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Canadianism Presidential Address

J. B. Brebner

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CANADIANISM

Presidential Address Delivered by J. B. BREBNER

Columbia University

Last September, on the outbreak of war, all the executive members of this Association were consulted as to what our policy should be. They were unanimously of the opinion that an organization which had been born out of the War of 1914 should, if at all possible, be kept alive during a new war in order to be of service during and after it. When we met in Council early last November, we offered our services to Government and set up committees to plan and direct the tasks that might be laid upon us. We also planned in outline a programme for this meeting which was calculated to draw out of the past, and particularly from Canada's experience of 1914-18, knowledge which would be useful in understanding our national strength and capacities.

Since November, the course of world affairs has been like the angry, urgent accumulation of towering storm clouds which is so familiar a feature of our Canadian summers. Tonight we are in the midst of an awe-inspiring storm which can only be described as a general crisis in world affairs, so general that it is impossible to think of a part of the world which will not be deeply affected by its outcome. Canada and Canadians have been directly involved for nine months, and no one knows how much longer the ordeal will last. At such a moment as this the present is so demanding and insistent that the past is likely to seem of little account. What is there which a historian can bring to bear on a present which seems unprecedented?

The historian can bring history to bear, a history which is not mere antiquarianism, but the living stuff, the marrow of a nation and its peoples. He cannot, if he is honest with himself and his hearers, inflate this history with rhetoric and appeals to emotion. That is the task of statesmen and generals. The historian must try to present the successes and the failures in the story which he records, so that the living may know and profit by what their predecessors have been able to do, and unable to do, with their land and its peoples. The greatest historian of antiquity, Thucydides of Athens, lived through and took part in the Peloponnesian War. Although his own state was defeated, he preserved an objectivity about the war which has made his history of it a marvel to all readers since. It is that objectivity towards which we must aspire today, even if we reason from the most purely practical considerations. Great and lasting national achievements cannot be built upon miscalculations about the materials which the past has brought to hand.

All recorded history partakes of the general pattern of the times in which it is written. No one here can usefully describe for you the design of this moment because it is twisted and torn by the exigencies of a war which is of crucial importance for the whole world. Yet everyone here can search in his heart and his memory for what there is in himself and in the history of his country which will help him to be true to himself and to his history in the mysterious days ahead. Do not ask the historians to tell you what is going to happen. Some of them have a rough idea of the

trends which have been prevailing in the world during the past generation, but only the most foolhardy among them will try to say that this trend is going to continue and that that one is not. It is impossible to anticipate with any high degree of accuracy what great synthesis, if any, will emerge from the present violent *mêlée* of events whose proportions are catastrophic.

You are entitled, it would seem, to make two demands upon Canadian historians. You can ask them to be honest and informative about the past and can bid them be judicial and accurate about the present. It is true that neither they nor you can know all that we want to know about the present until long after it has receded into the past, but it is equally true that they can write with this admission clearly in the foreground so that you may know that they are doing the most honest job they can in the circumstances. Their principal difficulty, and we must all help in surmounting it, is the danger of delicious surrender to wishful thinking.

This is my explanation, apology if you like, for proffering what is substantially the subject which I had planned to discuss before this war began and before this crisis in it developed. Like most Canadians of my generation, I have repeatedly asked myself the question "What is Canadian?" In fact, I have probably asked it oftener than most because circumstances have determined my residence in Europe and the United States for twenty of the past twenty-five years, except for many sojourns here while working at Canadian history. Now, Europeans and Americans, while usually very kindly disposed towards Canadians, are naturally either apathetic or condescending about Canada and its peoples. The Canadian abroad, therefore, is being continually provoked into wondering what Canadianism amounts to. It seems to me that if we could find out even a little about that tonight, we might make our ways into an unpredictable future with some substantial, even essential, nourishment stowed away in our knapsacks.

Almost every Canadian must at some time or other have tried to work out for himself what was positive and what was essential in being a Canadian. If my own experience in this search at all reflects that of others, it is a difficult process, and it is probably best to begin it by making two very reasonable admissions which are implicit in Canada's position on the rim of the world of great powers and in the physical nature of Canada herself. These are, that only to a limited degree does Canada stand on her own feet, and that only occasionally does Canada attain the degree of internal unity upon which a self-confident sense of all-embracing nationality can be built. If these circumstances are frankly given the weight they deserve, it becomes possible to isolate some traits which Canada can claim as her own.

Take the first admission that Canada draws upon many elements outside her own boundaries to make up a large part of her own national life. This has been a matter of deep concern, although of great usefulness, to Canadians, ever since they began to have aspirations to be Canadians. When Lord Durham dismissed the French Canadians as a people with no culture because they had no history, Garneau set to work successfully to refute the slight by demonstrating that they had both, drawing heavily on the French tradition to aid him. When the United States denounced the Reciprocity Treaty in 1865 with the confident expectation that the economic weakness of the British North American provinces would make them fall

into the American Union like ripe plums, those provinces, goaded on and powerfully supported by Great Britain, defiantly formed a federation reaching from Atlantic to Pacific. During the grim quarter-century of Canada's adversity, before the turn of the economic tide about 1895, while Goldwin Smith, a disgruntled Oxford don who had settled in Canada, called Canadians blind because they could not see that their future lay with the United States, Canadians like G. T. Denison worked feverishly to strengthen the ties with Great Britain in order to remain Canadian by becoming more British.

So it has gone throughout our history. French Canadians have jealously conserved the spirit of the French Counter-Reformation in order not to become British, Anglo-Canadian, or American. English-speaking Canadians have sometimes espoused American ways and American policies in order to be distinguished from, or independent of, the British, or, more often, have exaggerated the quality for which the *Oxford English Dictionary* can provide only the term "Britoness," in order not to be mistaken for Americans. The New Canadians cling to the languages, literatures, even customs and folk-dances of their homelands, in order to provide the colour which will keep them from being lost in what they feel is the prevailing drabness of North American life. All in all, Canadians have leaned heavily on others for the strength to go on, at the same time that their deep-seated ambition has been to stand out clear and distinct.

Small wonder that sustained isolationism in Canada has been so difficult as to be impossible. The point need not be laboured. It has been much discussed during recent years, and those who are especially interested may find it thoughtfully and comprehensively laid forth by H. F. Angus in his introduction to that extraordinary collection of Canadian opinions about the United States which he edited under the title of *Canada and Her Great Neighbor*.¹ The matter was more briefly stated, in its political aspects, by a member of this Association at Canton, N.Y., last June. There Mr Lower said: "In international affairs Canada is not a man but a woman. 'Whither thou goest,' she says to her 'father,' John Bull, 'I will go.' Like other women, she will pay. She is not even an American woman, for she is not spoiled; she holds her tongue and prepares to do her duty as it is pointed out to her. Her menfolk make her decisions for her—at present it is her father who does, but that other male, her neighbor, Uncle Sam, is increasingly important. It is not clear whether he is an elder brother, long ago estranged, or a fiancé."²

So much for the first admission, which can be summed up in the statement that Canada is, on the whole, a secondary nation. There is no great use in deploring it, or in deceiving ourselves that by taking thought we can add any large number of cubits to our material stature. Indeed, when we think of what appears to be the characteristic fate of secondary nations in the world today, we can be thankful for the comparative good fortune that has been ours. In addition, there is no need to conclude that because Canada is politically and economically a secondary nation, she must resign herself to cultural backwardness or imitativeness. One has

¹Toronto, 1938. Note the supporting evidence in part III.

²A. B. Corey, et al. (eds.), *Conference on Canadian-American Affairs, 1939* (Boston, 1939), 111.

only to think of what the Germanies gave to the world before they became a great power. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries they took the best the world had to offer and blended it with native genius to make it better.

The Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations which has just tendered its report to Parliament would be evidence enough in itself of the second, and more important, handicap to aspirations towards something that could be called Canadianism. We are all acutely aware that in times of peace there are at least five prickly, recriminatory sections of Canada, able to get along together only because of the laxities of federalism. War unites them, but in doing so it generates new strains which, when peace comes, rend them apart again. How, for instance, if this war goes on for a long time, are British Columbia, the Prairie Provinces, and the Maritimes going to feel when it is over about the inevitable accentuation of an already unhealthy concentration of Canada's capital equipment and capital resources in Ontario and Quebec?

It is true that during the past twenty years this increasing concentration has been bringing Quebec and Ontario nearer to a common outlook than ever before in their history, but powerful as have been, and are, the economic forces which compel the two former antagonists to see eye to eye in more and more matters, almost in spite of themselves, yet a spark of intense feeling might explode in the neighbouring provincial cellars the gun powder casks of old emotions and send flying the joint edifice of mere economic interest which has been built overhead.

On the whole, however, the most substantial Canadian nationalism in times of peace has been economic nationalism. Once the United States and Canada had come to be reasonably sure that they were not going to form a merger, both got to work with railroads and tariffs and industries, as lusty competitors. Recently Mr Whitelaw made the suggestion³ that "the benevolence of Great Britain on the one side and of the United States on the other may be regarded as the two greatest obstacles to the growth of Canadian national unity," but while this is no doubt true politically it is not so economically. We shall not soon forget Mr Bennett's blunt methods ten years ago in trade dealings with Great Britain or Mr King's adroit prior insertion of Canada's claims at the time of the recent Anglo-American trade treaty. When Canadians have been facing outwards towards economic competitors, they have shown remarkable skill in achieving a national policy.

The difficulty, as we all recognize, is what happens within. "We have a habit," Mr Innis says, "of continually worrying about the problems of other countries in order to keep from worrying about our own."⁴ Probably most countries which are clamped tightly into economic and political relationships with others more powerful than themselves have that habit. They are like householders and the owners of their mortgages. But they and we do also worry about domestic problems. It seems worth while to recall, for instance, that the recent world depression set the best minds in Canada to work on nearly every aspect of the disunity which we deplore.

The present war has temporarily eclipsed the problem, at the same

³C. Read (ed.), *The Constitution Reconsidered* (New York, 1938), 308.

⁴Corey et al. (eds.), *Conference on Canadian-American Affairs, 1939*, 133.

time as in its course it may very easily intensify it for the future, but before it began, and before the Royal Commission had been appointed, Canadian scholars and statesmen had diagnosed the disease in much the same terms as it has been diagnosed in Australia and the United States. The malady is that some parts of the country have profited distinctly more than others by the national policies which their preponderance of voting strength has enabled them to dictate. There are a number of patent medicine remedies which have been airily recommended for the victims of this perilous condition, many of which can be summed up in the thoughtless question, "Well, why don't they move?" Picture for yourselves what would happen to the Canadian Dominion if a large proportion of the inhabitants of the Maritimes, the Prairies, and British Columbia decided to move in on their more prosperous brethren of southern Ontario and western Quebec.

This economic basis of disunity is, of course, not the whole story. To it must be added the difficulties of reconciling, not merely the different cultural traditions of Anglo-Canadians and French Canadians, but also the sharp regional differences within both those great groups, and the many kinds of incompatibility among Canadians engendered by the continental European stock who form twenty per cent of the population. Yet a roughly equitable distribution over the various parts of Canada of the available wealth, opportunity, and national revenue, is the most powerful agency that could be devised to make Canadians of all sorts feel that they were stock-holders in a national corporation. They would acquire such a sense of beneficial co-operation that they could better take the rough with the smooth. Moreover, the knowledge that the products of local resources, skills, and effort, were being pooled and thereafter divided with a sincere attempt at fairness, irrespective of regional advantages and disadvantages, would do an immense amount to transform local peculiarities from being divisions in Canadian nationality to becoming contributions to its total variety and colour.

Conceivably then, something could be done to diminish the internal disunity of Canada, and thus to render less effective an admitted obstacle to the existence of a distinct, general Canadianism. Moreover, every gain of this sort would increase Canada's capacity to stand on her own feet instead of leaning on others. It seems unlikely that Canada will ever become a leading power, but she can certainly become a greater one than she is at present, and, if and as she grows in strength, she can become less self-conscious about the traits which she has borrowed from other countries and more self-confident about those which are properly her own.

What traits has Canada of her own? It would be foolish to claim any virtues or other characteristics which were unique in her people, for practically every human accomplishment from poetry to head-hunting is shared by many peoples, and what distinguishes one people from another is the proportions in which various human traits are blended. It would be incredible that Canadians could have lived for over three centuries in a powerfully selective environment without having established a blend which was recognizably their own. We ought, if Canadians have made the least beginnings of becoming indigenous, to be able to say that they are like this or like that.

Yet it is something of a puzzle to find a method which can be used,

like the prism in a spectrograph, to break up the light which is reflected from our national countenance into a neatly divided rainbow of its constituent colours. One device would be to collect and interpret our folklore and those legends in our history which go on being believed, in spite of scientific historians, because they fill some need in Canadians' faith in Canada.

Why, for instance, do Canadians persist in nonsensical ideas about Cabot or Cartier having achieved anything substantial towards the founding of Canada, while at the same time they do very little to embroider the career of Champlain who did? Again, why are we half afraid to be critical when we think of Madeleine de Verchères, Adam Dollard, James Wolfe, or Laura Secord, but quite prepared to probe thoroughly into the careers of Sir Isaac Brock or Sir Arthur Currie? We persist in believing that the early Jesuits were successful missionaries to the Indians, yet we neglect to give anything like appropriate space in our historical thinking to the later much more extensive and successful missionary work of Catholic and Protestant alike. We like to think that Howe really did jump out of a window of the Astor House when he was almost caught recruiting in New York for British armies in the Crimea. The Americans have pretty well stolen our gigantic French-Canadian lumberjack, Paul Bunyan, as the epic hero of the destruction of the forests, but we share with them the conviction that the red-coated Mountie "always gets his man." If Sir John Macdonald did not say that an Ontario political audience would sooner have him drunk than Edward Blake sober, we feel that he ought to have. And how many of us have any other impression of Sir Charles Saunders than that he spent all his time chewing wheat in order to gauge its gluten content?

It would be a fascinating project to put together a mosaic portrait of the Canadian from the fables and legends and stereotypes which reveal what Canadians want to believe about themselves, but it would be the subject for a long book instead of a short paper. A much swifter device would be to determine what ten persons were thought by Canadians to be the greatest Canadians of the past. It is a question which every Canadian would find it interesting and profitable to put to himself. I was once asked to suggest about twenty-five Canadian names for inclusion in a great encyclopedia and I found myself struggling with a list of almost one hundred and fifty which I succeeded only in dividing by three before surrendering the final selection to the editor. When one tries to get the number down to ten, two things happen. One is forced to choose figures which typify in a high degree the estimable qualities of an army of others, and by the selection of qualities judged estimable one gives oneself away.

In spite of the risk of psycho-analysing myself for you, I should like to suggest a list of ten great Canadians, in the hope that it will give us some hint of the Canadian traits which are admirable and at the same time characteristic.

Samuel de Champlain would begin the list, not so much because he founded Acadia and Canada, but because he embraced in himself alone the courage, technical skill, geographical insight, and curiosity, which were possessed in lesser degree by such distinguished later explorers of Canada as Groseilliers, La Salle, Vérendrye, Hearne, Mackenzie, and Thompson.

Jeanne Mance would come next, because she not only personified the missionary fervour of the French Counter-Reformation which is so substantial a part of French-Canadian culture today, but she was at one and the same time the frontier woman and the first member of the army of Canadian nurses, those women who elevated a craft into a profession in Canada and also in the United States. The third figure of the French régime would be Jean Talon, who found New France on the very brink of extinction by the Iroquois. In seven years of astounding activity he fortified it with new immigrants from France, and then so successfully taught his less than seven thousand French Canadians how to sustain themselves in North America that there are five or six million of their stock on the continent today.

Dr John McLoughlin may seem an odd choice for the great Canadian pioneer of far western settlement, for his Oregon became American and he became American too. Yet he added to the virtues of western pioneers like Lord Selkirk, Sir George Simpson, or Lord Strathcona, a strain of high nobility which, during the bitter campaigns to attach Oregon to the United States, disarmed many of those whose basic interest it was to defame him, so much so that those who persisted in traducing him condemned themselves by that act. We might balance against him the American immigrant, Sir William Van Horne, who seems a natural personification of Canadian railway-builders from Sandford Fleming to Mackenzie and Mann. His pre-eminence among them can be attributed to his mastery of unprecedented obstacles in northern Ontario and the Rocky Mountains which, more than any other single factor, transformed the Dominion of Canada from a blue-print into a solid edifice. For a third conqueror of what was deemed worse than useless wilderness, let us nominate the Montrealer, Sir William Edmond Logan, who, having made one reputation as a geologist in England, returned to Canada in 1843 to direct the new Geological Survey and guide it through the gruelling first thirty years of its work. It was his spirit and example which sent A. P. Low, the Tyrrells, and less-known later members of the Survey off on those lonely canoe journeys through empty lands which prepared the way for the Laurentian mining empire of today.

It is a reasonable tradition, particularly when applied to the history of a political creation like Canada, that a high proportion of a nation's great men are likely to be politicians, indeed their greatness wins for them the name of statesmen. Our four last places, then, might properly be filled by outstanding political leaders. Robert Baldwin commends himself as the earliest claimant, largely because his father and he and their circle, over a period of years, really thought out the way to achieve within the Empire what Durham called "the necessary consequences of representative institutions." In the work of obtaining responsible cabinet government for colonies, possibly the greatest of Canadian achievements and contributions to general political science, Joseph Howe must also have a place because of his magnificent combination of common sense and capacity for eloquent, if occasionally earthy, expression of it. If Canada ever had a figure much like Daniel Webster, it was Joseph Howe. Macdonald was our Lincoln. Having had more to do than any other individual with making the Dominion, he magnified our debt to him because he was also pre-eminent in

holding it together, by high magic, low politics, and sheer will, through a quarter of a century of the most discouraging adversity. His successor, Laurier, acknowledged Lincoln as his hero, as was natural in the Prime Minister who really welded English and French Canadians together for the first time, but it seems reasonable to suggest that history will praise him most highly because of the brilliant formula of 1877,⁵ by which he cut the Gordian knot of religion and politics which had been tightening around his people. By boldly espousing and preaching the most ideal form of British liberalism, he succeeded in separating political liberalism from the philosophical liberalism which the Vatican had just condemned. This inspiration emancipated French Canadians politically at a crucial moment in the history of Canada as a whole.

It seems hardly likely that any other person here would nominate the same ten Canadians. There is no soldier on the list, and, for a peace-loving country, Canada has produced some great soldiers. There is no lumberman, no pioneer of agriculture like the producers of Red Fife and Marquis wheat, or Mackintosh apples. Not even Sir Adam Beck is there to stand for the men who reduced Canada's dependence on foreign coal by developing hydro-electric power. Leaders of medicine like Osler and Banting are missing, and there is not a literary, pictorial, or plastic artist, a musician, an actor, or a philosopher in the group, although the names of several will come to mind. All one can say in defence is: "Try to choose the ten greatest for yourself." At the moment, the question is whether these ten can be made to yield some idea of what might be called Canadian.

The writers of the seventeenth century used to practise an essay form which they called a "character," by which they meant, not so much a critical biography, as a piece which was concerned with portraying a man's pattern of personality and embroidering this with his essential and unique quirks and humours. Some day when Canada is more assured and united, some member of this Association may venture to write a comprehensive "character" for her. At present all that one can do is to record, in this case partly from observing a group of great Canadians, a few of the characteristics which time has already revealed. They seem to fall into three groups: first and quite the largest, what one might call frontier qualities; second, what one might call political virtues; and third, a number of kinds of conservatism or caninness.

Mr Lower has recently reminded us that "Canada must . . . always be a country with a frontier—it must always look out on an unconquered stretch of Mother Nature."⁶ He thinks that that might be for better or for worse, but sixty years ago sober Edward Blake had no such uncertainty. "I believe," he said, "hard work, rigid economy, prudent management and gradual progress and accumulation is the fate of this country as a whole and of its population individually. I regard it as no unhappy fate."⁷ The facts of the matter seem to be that the gloomy eighties had squeezed

⁵O. D. Skelton, *Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier* (2 vols., New York, 1922), I, 146-53.

⁶"Geographical Determinants in Canadian History," in R. Flenley (ed.), *Essays in Canadian History* (Toronto, 1939), 232-3.

⁷*Canada, House of Commons Debates*, 1880, 1462, quoted by F. H. Underhill in R. Flenley (ed.), *Essays in Canadian History*, 141.

Blake's hopes of Canada pretty dry. He himself left the country, as millions of others did between 1870 and 1900. Yet the rewards for frontiersman's enterprise were in Canada then, and they have been wrested from the land since, in greater quantities than he ever imagined would be possible. None the less, Canada has been a far tougher country to develop than the United States and has demanded proportionately larger investments of labour and capital, without attaining anything like equal economic strength. Even during the greatest booms in Canadian history, there has always been a precariousness about her prosperity and a vulnerability to external change. It has been this circumstance, along with the dictates of northern continental geography, which has kept alive the frontier virtues, and the respect for them, even in days when it is often hard to see the difference between the inhabitants of Bay Street and Wall Street.

To turn to our second group of qualities, the acknowledgement by American observers of what we might call Canadian political virtues has always been the source of great satisfaction here. Canadian political institutions are not free from corruption and defects, and in a number of ways Canada is normally less democratic, politically than the United Kingdom, and socially than the United States. Yet granting all this and more, Canada deserves commendation on three political counts. She invented the method by which Great Britain could transform colonies into associated autonomous communities. She has given her executive a federal character and has at the same time kept it fairly continuously responsible to a representative Parliament. By avoiding the election of judges, she has kept her courts cleaner than the courts of the United States and she has somehow, perhaps by the same device, succeeded also in inculcating a more consistent respect for the law.

Our last group of essential Canadian qualities has to be drawn from the general history of the Canadian peoples rather than from heroines and heroes, for it really amounts to conservatism—a canny, deliberative approach to questions of political, social, or cultural change. As Rupert Brooke once said, "Canada is a live country, live, but not, like the States, kicking." This caution has the effect of a time lag, which can be beneficial when it saves Canadians from some impulsive enthusiasm or fad long enough to have its emptiness exposed in Great Britain or the United States. On the other hand, it often means that Canada gets around to some social reform long after other countries have tested it and found it good. Penologists, for instance, have claimed that Canada's prison system is about where Great Britain's was two generations ago. Or to take a more general matter, the women of Canada have every right to complain because their position in society as a whole has lagged behind what has been conceded to their sex in the British Isles and the United States. There is still a strong Canadian prejudice against women in the professions, re-inforced by an almost universal belief that no woman should keep up her work after marriage.

When thoughtful Canadians add up all the elements in past and present Canadianism, they are apt to complain of the total in about the same terms, whether they are pleading for a more notable Canadian literature, art, or political nationalism. "Our real trouble," said a recent critic of Canadian drama, "is that we have not come alive as a people. . . . There is little

passion in Canadian life. Suspicion and jealousy of the United States and admiration for England are not passions."⁸

This complaint seems open to criticism. Actually, the trouble is not so much the lack of passion, as the fact that there is no single continuous objective for the various passions that exist. To take only the two largest instances (and there are a number of others), both French Canadians and Anglo Canadians are thoroughly capable of passionate loyalties and enthusiasms which are particular to themselves, and on occasion they have manifested them towards the same objects, as for instance, for the war during 1914 and 1915, for the Royal Visit of 1939, or for the present war. Unfortunately, however, they do not on ordinary occasions dare to do this, even though both groups know that the road to a richer Canadianism lies in devotion to an all-embracing Canadian nationality. Each section is afraid, as it were, to give up the dainties of loose federal association for the plain bread and butter of unity. The great enigma of Canadian life is the problem of how to establish a national focus which will be so compelling that the energies which have gone too exclusively into local particularisms will converge naturally and easily upon it, thereby giving Canadian life much that it has lacked.

Perhaps if we really believed in our cherished political methods, we might get along at least part of the way to a solution. The point might be illustrated from the national creeds which Dr. H. M. Tory once used to differentiate English, American, and Canadian characters. The English creed, he said, was: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen"; the American: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and by gosh it's got to stop"; and the Canadian: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and, ladies and gentlemen, if we are going to make any changes we will appoint a Royal Commission to tell us how it is to be done."

Well, Canada appointed a Royal Commission, it has made an elaborate and scholarly investigation, and, in essence, its basic recommendations might have been drawn from the circumstances which we have considered here tonight. They can be boiled down to the fact that Canada needs to recognize frankly that some parts of the Dominion are more prosperous than others and that it is imperative to organize efficiently an internal distribution of the national revenues which will permit the maintenance of an approximately equal standard of living across the country. This, as was suggested earlier, is the economic foundation upon which the superstructure of common Canadian nationality can most easily and satisfactorily be built, indeed it is perhaps the only one. To it, with time and energy, other elements of common nationhood might be added, until every kind of Canadian could feel reasonably at home in any part of the Dominion. And, during the years of this truly national effort, Canadians might freely borrow from Great Britain, France, the United States, Rome, or any other fruitful source, adjuncts of political, economic, and cultural strength for the Dominion, with the feeling that they were elaborating a pattern of congenial national characteristics which they would be increasingly proud to call Canadianism.

This Canadianism, this sum total of all that Canadians have and are, is what Canada possesses as an instrument to cope with the inexplicable

⁸A. L. Phelps, in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, IX, Oct., 1939, 86-7.

fate that lies ahead. We know that our world will be greatly changed, no matter what the outcome of the war. Yet Canadianism is no mean instrument with which to face these changes, for it is made up of over three centuries of successful struggle with a recalcitrant environment, of over a century's original and successful political adaptation and inventiveness, and of a kind of conservatism which history has shown can be converted by adversity into stubborn, indomitable will. Presumably the one aberration to be guarded against at all cost is any concession to the spirit of "every man for himself." If Canadians remain loyal to the spirit of "every Canadian for every Canadian," then Canada can become more of a unit, and can bring to the external associations which unquestionably must be great factors in her future something like a single voice and will. And the closer the harmony between Canada's acts and utterances and the essence of the past which we call Canadianism, the more valuable will they be, on the one hand in building Canada, and on the other in contributing to the making of a world which will be somewhat nearer to our hearts' desire.