

We speak of Confederation as though the Dominion, as we know it, had come into existence in 1867. True enough, 1867 was the date of Confederation, but the Dominion was not then what it has since become. In 1867, there were only four provinces. It was 1870 before Manitoba became a province; it was 1871 before British Columbia was admitted into the Dominion; it was 1873 before Prince Edward Island entered Confederation; it was 1905 before Saskatchewan and Alberta were created as provinces. After all, the period of the history of this broad Dominion does not extend over many years.

During the early years the work that was carried on by government was largely in the nature of development, of settlement, the construction of railways and other necessary public works. Government was concerned largely with material things, but, during these last few years, new classes of social and human problems have come very much to the fore. The early period was one of expansion. Periods of expansion are usually comparatively easy for administrations. We have come now to what, in many ways, might be described as an era of contraction. Speaking in terms of the agencies of transportation and communication, our country is smaller than it was. People are in immediate contact and association with each other, and with other parts of the world, in a way they have never been at any previous time.