



# G. D. CONANT

1937 speech at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York City

## ABSTRACT

Transcriptions of three vinyl aluminum records of G.D. Conant speaking at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, possibly in 1937, on Armistice Day for the Canadian Club in New York City. Conant was attorney general in 1937. He is speaking on behalf of Mitchell Hepburn, the current premier of Ontario at the time.

## Archival Reference Number

A000.19

Photograph – G.D. Conant and Verna Conant, 1938.

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## G.D. Conant Biography

Gordon Daniel Conant was born in East Whitby Township, 11 January 1885, to parents Thomas Conant and Margaret Gifford. Throughout his life, he would spend the majority of it in politics. Conant trained as a lawyer at the University of Toronto. In 1913, he married Verna Conant (née Smith). Conant was reeve of Oshawa in 1915, and became mayor of Oshawa from 1916-1917. In 1937, he became attorney general in the Ontario government of Mitchell Hepburn. He would later inherit the premiership from Hepburn in October 1942. But Hepburn's feud with Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King was tearing apart Ontario Liberals and his choice of successor deepened resentment. Despite a productive legislative session, Conant could not heal the rift, and in April 1943 he resigned and was succeeded by Harry Nixon, who became leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, and thus Premier of Ontario. Conant died 2 January, 1953, at the age of 67.

Sources:

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/gordon-daniel-conant>

## Catalogue Reference Numbers

### **A000.19.18**

1D Conant side 1 and 2

### **A000.19.8**

3D Conant side 1 and 2

### **A000.19.17**

5D Conant side 1 and 2

## 1D Conant side 1

WEAF New York

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, in the flag day ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York, members of the Canadian club and their friends assemble at their annual Armistice day luncheon to pay tribute to those who rally for the colours when their country called and now are no more. And recognize the twentieth anniversary of the year of the United States' entrance into the world war. ?? fly the colours of the troops, President Newman? of the Canadian club is just welcomed a distinguished guest. The next voice you will hear will be that of chairman Victor Hoogan? (Koogan?) speaking for the Canadian club of New York.

When a man enters public life, he becomes a public servant. No longer is he always free to express his own initiative, and to do, and come and go as you and I. He has no choice but that and no release from responsibility. It's because he truly is a public servant that the honourable Mitchell Hepburn\* is not here with us today. I can assure you that if duty not calls, he would be here. In his place he has sent his second in command, his attorney general. The fact that he is attorney general of the great province of Ontario, and that he is Mr. Hepburn's choice to take his place, makes further introductions entirely unnecessary. It is my pleasure ladies and gentlemen to give you the honorable Gordon D. Conant, Mr. Conant (*applause*).

Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, may I first thank you for the kindly way in which you have received my introduction. And also your very worthy chairman for the all too generous remarks he has made returning myself. And that may I further thank the community of management for the entertainment committee of the Canadian club of New York for the splendid way in which they have received and entertained me and my good wife, who have accompanied me on this memorable trip to New York. Speaking on behalf of the Premier of the province of Ontario, the honorable Mitchell Hepburn, and representing the people of that province, the second largest in extent in Canada, and the largest in population, I bring to you cordial greetings and sincere good wishes from the constituents parts of the British Empire and from people, who by experience and sacrifice, are deeply conscious of all that the States signify. On such a memorable occasion as this, commemorating the anniversary of that day of all days, in the history of civilization, when men cease to slaughter, from carnage and from the strike of war in all its stages manifold phases, we are absorbed in retrospective and an appreciation of the present and in speculation as to the future.

\*11<sup>th</sup> premier of Ontario, 1934-1942

## 1D Conant side 2

Someone might express the beautiful sentiment God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December. Applied to the tragedy that terminated on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, surely it will be said that as God gave us memory so that we might remember those of our race who paid the supreme sacrifice in order that the ideas of justice, freedom, and democracy did not perish. And in so that remembering them we might direct our national and international affairs in such manner as to make impossible another world disaster like the Great War of 1914 to 18. The commemoration of Armistice Day arouses emotions threefold and significant, today. That solemn and grateful remembrance of the sacrifices paid by the men who gave their lives in the Great War. In honour of the victory achieved by the common idea of the justice, freedom, and democracy exemplified by the allied nations and particularly by the two great English speaking people, the United States and the British Empire. The re-edification of the respective national lives of the great English speaking peoples of the world to the ideas of peace and democracy, and of international law and order. The men who fought and died in the Great War did so for an ideal. It is for us, the living, to retain for ourselves and posterity all things for which they died. We bow our heads in style for their passing. We raise our faces to heaven in tribute of remembrance. In the words of the English poet Roger Kipling engraved on the war memorial in the city of Sault Ste. Marie in the province of Ontario, "from little towns, in a far land they came, to die of honour and a world aflame; by little towns, in a far land, they sleep, and leave to you to guard the things they died to keep."

The consciousness of the people of Canada have all to this day signified may be indicated by the fact that Canada's effort in the Great War, a decision in which we commemorate today, resulted in approximately 62,000 killed or died, one hundred and fifty thousand wounded, three thousand seven hundred taken prisoner and refuge, a total of two hundred and sixteen thousand casualties from an enlistment of six hundred and nineteen thousand men, out of a population which amounted at that time to less than ten million. Of those loses, the people of Canada have extended on the Great War directly and immediately during the war and since its conclusion to the end of 1936 the total of two million six hundred and two billion six hundred and seventy-nine seventy-five million dollars. On such an occasion as this and ??(audio scratchy)?? the sacrifice of any other nation, these figures surely ? indicate that Canada is deeply concerned in what goes in the world.

## Conant 3D side 1

And in what the future has in store, for the nations of the world and for civilization. And in that retrospect, and that anxiety, for the future we know we share the sentiment, hopes, and aspiration of the people of this great republic, our nearest and best nation. For we are good neighbours, in all respect, and in all things. The President of this nation has said that all people come from the United States into Canada, they're not treated as foreigners, but as neighbours. And Canadians coming to visit us in the United States, they are not received as foreigners but are welcomed as good neighbours who we love and respect. We gladly accept and adapt, this definition of the relationship between the people of Canada and the people of these United States of America. Your worthy secretary of State Mr. Cordell Hull has further amplified this statement when he said people of our two countries have common interest and common aspirations. Partially, morally, and materially. The progress of each depends more and more on the progress of the other. And so I repeat, without ostentation, that we of Canada and you of the United States are truly the good neighbours. Each concerns of the intellectual, material, and moral progress, and the general welfare of the other. Our people can show how two great nations to live together in peace and harmony, they have learned how two great nations can change together for their mutual benefit and have representative of the whole world, an example of how close understanding and a will to peace can result in the betterment of the people of every nation. The similarities differs from the savage existence in the imposition and acceptance by common accord, are ruined of law and order. The human being, unfettered by these precepts and principles, becomes or remains the savage brute, in told or restrained only by the law of might. In its mercy has no place, and where human rights are subservient to the brutal instincts of the barbarian. Through the centuries, and since the beginning of history, in the civilized states of the world, there has been substituted for the law of the jungle, to the control of human emotions and desires by laws and precepts, calculated to achieve an ordered society and to accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number. And as our borders with civilized nations in the world, maintain a fairly well-ordered society based upon law and governing human conduct and enforced by police and judicial systems of various kinds of quality. In this great nation have no doubt (audio cuts out), in the reaction of the people of the province of Ontario to a movement far more than economic and its aspirations and calculated to be subversive of law and order. Those reactions and revulsions of our people have recently resulted in the return of my ? to power.

## Conant 3D side 2

As Premier of the province of Ontario, and in my own election as a member of the legislative assembly, representing the constituency for the greatest effort of that movement with concentrate. Ever since followed my appointment as attorney general of the province, an office concerned chiefly with the maintenance of law and order. Recent events in your country, near the international boundary have indicated that you too act in kind with maintenance of your institutions and with a respect for law and constituted authority. Let us hope that unitedly we may maintain the sound principles and practises of government, laid by our forefathers. And the institutions they created, and all that remain in quality engage in the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

Generally speaking, and with a few minor qualifications, the civilized nations of the world do maintain peace and order in their domestic affairs. But in the realm of international affairs, in the relations between nations, conditions are not so encouraging or conducive to law and order. We are bewildered on the line by the actions and the current aspirations of some of the nations of the world. They seem to threaten the very foundation of civilization and the continuance of an ordered society. Of all things imminent to replace the orders which revoke with emergence from the last conflict. In the words of your imminent secretary of state Mr. Cordell Hull no community and no nation can continue to base its existence in part on order and in part on chaos, in part on law and in part on lawlessness. Sooner or later, one or the other must triumph. All English speaking nations have all the severance of peace and have long been the champions of true law and order. And just as every state must within its own borders, if law and order has to be preserved, set up machines to deal with those who broke the law. Though we of English speaking nations must endeavour, not always to the preservation of peace but in the setting up in machinery to deal with those nations which threaten or violate international quality and the love of international relations. In the words of your President who recently spoke in Chicago, if we are to have a world which we can breathe freely and ? without fear, the peace loving nations must make a considered effort to uphold laws and principles on which alone peace can rest secure. Those that cherish their freedom can recognize and respect each the rights of their neighbour to be free and live in peace but work together for the triumph of law and lawless principles in order that peace, justice, and confidence may prevail in the world. There are solidarity and interdependence about the modern world, though technically and morally which make it impossible for any nation completely (audio cuts) from economic and political upheaval in the rest of the world. I have been quoting the words of the President of United States.

And so we of the Province of Ontario, are considered a part of the Dominion of Canada, and an integral part of the British Empire, gladly, but sadly, we are with you in commemorating a day which we hope would mark the dawn of a better day to come. We know not what the future may have in store for us, either as individuals or as nations.

\*President of United States between 1942-43 was Franklin D. Roosevelt.



## Conant 5D side 1

We do know that civilization can only survive if international anarchy is to give place to law and order among the nations of the world. Despondent from the desire of the people of the British Empire, and I can see their emotions, to act as policeman in the drama of world affairs. I believe that you of this great nation care in the aversion to the assumption of any such role. But in order that we may survive, and that our children and our children's children, may continue to enjoy the blessing of liberty as we have known it for many generations in English speaking communities, it may be necessary for us to join hands. In a concerted effort to maintain peace and to suppress anarchism in international affairs. And those who would substitute the law and order to rule of might in the settlements of international travel. Today I hope for peace in the years to come. Our emotions are stirred in commemorating those who died, that peace might be maintained. Until I close, the slight variation of the immortal the most appropriate words of your immortal length.

"It is for up to the living to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought have thus far shown no so nobly advanced. It is for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us. That from these honored dead do we take increased devotion, for that cause for which they gave the last full measures of devotion. Then we highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, and that these nations under God shall have a new birth of freedom. And that governments of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth." \*

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you. (Applause).

Thank you Mr. Conant.

From the bottom of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, members of the Canadian Cabinet friends assemble at their annual Armistice Day luncheon to pay tribute to those who relished at the colours when their country called and now are no more. The twentieth anniversary of the year the United States entered into the world war. This is the National Broadcast Company.

\*Part of the Gettysburg Address, spoken by President Lincoln on November 19, 1863.

## Conant 5D side 2

(Same audio as 1D Conant side 1)

WEAF New York

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, in the flag day ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York, members of the Canadian club and their friends assemble at the annual Armistice luncheon to pay tribute to those who rallied to at the colours when their country called and now are no more. And recognize the twentieth anniversary of the year of the United States entrance into the world war. (audio warped). President Newman? of the Canadian club has just welcomed a distinguished guest. The next voice you will hear is that of Chairman Victor Hoogan?, speaking for the Canadian club of New York.