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The war and its influences  
upon Canada.

Talbot Papineau.



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THE WAR  
AND ITS INFLUENCES  
UPON CANADA

Address delivered by the late  
Major TALBOT PAPINEAU, M.C.,  
to the Canadian Corps School at  
Pernes in February, 1916

*See - 1916*



Read to the Members of the Canadian Club of  
Montreal, on Monday, January 26th, 1920, by  
MR. E. LANGUEDOC, K.C.

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The war and its influences upon Canada /



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*Major Geo. McDonald (President) prefaced the reading of the address as follows:—*

My earliest recollection of Talbot Papineau goes back to an affair that took place in the lane between Peel and Metcalfe Streets in which he acted as one of the principals. It was an affair of honour. He acted with courage and with chivalry and earned the admiration and respect of all his schoolfellows. That admiration and respect continued in whatever walk of life his subsequent career found him and it increased as he developed.

In the first week of August, 1914, he was attending the Convention of the Association of Canadian Clubs in Vancouver as representative of the Montreal Canadian Club. On that occasion he made an address on "The Nationalist Idea in Quebec." The address made a profound impression on the convention and was the subject of some very complimentary references at the next gathering of the Association which took place in Ottawa in November, 1919. In his remarks he stated in regard to the war "that Canada did not have one word to say in the diplomatic negotiations leading up to it or in the declaration of war." He did not think this right but, notwithstanding his views, he was one of the first to volunteer. He enlisted from Vancouver and was given a commission in the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, with which regiment he went overseas. As he had no previous military training many people thought that it would be some time before he could be of much use as an officer. It did not take much experience of the war to make us realize that besides a knowledge of barrack square drill many other qualifications were essential in a good officer. These he possessed in an unusual degree. His personal courage, his untiring energy and his resourcefulness soon proved his sterling worth. He served with his battalion in the trenches during the first hard winter and he was in the forefront of all the engagements in which it was concerned during that period. He was the first Canadian to win the Military Cross. He also won the love and respect of his men and of his brother officers. He always looked after the comfort of his men before thinking of his own and he never ordered his men to do anything or go anywhere that he did not personally lead

them. He was a pioneer in the aggressive form of trench warfare for which the Canadians afterwards became famous.

When the Canadian Corps was formed early in 1916 he was chosen on account of his experience and intimate knowledge of trench tactics as one of the officers of the General Staff of Corps Headquarters. In this capacity he proved of particular value to the new troops then arriving in France. It was at this time that he wrote the letter to Henri Bourassa which was so widely circulated and which received the distinction of a long editorial in the *Times*. In February, 1917, before the Canadian Corps School in France he delivered the address which you are to hear to-day. At the time he with many others confidently believed that in the spring the Allies would make a big push which would end the war. The Russian breakdown changed the complexion of the war for the time. He then decided to return to regimental duty. He thought that he had served long enough in the comparatively greater security of a staff appointment and that he ought to again take a turn with his battalion in the line. He went back to his old Company which he commanded during the following summer and autumn. In October he was killed leading his company in the victorious attack upon Passchendaele.

Canada may well be proud of having produced such a man.

## THE WAR AND ITS INFLUENCES UPON CANADA

That I should have been asked to address you upon this subject I consider to be an indication of the high morale pertaining to this School and incidentally to the whole Canadian Army. Where morale is low, there is a tendency to live and think for the moment alone — to say “why worry about the future when the future is so uncertain” — to look upon the life of a soldier as a desperate gamble and to suspend all his mental activities until the final cast of the die. But where high hopes and courage and confidence exist there will continue to be speculation and preparation for the future, and particularly there will be a keen intellectual interest in the social and political changes which may be expected to occur after the war.

Two years ago I should have been surprised to find this interest in the future but to-day, when we know that the Central Powers are desperately eager for peace, when we feel that the Allies' strength has so greatly increased, and their accumulation of trained men and of munitions has become so enormous, we are confident that a great military victory must come in the spring and I, for one, am of the opinion that not later than the end of the summer the enemy will again ask for peace, not upon *his* terms, but upon *our* terms.

It is, therefore, well worth our while to pause amid the labours of the present in order to consider what may be the developments of the future, not merely for the pleasure of our imaginations but because in taking thought and in spreading the influence of that thought, we may considerably assist in the actual moulding of that future.

There will be two main divisions to the effects of the war upon Canada — the first will be the influence upon her external relationships — the second the influence upon her internal conditions.

The first of these will naturally present the greatest difficulties for the prophetic vision. The possible complications are immense and the final effects will depend to a much greater extent upon the actual result of the war.

Nevertheless, I venture to think that certain broad lines of development may even now be laid down with some degree of assurance. Let us imagine that as a result of a series of brilliant Allied victories, peace has been declared. Perhaps many of you recall the excitement and the patriotic demonstrations which followed Ladysmith Day in Canada and the end of the South African War. But even you will have trouble in picturing the great wave of frantic, almost insane joy that will sweep over the whole country when the end of this war has come. The suppressed emotions of years of sacrifice and anxiety will break out with volcanic force. Think of the cheers, the processions, the songs, the bonfires, the speeches, the happy hearts. Never in the whole history of the world will such universal joy have been known. There will also be the undercurrent of sad and reverential memory for those whose supreme sacrifice has made such joy possible. From out of this welter of intense emotion two main streams of feeling respecting the constitutional position of Canada will develop.

The first will be a realization that in the trial and pain and bloody sacrifice of war the national life of Canada has taken birth. Such has been the history of every great nation and Canada will now have a history — a history to raise the heads and thrill the hearts of countless generations to come — a history that will form the firm foundation for a national construction.

In the presence of our victorious armies the nation will feel an uplift of pride and confidence. Canada, for instance, will no longer fear an absorption by America, she will no longer doubt her ability to trade with foreign countries. She will demand a recognition of her national status. She will wish to continue to play a part in the politics of the world.

Briefly, there will result a strong, self-reliant spirit of Canadian Nationality.

Side by side with this feeling there will run a powerful current of what for a better term we can call "Imperial Patriotism"— or a realisation of the advantages to be had from a form of union and solidarity with the other nations of the old British Empire, with whom, during the war, we have fought side by side in such complete harmony and to such victorious issue.

We must realize the immense value to ourselves and to the world at large in the perpetuation and strengthening for certain purposes of the spirit of Imperial union. If, as so many believe, lasting peace may only come to the world by reason of the strong alliance between certain nations of an equal civilization who will act together in the control



and discipline of lower civilizations, then surely in the present union of the nations of the Empire we have the nucleus for that broader, international union. It must become a question entirely of the form or constitution of the union — not of its value or necessity.

Yet, unless a formula is found which will satisfy both the intense national feeling in Canada as well as the Imperial feeling, there is bound to result a most deplorable and perhaps a serious friction. On the one hand there will be a party in Canada which will emphasize her national aspirations — which will fan a fear of Imperialism by urging that it means militarism — and will even advocate a military and politic organization entirely independent of Great Britain. This party will have great strength, for it will no doubt secure as adherents the majority of those not of British stock.

On the other hand there is a danger that the Imperialists will attempt to strangle or stamp out the natural legitimate national feeling in Canada and will advocate a too rigid and oppressive Imperial organization.

I believe there is no necessary antagonism between these two extremes provided both are willing to make some concessions. To secure union, the Imperial party should frankly concede in name what they have long done in fact — that is the sovereign character of Canadian Nationality, and the character of the union or alliance which would then follow should be the expression of a free and independent country having certain common aims and standards, the realization of which requires a formal organization of union. In other words, union should continue to exist but union of such a nature as is possible between independent and sovereign states.

I cannot in this lecture attempt to detail the new constitution, but whatever the divergence of view as to form may be, everyone, I think, will be agreed that conference should at once be held between all portions of the Empire for the discussion of a new type of union.

Thus, the first great result of the war for Canada will be a change in the constitutional relationship between Canada and Great Britain.

Incidental to this change, but of almost equal importance, will be an altered relationship between Canada and the Allied or neutral countries.

The broadened outlook of our people, the increased spirit of pride and confidence, the knowledge of foreign countries which our traveller soldiers will spread upon their return, the probable increase of immigration and foreign trade, the feeling of union with France and Italy

and Russia will develop a keen national interest in foreign politics. There will be a tendency to increase the power of our foreign representatives so that our commercial and political intercourse may take place through more direct and less complicated channels. It will be conceded, I think, that Canada should have her own accredited representatives in France, Italy, Russia and the United States, and should begin the development of a consular and even diplomatic service of her own. The participation of Canada in the war will have given her a position in the eyes of foreign countries which she should maintain.

It is certain that there will be a great movement westwards of European people. The intensive cultivation of Europe and the density of her population are only possible because of vast accumulated capital. The war will have destroyed much of this accumulated capital and great numbers of people unable to find the capital necessary for European cultivation and life will turn to the natural wealth and unclaimed capital of Canada. This process will be assisted by the destruction of family and business ties and the adventuresomeness and restlessness resulting from long military service.

I believe that after the war Canada will enter upon a great period of expansion and of material prosperity. But we will be untrue to ourselves if we do not jealously guard our precious heritage. We should carefully control the character of our immigration and we should adopt such laws of conservation as will, while encouraging legitimate development, prevent wanton exploitation of natural wealth. For men like yourselves who have been prepared to pay the extreme price for national honour and existence, there will be, I think, an intense seriousness in the consideration of these two problems, and we will not lightly fall into the detestable crime of placing material considerations and the desire for rapid wealth before a sane and wholesome, though perhaps less accelerated, national development.

In short, Canada having taken her place among the nations of the world must necessarily acquire a foreign policy — and in many respects her situation and her racial composition will facilitate the establishment of valuable associations. In a very special degree her attitude to and relations with the United States may have a profound influence upon human progress in general and British civilization in particular. I think Canada has won in the eyes of America a most honourable position. We shall hear less from cock-sure but well meaning Americans of Canada's inevitable absorption into the republican states.

On the contrary, America will find herself deeply influenced by Canadian public opinion and especially by Canadian foreign policies. Canada will be looked upon as a valuable friend and a necessary ally.

There is every reason to hope that if the international situation is properly handled, Canada and the United States may shortly after the end of the war enter into a mutually helpful arrangement to ensure the policing of the North American and, possibly, the South American continents. A new doctrine of the nature but without the ambiguities of the Monroe Doctrine may most honourably be declared by both countries. Certainly we should seek to establish by treaty the settlement of all disputes by arbitration and we may find Canada and America playing leading roles in the establishment of that international police force which so many now believe to be the best guarantee against future wars.

Towards the East our policies should walk hand in hand for our problems are identical.

Also, the States gorged with the exiled wealth of war-torn Europe will be for a long time to come the only country in which we may seek capital for our development. To pay for our borrowings we must be prepared to export to them even larger quantities of our natural produce. Every facility should therefore be given to the free flow of trade which will be the very life blood of our country. Fear of political absorption having been for ever destroyed, we may no longer fear to profit by advantageous trade agreements.

With France, I think there will be a very close and affectionate relationship. The courage and nobility with which the French have fought in this war has won the undying admiration of all Canadian soldiers. The industry of her old men and women, the restrained and uncomplaining lives of her citizens, have deeply impressed us all. We have lost many misconceptions of French character and many ignorant and absurd prejudices. We have also come into touch, though not yet sufficiently, with French culture and French social ideas. France will not seem so foreign a country. I think all Canadians after the war will endorse any policy of commercial or diplomatic character which will place us side by side with France in the search for human welfare, and the assuring of the world's peace.

The presence in Canada, too, of a great and powerful French-speaking colony must in time assist in drawing the two countries together.

These in very brief form are the principal influences which I expect the war will have upon the external relationships of Canada.

(2) As to the influence upon internal conditions the various manifestations are too numerous to be all mentioned here. I shall speak of what may be the more striking and important.

What, for instance, will be the relationship between the returned Canadian army and the other Canadian citizens? What will be the future military history of Canada?

I think we may take it for granted that whether any soldiers' party exists or not — and of that possibility I will speak in a moment — the public opinion of the country will be greatly influenced by the opinions of the soldier citizens. Their opinions, I venture to think, will be directed to secure two principal things. First, that every step will be taken to prevent another war. The army, contrary to generally conceived ideas, will be strongly opposed to war for war's sake. We will have a wholesome horror and detestation of this inhuman method of achieving human progress.

But in the second place the army will have realized the advantages to a people of military training as an insurance against aggression, as a means of improving the physique of a nation, and as an admirable disciplinary measure. They will look upon the duty of defending their civilization, not as one which can be voluntarily assumed by certain classes of the community but as the necessary and compulsory duty of every citizen.

I believe, therefore, that some form of compulsory military training will be adopted in Canada after the war.

This will at least necessitate the maintenance of a considerable staff of regular officers as well as a number of regiments to act as a standing army or as the skeleton frame for a larger organization.

We must abandon the ridiculous limitations that our soldiers can only be used for home defence and we must sub-ordinate everything to a wider strategy which may require, as is the case in this war, that our troops be employed independently of any territorial limits and wherever it may appear advisable to send them.

Since we are to be united to the armies of England and Australia and South Africa, our military organization should be developed upon similar lines so as to allow a ready cooperation. There should be an exchange of officers and even of regiments, and the training and progress of our separate arms should be closely coordinated.

For men like yourselves, who have had great practical experience in this war and who have been also skilfully trained as instructors, there will be valuable careers. And in this connection I have heard it wisely said that there will be golden opportunities in America after the war for trained officers and instructors from Canada. There is a growing realization in the United States that they cannot be an international hermit. They must play a part in the world politics and to do so with honour and authority they must be a military and naval power.

They will be eager to profit by the experiences of this war, and what better sources of instruction can they turn to than to the veterans of Canada?

This important problem will arise. What must be the extent of Canada's preparation for future wars or her contribution to the united forces? This must depend too much upon the character of her new alliances to be even approximately determined here. A safe principle, I think, will be contribution in proportion to population. Another principle which may be readily conceded is this — that the assessment and expenditure of the monies required must have no other sanction than that of the Canadian Government itself.

I should deeply deplore the establishment of any constitutional power outside of Canada, whether representative or not, which, independent of the Canadian Government, could levy direct taxation upon the Canadian people.

Centralization of authority may present very tempting and apparent advantages, but the dangers and disadvantages far outweigh them. When Canada by virtue of her international or, if you will, her inter-imperial agreements, has undertaken the contribution of a certain military force, she should be left entirely free to make the necessary financial arrangements for the equipment and maintenance of that force, precisely as she is doing to-day.

A similar principle should determine the establishment of a Canadian navy, for naturally it will not be sufficient for Canada merely to have an army—she must also have a navy.

As to where the ships of that navy are to be built that is a financial and fiscal matter — not a matter of principle. As to where these ships shall be stationed, that also is not a matter of principle but a matter of naval strategy. But it *is* a matter of principle that the ownership, the maintenance and operation of those ships shall be purely Canadian.

I now come to what should be one of the most important influences of this war and that is the influence upon the public life and the politics of Canada.

Under the lighthearted and seemingly thoughtless manner of our soldiers there is an intense seriousness and a great earnestness of purpose. We who have survived and who will live to enjoy the blessings of peace and the joy of life can never divest ourselves of the deep reverent feeling of indebtedness to those who have fallen. We cannot, in days to come, take unthinking pleasures because of the remembrance that those who have been less fortunate, but perhaps more deserving, are not there to share them. Our lives must be dedicated to the purpose for which those others died, and that purpose was the establishment of a great, free and happy nation.

In matters of policy, in questions of state, we shall among ourselves disagree. I do not think it will be possible to maintain a soldiers' party for the simply reason that every soldier is also a citizen and as soon as he has returned to his citizen status he will be bound to have once more his independent views. It is true that upon certain questions, such as military training, compulsory service and the like, we may find the great body of soldier citizens throwing their united and their determining influence into the scale. To a great extent the soldiers will have been freed from the shackles of purely party politics. Where a community has but a single purpose, such as the winning of a great war, a continuance of party politics is an utter abomination. We are likely to return to Canada sick to death of political intrigue and determined to exercise independent judgments. One thing which we will demand above all others is decency and honesty in our public men. That is a thing upon which we will all agree and which, if we are true to ourselves and true to the sacred trust which our dead have left in our hands, we can most assuredly control.

After the war there will be no more powerful political element in the country than the returned soldiers. They can wield if they will, an invincible power and, I believe, always a power for good. They will be influential because of their service to the country, because they represent the more intelligent and energetic and enterprising of the citizens, and because the influence of their experiences here will have served to develop them in every sense.

In proportion to the sacrifices and contributions which individually and collectively the citizens of Canada have made to this war, so, I believe, will they derive power and influence at home.

The one danger which may arise is this — that we may place our military interests before our citizen interests and may demand too much. We are fighting not for ourselves, not for any particular body of citizens, but for the nation

as a whole. We must avoid the temptation to seize so much for ourselves that that the nation and our fellow citizens will suffer or will be antagonized. Sacrifice is the keynote of our service here. It should continue to be our guiding principle in our citizen life.

The idea which is, perhaps, more prevalent than we imagine, that the soldier is to return to Canada to be forever pampered and petted, to be given free land and easy living, to be pensioned and supported, and to have jobs found for him, will be as disastrous to ourselves as it will be to the country as a whole. We have lived and fought like men out here. Are we going to become mollicoddles when we return to Canada? We have done no more than what we feel is the proper duty of every citizen. Why should we expect a greater reward? For those who have been disabled, who cannot carry on the good fight — it is certainly for us to see that they want for nothing. So also for those who were dependent upon our heroic dead. We shall accept with readiness and joy the honour of their support.

One thing which we must jealously guard against is the false hero — the old soldier who, having never been in France, or never in the firing line, returns with great stories of his prowess and adventures and so secures advantages over more deserving, but more modest men. Already there are many cases of this which I know of personally. Men who have been tragic failures here but whose record was not known elsewhere and who have returned to Canada or England and have been showered with the gifts of an honourable and sentimental enthusiasm. Nothing is more disgusting to the real soldier. We must take steps to create some bureau of information where the war records of every soldier may be found.

There are many other influences upon Canada which it would be interesting to consider if we had the time — such as the effect upon the relationship of the different racial elements in Canada — the effect upon the social, domestic, and religious life of the country — the effect upon Canadian literature, art and music. All these phases are bound to be profoundly modified by the war.

But I have probably spoken already at too great length. You have agreed with some of my prophecies, with others you have disagreed.

In this, I think, however, you will agree that we are here making the foundation stone of Canadian greatness and that we will build with all our hearts and all our might.

Much as we long to return to our Canadian homes — eager as we are to begin the work of reconstruction after the war — I think we are all one and all determined to see

this unhappy business through to a finish and to so effectively defeat the enemy as to render impossible any recurrence of such a situation.

This is the spirit which animates all the Allies and, I think, it will not be long before the Hun is ready to cry not merely quits but *unconditional surrender*.

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*Closing remarks by the Chairman:*

In 1837 Louis Joseph Papineau earned the title of Patriot. I don't know anyone who is more worthy of that title than his great-grandson Talbot Papineau. He has given his life — he has given more to his country. In this address he has given us principles of Canadian citizenship which may well serve as our ideal, and in living up to that ideal we do honour not only to ourselves but to our noble dead.

On behalf of the club I wish to tender to Mr. Languedoc our thanks for his admirable rendering of this address.





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