

Mr. O. A. Howland's Address

National Celebration of the Four Hundreth Anniversary of the Discovery of Canada

Your assistance is requested in the formation of a broadly representative Committee for the purposes above indicated. The four hundredth anniversary of the landing of John Cabot on Cape Breton will arrive on the 24th of June, 1897. It was the first discovery of the continent of America. It took place under the English flag, and heralded the course of English and French explorations along the Atlantic Coast and following the line of the St. Lawrence River and Gulf, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi. It was due to that discovery and those explorations that the Northern Coasts and the interior of the continent were made known to European nations, and became the scene of vigorous French and English colonization. To Canada, whose soil was the scene of Cabot's landing, appropriately falls the duty of honouring the memory of the discoverer. It is felt that the anniversary should be commemorated, both as that of an historic event of world-wide interest, and also as marking the accomplishment of an important consummation in the national career of Canada. The union created in 1867 has extended until it covers the northern half of the continent from Atlantic to Pacific. In the course of thirty years the Dominion then inaugurated has become firmly consolidated into a self-contained, and self-reliant nation, looking forward hopefully and resolutely to the utilization of vast resources. Its relations with the Imperial organization of which it forms a part have also rapidly ripened within the same period. The complete Federal autonomy of Canada within her own borders has been asserted and may now be said to be fully recognized. Her right to a participating voice in the negotiation, in the name of the Crown, of all international treaties, conventions, and controversies which affect her interests, is now practically conceded. When Canadian representatives are not actually present, as in the case of the Washington Treaty and the Behring Sea arbitration, it is well understood that the Crown will not hereafter act without due consultation with Her Majesty's Canadian advisers. In this sense a Federal centre of action also exists in substance if not in name. As an integral part of the Empire Canada has thus assumed her position, and has entered into the cognizance of foreign powers. The constitutional lines of development are settled, and further progress will be matter of detail. Time and occasion, therefore, seem to meet for celebrating the conclusion of a great and interesting era of political development, along with the event in which it has its beginning. It will be an appropriate demonstration of our substantial unity and permanency as a nation, notwithstanding diversities of origin and