercial Club members)

The other viewpoint I wish to have us keep before ourselves, is closely connected with the first; it is that our appeal ^{often} is too much to the present, and the immediate penalties and terrors of failure to do our part are kept too much to the front. We are told a submarine may come up Halifax Harbour and sink our ships; we are threatened with the thunder of German guns at our own gates, and the death of citizens and the destruction of our homes; we are frightened by the suggestion that we may have to fight again ^{on the plains of Abraham}. All this may be legitimate; ^{but this is legitimate; all this may be necessary;} ^{our appeal} but our Campaign should also be one of education, and should go much deeper and strike ^{also} a more fundamental chord. It is not only the unthinking that must ^{be asked to} go to the front; it is not only the untalented that must offer his muscle and brawn or his money. It is quite right to try to rouse us through ^{our fears and} ^{our points} pride and fear to the present losses we may suffer. But there is a higher and nobler appeal that we must make - our sacred duty to posterity, and our sacred responsibility to do for those who follow us what our progenitors did for us, not for themselves. The liberties we claim to prize so much were

not man by men fighting for themselves, but by men who
fought for a principle, by men who fought that others
might enjoy liberties they ^{themselves} had been deprived of. Hampden
could probably have paid without a pinch this paltry tax,
and lived a long life of ease and comfort. It was that we
might enjoy new liberties that he protested against tyranny,
with the consequent loss of his own personal liberty. It
is ~~the~~ ^{nations of men} people ~~who~~ have fought and died for a principle,
for an ideal, who have advanced in power and the respect of
their neighbors, and have professed in the arts of civilization
and freedom. In the career of peace and fatness Canada has
run the risk of forgetting the history which gave her the
conditions under which she is thriving. We were too apt
to go about saying "see the land which I have got; see what
I have done". They forget the idealism and sacrifice of the
intrepid pioneers who ^{truly} got the land and gave them
possession; they forget ^{that} the liberties they glory in so much

Sarcastic
to Scot

are the work of eight centuries of struggle from the Barons & King John to the Reformers of today. They forget they had no hand in the acquiring of them. And so they are apt to forget that the least they can do is to hand on their heritage undiminished; and that what they ought to do is to add a page of glory to the great volume of the deeds of their kind. It is this forgetfulness of what we owe to the Past that makes the cynic feel say "Why should we do anything for Posterity; what have they done for us?" ^{if we fail} they'll have done this for us, they'll have drunk the dregs of our undoing, to our eternal disgrace.

It's a sad ^{British} motto "what we have, will hold"; but it's a better "what we have, we'll give — to posterity."

When your President ...

You are business men ...

But the shoemaker cannot stick ...

... war all-absorbent ...

... part of a University, in the war ... No use

What is our duty ...

What does it mean for us? ...

In this hour of peril we hear appeals ...

... issue is far greater ...

... ordeal by fire & it is the judgment day.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light

There are two points I am going ...

... got into the way of talking ...

... grow into a nation. My reading ...

Nor is Nationhood a gift.

... suffering and sacrifice - Sacrifice - Blood

... fused and welded ... fierce heat of passion

... spiritual exaltation

An altar and a sacrifice ...

Each one must give his bit

The other viewpoint ...

... the present, and the immediate benefits ...

... a submarine ...

... legitimate ...

... campaign of education ... Fundamental change

... unthinking ... untaught ...

It is quite right ... But there is a higher ...

... second duty to posterity ...

The liberties we claim ...

Hampden ...

It is the nations ...

... peace and fatness ... forget history -

We were too apt to go about ...

... idealism and sacrifice ... intrepid ...

They forget that the liberties ...

... they had no hand ...

And so they are apt to forget ... least ...

... ought ...

It is this forgetfulness ... cynic fool ...

It's a good British Motto - "what we have, we'll hold," but it's a better, "what we have, we'll give - to posterity."

Scot

Dr
Fut

Amor
Rust.

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