

tions of which are being emphasized as we recede from it, that event alone would suffice to immortalize the year 1897, the precious remembrance of which will be handed down to the remotest posterity by poets, historians and orators, as an unprecedented celebration in the history of mankind, when it was given us to witness a genuine outburst of loyalty and devotion on the part of the English people, and of the outlying portions of the Empire, which were so worthily represented at the foot of the Throne of Her Majesty, and in particular, the Dominion of Canada, represented by our most distinguished Prime Minister, the right hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Lady Laurier.

In after years, when scrutinizing the history of civilized countries, many a one will pause in wonderment before the apotheosis conferred by a nation on a woman we all admire, and let me add, Mr. Speaker, a woman we all love, and with the poet of old, the student of history will then cry out: Stop, traveller, you are travelling on sacred ground; Sta. viator.

I may perhaps, in my turn, be allowed to look back at past events, as far back as the outset of the present reign, which did not begin under very auspicious circumstances for our country. In 1837 a most gloomy period of our history, when the crown of Great Britain was being placed, perhaps with a trembling hand, on the head of a girl sixteen years old, this country, which has been called the finest jewel of the British Crown, threatened to be buried under the ruins of a domestic strife that had developed into a bloody revolution, and the great Papineau, who might be called the Canadian Daniel O'Connell, was then thundering out his fiery philippics, protesting against the abuses of the authorities, and arraigning the provincial government for their arbitrary and tyrannical course. The constitution of 1791 was then tottering under the repeated blows of its assailants, and amidst the bitter strife of the contending factions, the dawn of the era of 1841 could be foreshadowed, with the union of Upper and Lower Canada, which, in the mind of its author, was calculated to give the death blow to the French Canadian nationality; a consummation which was happily averted, through our being brought into daily contact with a people as much distinguished for their energy, their spirit of enterprise as for their love of progress: I mean the British people.

Through the radiancy or rather contagion of good example, a miracle has been wrought; and instead of our nationality being buried in the grave prepared for it, a new life, on the contrary, was infused into it. As years rolled by, many prejudices disappeared, and on the day when it was given us to see a French Canadian occupying the exalted station of adviser of the Crown and Prime Minister of the country,

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may, more, on the day when it was given us to see a scion of that people who, in 1837-38 had risen in arms against the Government of the day, intrusted with the mission of representing at the foot of the Throne of Her Majesty—and how nobly he fulfilled his mission, with what dignity and honour for himself we all know—a colony in which the British element predominates, and the French Canadian element is in a minority; on that day, Mr. Speaker, I say, British statesmen undoubtedly must have been satisfied that a colony where such tolerant views and harmony prevailed, where religious, political and civil liberty were so well understood and applied, without any of those terrible struggles, the offspring of religious bigotry, being engendered through the diversity of religious creeds; undoubtedly, I say, on that day, these statesmen must have come to the conclusion that such a colony was ripe for liberty and the moment had come for that people to take rank among the free states in the greatest Empire of the world, with the power of making their own treaties, and weighing enough in the balance to be able to exact and bring about the denunciation of treaties by which trade was being handicapped and the development of the natural resources of the country was being retarded and checked. 1837, 1867, 1897; these three epoch-making dates are pregnant with lessons not only for us, men of the present generation, but also for those who will come after us. Now, Sir, I ask, what position do we occupy to-day in the eyes of the world, on the very morrow of the Jubilee celebration, of the grand apotheosis conferred by a people gathered from the four corners of the globe, on that sublime woman, Queen Victoria, Empress of India? I am well aware that 1897 is the Jubilee year; but I am also reminded that it was marked by the discovery of the Klondike gold mines, an unlooked-for and most welcome discovery of untold wealth, and one well calculated to fill with hope the breasts of all Canadians who wish to see our country rich and prosperous. The gold fever is raging in every quarter of the globe, and is spreading among the most enlightened people of the old world. Powerful syndicates are being formed, at the head of which appear the leading men in financial, commercial and aristocratical circles of Great Britain, and those powerful syndicates are going to invest their capital in this country and thus assist the exploiting, on a large scale, of the fabulous wealth of the gold fields of our new Eldorado. As the Jasons of old, the gold-seekers, from the different countries of the world are about to rush to the conquest of a new golden fleece, the access to which is perhaps still more difficult in our days than it had proved in times gone by; but I am sure it will give better and still more remunerative returns. I would fain borrow the pen of the author of the Arabian