

ADDRESS

BY

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Boards of Trade.

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ONTARIO ASSOCIATED BOARDS OF TRADE.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

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Gentlemen,

The President, Vice-Presidents, Officers and Executive of the Associated Boards of Trade of Ontario have endeavored during the past year to express their appreciation of the honor you conferred upon them, by co-operative and we hope public-spirited work, and here let us not forget the splendid pioneer work done in the past by our two first Presidents, Mr. W. J. Gage (whose recent philanthropic gift to suffering humanity is worthy of all praise), Dr. Reason, and their respective executives.

We, in this old British Province of Ontario now embracing 410,000 square miles, three times the size of Great Britain and Ireland, twice the size of France, and twice the size of Germany, have much upon which to congratulate ourselves and much by which to gauge our great responsibilities. We have shown great strength in meeting the emergency of the abnormal conditions existing and have determined upon a course of conservatism tempered with optimism. What are the prospects for the coming year on the threshold of which we stand? We do not say "stop, look and listen"! We rather say - "wait and see", but waiting, work. We may have gone to an extreme of speculative development, let us not veer to the other extreme. There is no room for either the pessimist or the drone in Ontario. We have held our own, we are weathering the economic storm. Business has been subjected to an unusually severe strain but we have a reservoir of resisting and producing power. We must spend wisely and be spent in public service and individual energy. Hoarding is not conservation, and remember as we read and hear the colloquial jargon of "red ruin", the quaint

but true aphorism, "our worst troubles are those which never happen."

With the satisfactory returns as to such common barometers of prosperity as Life Insurance, Automobiles, Marriages, Travelling, and Immigration (but slightly reduced) - with exports from Canada of \$135,000,000 of minerals and \$187,000,000 of agricultural products, during the last ten months alone (of which Ontario still sends by far the larger share of all the Provinces), - and with the spirit of co-operation abroad - with great public enterprises (such as the Welland Canal) requiring millions, finding fruition, there is surely no reason to doubt but that we will within a reasonably short time re-attain a high level of commercial, industrial and productive activity - at the same time realizing the inevitable slackening in volume and velocity of the tide which has flowed so strongly and so long.

The high cost of living will have to be met, not merely by increased output of agricultural products - for the farmer suffers also, and increased produce means increased cost. Economy in the standard of living will have to be practised and a little more dynamic energy expended by the individual, with perhaps longer hours of legitimate work. Labor and capital in competing centres will have to learn to act harmoniously together for their mutual co-operative good. Applied science will be a great and increasing factor both for farmer and for manufacturer. The technical, vocational and commercial training now being imparted will soon realize itself. All business methods will have to be modernized, and every effort must be made to secure the essentials of business success, viz., (1) A plentiful supply of capital. (2) Skilled and contented labor. (3) Skilled technical and business management and administration.

But capital is sensitive and there can be no capital without confidence. Let us remember that our great source of supply is still the little sea-girt isle - the homeland - whose people have built our railways and developed our most important works. See to it then that our financial records are clear, that Ontario's honor, and Ontario's products are standardized. Trade follows the flag, so does capital. Are we Canadians doing our share towards keeping that flag flying? Is our shield a little rusty? The "nation" so-called that will not use its own right arm, but relies on a right arm over seas to keep the great avenues of trade clear and to insure protection to its own exports on the high seas, has not the attributes of nationality. Security is an economic factor. Commerce is the golden girdle of the Globe. The Empire is commerce and the essence of successful commerce is confidence, - and to this add kinship, and we have the web and warp and woof of the Empire, - a living organism - and with it Peace.

The Ontario Associated Boards of Trade will actively unite with all other organizations on our own historic ground in celebrating the Centenary of Peace in 1915, not merely in reminiscent mood of the past, but to lay broad and deep foundation of continued future Peace which is of vital moment to men of trade and commerce and industry - the true Peacemakers.

King George himself has well and wisely said "The high ideal of universal peace and brotherhood may be far from realization but every act that promotes harmony among the nations points the way towards its attainment..... We live in an age of competition, the struggle between nations is one not of arms but of trade.

"Probably at no time in the history of our country has there been a greater demand upon the intellectual powers than

there is to-day. Keen competition and rivalry characterize the existing relations between communities and nations.

"The British Empire requires at the present time hard service from all its sons. It requires the hardest service from those to whom most has been given. You will, I am sure, in the course of your lives lose no opportunity of rendering service to your country and to the nation. These opportunities occur in times of peace as often as in times of war. By seizing them and turning them to the fullest account, you will be able to take your part in the work which my people have to do all over the world.

"The increased facilities for commerce and inter-communication will inevitably strengthen the grip of hands across the sea, will tend to increase the community of interest, that mutual trust, and that sense of kinship which are the sources that make the unity and strength of the Empire." Royal words and thought producing!

The Sailor King who after his world tour round his Dominions, uttered the stirring words, "Wake up England"! has broadened them out to "Wake up Empire"! and we as a constituent and loyal part feel the impulse given in "Wake up Ontario"! The Handbook of Ontario of 1913 published by the Department of Agriculture is worthy of the prestige of the Province, but there must be no releasing the grip, no cessation of activity. Ontario is coming into her own. A great administrator who has studied the conditions thus reads history and the immediate future. "The East has spent and been spent for the West; has given forth her energy, her young men and her substance, for the new regions that have been a-making all the century through. But she has learned as much as she has taught, or taken as much as she has given. The Westward march has stopped upon the final slopes of the Pacific; and now the plot thickens. Populations turn upon

their old paths, fill in the spaces they passed by neglected in their first journey in search of a land of promise; to settle to a life such as the East knows as well as the West, - nay much better. With the change, the pause, the settlement, our people draw into closer groups, stand face to face, to know each other and to be known; and the time has come for the East to learn in her turn, to broaden her understanding of political and economic conditions to the scale of a hemisphere. 'Tis thus we shall renew our youth and secure our age against decay."

In the Minister of Trade and Commerce of Canada we have one of whose active administration of his high office, not merely his Toronto constituency but all Canada (irrespective of politics which we know not), may be proud. His forceful eloquence, tireless energy, sane patriotism and practical common sense, have elevated his Department to its proper stature and status, and he has from the first regarded our Boards of Trade as his auxiliaries and allies - the eyes and ears of their respective districts. We are or should be the ganglia or nerve centres of progress - live wires in the constructive sense, and we as delegates at least will, I hope, return to our respective home centres full of missionary zeal, for only a small part of our effective work is done at our annual gathering. By concentration and unanimity of purpose we bring organized public opinion to bear quickly and effectively. Organizations of men are for crystallizing and capitalizing thought and action so that they may act as one compact whole with rapidity and decision. For whatever rings true and for the general good of all, we will always get an attentive and considerate hearing. So - along certain well defined lines - not going beyond our scope - we are trustees for our Province.

And why not broaden out - if good for the Province why not for Canada as a whole ? Let us have a Dominion Chamber of Commerce which would not be merely full of potential results for profitable and productive good but would also be one of the strongest, most conciliatory unifying bonds between the various parts of this much disintegrated Dominion with its great areas and varying conditions and languages. Where prejudice, jealousy and bias sometimes clog there is nothing like personal intercourse for establishing and maintaining reciprocal goodwill. Associations such as ours give us a better perspective and sense of proportion. Let us have also a clear objective-cohesion with expansion - feel inwards but look outwards. We are each a unit, but a unit in an orbit.

Of the many matters to receive consideration at this meeting, none so imperatively require attention as the proposed Workmen's Compensation Act, and without prejudging the result of the discussion thereon, it may well be asked is Ontario ripe for such drastic legislation ?

Does Ontario understand the new doctrine with regard to contributory negligence and the partial withdrawal of the remedy from the old and tried forum ?

Have the vast areas and climatic conditions and the still struggling position of many industries in Ontario been taken fully into consideration ?

Will not the operation of the Bill, if passed, in its present shape, still further add to the high cost of living by increasing the risk and therefore the cost of production of necessary articles ?

Would it not be better to at least delay the passage of the proposed Bill for another Session until its results may be thoroughly realized and some modifications in any event introduced ?

Is not the present too critical a time to try out such an experiment, always admitting of course that something equitable has been aimed at, and something equitable and mutually satisfying should be attained ?

The forty-two resolutions on the agenda leave little of matters of public moment untouched, but this Associated Board is also interested in :-

1. The great Peace movement already adverted to.
2. Deep waterways and harbors. Great ships require deep waters, and great countries - dowered with great rivers - require great ships.
3. Safety at sea, regarding which we have been represented on a Royal Commission, and safety of railways (which the railway companies have been so creditably endeavoring to attain), must, in view of the tragedies of 1913, be supplemented by the effort to insure safety on the Great Lakes - our great unsalted seas - and safety in our factories and mines.
4. The investment of Canadian money at home with such lessons as Mexico and other storm centres abroad teach us.
5. Imperial defence, remembering that

"A thousand years scarce serve to form a State
An hour may lay it in the dust."

The Imperial Council of Commerce, which links up and makes effective all the commercial institutions of the Empire, deems this of vital moment and such splendid organizations as the Royal Colonial Institute place it in the forefront, for the preservation of the world's Peace; and pax Britannica spells prosperity to us.

That we in Canada have not yet reached the model of the perfect machine with every part performing its function adequately, and all co-ordinating together, will be seen when we consider just for a moment "lest we forget" some matters

which seem to call for critical comment or at least thoughtful inquiry.

1. Our Iron and Steel imports amount to \$140,000,000 annually, yet we have plenty of Iron and should have plenty of steel.

2. Capital is centralizing in large financial centres, and the small municipalities are not benefited thereby.

3. There is little money available for legitimate house building purposes and credit is refused when asked for with that object, yet cities and towns are said to be congested, and Town Planning is creative and to the fore.

4. We are importing butter from New Zealand and also eggs and poultry, yet our population is less than 2 to the square mile, while that of the United States is 25 to the square mile and of Great Britain 471 to the square mile. Only 10% of the arable land of Ontario is under cultivation. We must populate Greater Ontario and intensify our agricultural work.

5. We are exporting productive cattle by the thousand and our milch cows have decreased by nearly 15,000, yet our pasture lands are ample; our food supply is sufficient and dairy prices are remunerative.

6. The great sheep industry, with its double crop of mutton and wool, is paralysed because our complicated laws and public opinion do not protect them from the useless and destructive cur.

7. Our fire losses and insurance rates are the highest in the world, yet the crime of arson meets with moderate punishment - (it should rank with murder) and liability is not always brought home to the negligent. Remedial legislation is now being introduced.

8. Our ocean freight rates (amounting almost to a combine) and cable rates are far too high for the quick interchange

of trade within the Empire, and the lack of a general Insolvent Act and the non-assimilation of our Commercial Laws, militate somewhat against our credit and development.

9. Our public domains in respect of fish and other products are too often exploited by foreign Trusts, and Ontario simply gets what they do not want.

10. Railway subsidies are still granted to capitalists and promoters, but the millions for Good Roads - the right of the people - the veins and arteries of the Province - are still in the Canadian Exchequer.

Who is responsible ? It is not for us to say, but there must be a remedy found and we must help in finding it.

The splendid grants for agriculture, the promised grants for technical and manual training, the public and private development of electric power, and the forward movement for conservation of resources and public health; and above all the spread of the spirit of "all for each and each for all" with an ever increasing realization of community of interests as never before, are however bright spots which shine through any scattered clouds across our provincial or civic sky.

More than one project suggested by resolution of our Associated Boards has in the past been crystallized into legislative enactment or departmental regulation. Our constructive activities for the past year may be summarized as follows; in addition of course to the general public spirit and good understanding which we have endeavored to engender throughout the Province.

1. We have interviewed members of the Dominion Government at Ottawa and presented to them resolutions passed at our last Annual Meeting.

2. We have interviewed the members of the Government of

Ontario, and have presented to them the resolutions passed at our last Annual Meeting. In both cases we were most favorably received.

3. Our representatives were appointed upon the Good Roads Association of Ontario.

4. By request of the London (England) Chamber of Commerce we reported on Ontario conditions with a view to developing trade between Britain and Canada.

5. We attended before members of the Ontario Government to urge the adoption of town planning and civic betterment.

6. We attended before members of the Ontario Cabinet to urge the appointment of a Fire Marshal and the passing of legislation for fire prevention and protection.

7. We obtained recognition and a representative upon the Imperial Council of Commerce.

8. We endeavored to infuse new energy into dormant Boards and urged the formation of new Boards in various municipalities, the result being that at least six were established and have affiliated with our Board.

9. We have delivered addresses to Agricultural Societies, Farmers' Institutes, Fruit Growers' Associations, Dairy Men and Stock Breeders' Conventions, endeavoring in every way to link up the city and the country - to "urbanize the country and ruralize the city". See the report of our Agricultural Committees.

10. We laid before the Board of Railway Commissioners representations as to average and reciprocal demurrage and inter-switching.

11. We took up the subject of deep waterways and harbors and Ontario Navigation generally.

12. We made representations regarding immigration, and distribution stations for immigrants.

13. We addressed business men of Buffalo and other cities

on our community of interest.

14. We put forward our views regarding the establishment of United Dominion and Provincial Government Offices in London, England, worthy of our resources, status and standing in the Empire.

15. We have encouraged by active participation on the General Committee at Ottawa the due celebration of the peace centenary between Great Britain and the United States.

16. We have sent seventy-five photographs of various parts of Ontario to the "Illustrated London News", "Canada", and other papers and periodicals in Great Britain.

17. We have made representations to the Minister of Militia and Defence as to the possibilities of Ontario for breeding horses, for cavalry and artillery remounts for the British Army.

18. We have encouraged Boards of Education to enlarge their scope by teaching English to adult foreigners.

19. We have memorialized the Government with a view to the utilization and preservation of the St. Lawrence River Power and Navigation.

20. We have affiliated with the International Chambers of Commerce which held their last meeting at Boston and will hold their next meeting in Paris, France, at which our Associated Boards will be represented.

The Province will gladly if permitted join the Toronto Board of Trade in welcoming and entertaining the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire in 1915, on the auspicious occasion of their visit here.

A new note has been struck by President Gundy's suggestion that the Province and Toronto, its Capital, should combine resources in solving some of the transportation problems that are pressing upon Toronto and other municipalities.

We would be wanting in our duty if we did not join a grieving Empire in lamenting the death of Canada's grand old man, Lord Strathcona, and of recording our gratitude for his "life well lived". He was not the only Captain of Industry who, in the past and now living, has been and is a benediction in discriminating philanthropy and public spirit, and the encourager of art, science and education. Commerce has its ideals. Trade its noble traditions. Let us maintain them.

The Associated Boards of Trade do not forget the great work in social service now being done by Woman, the Home Maker. The women of Ontario have, especially in the last few years, contributed much to making life in our Province better worth living and have added to its magnetic attractiveness as a residential centre, a Province of homes.

Finally, Gentlemen, I urge upon you that when we separate you will each encourage and develop the increased influence and importance of your own Boards of Trade or Chambers of Commerce in your own respective localities. We are all bridge builders and each does his own cementing work in his own niche. We all move in concentric circles of influence. We men of the Ontario Associated Boards of Trade should be, and are I hope, men of cheerful yesterdays and confident of to-morrows, workers for the welfare of the Province with which our lives are identified.

"We have iron and fire - and power - the hand can never go back on the dial of time".

W. N. Ponton,

President.