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# ADDRESS

TO

## THE INHABITANTS OF CANADA.

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FELLOW COUNTRYMEN :—

It has been deemed by those who now address you, that the present is a fitting time to ascertain public opinion upon many important subjects, intimately connected with the social, commercial, and political welfare of the inhabitants of this Province.

These subjects are neither of transient interest nor of mere local importance. They relate to the very existence of the Colony itself; they concern the character of the nation to which we belong; and, as they are viewed and acted upon by the men of the present day, will affect the happiness and the fate of their posterity.

That commercial distress and general depression in every department of industry, exist throughout the Province, to an extent unparalleled in the previous existence of the Colony, is admitted by all men of unbiassed judgment and adequate opportunities of observation, by commercial men of the greatest experience, and political economists of every shade of opinion; who, while they all bear concurrent testimony to the truth of this statement, as a fact of which all alike must feel the mournful weight, differ nevertheless, to some extent, from each other, as to the immediate causes from which this result has flowed, and the prospective measures most likely to afford relief.

It is neither necessary nor proper for us at this time to pronounce an opinion upon causes, with respect to which many intelligent and experienced minds are in conflict with each other, or upon remedies requiring more general concurrence and authority, than of necessity belong to the limited sphere of duty now allotted to us. The discussion of these subjects will properly belong to the people of Canada. The duty of the Association which now addresses you, is of a preliminary nature merely. It is for us to point out the exigency of the time; for you to consider the causes from which that exigency has arisen, and to suggest the remedies best calculated to obtain relief. To *anticipate* public opinion upon matters of such deep and general interest, would be presumptuous and unwarrantable; to *invite* it, we hold to be no less our duty than our right. Many thoughtful and honest minds have been, latterly, applied to the consideration of the state of this Province.—They are the minds of men interested in its welfare, to the extent of all they possess in the world, or hope to transmit to their children; of men belonging to the most widely distributed race on the face of the globe, and speaking the prevailing language of this continent and of the Empire; who desire the prosperity of Canada, and with it the prosperity of the nation of which it forms a part; children of a monarchy, too magnanimous to proscribe, too great to be unjust; inhabitants of a Province ceded to England at the termination of a long and glorious struggle, aspiring to a career of virtuous emulation with the other dependencies of the Crown, and determined to be unchecked by the narrow jealousy of a peculiar internal and exclusive nationality, which, though entitled to perfect equality with the