

## The Bahamas and Canada.

### The Canadian View Point.

MR. MACAULAY'S ADDRESS BEFORE THE CANADIAN CLUB, Montreal, April 3rd, 1911.

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Canadian Club,—I have accepted with the utmost pleasure the invitation to address you to-day, for I appreciate the opportunity to discuss with such a representative body of business men one of the most interesting and important propositions which we Canadians have had to consider since we became a nation. My subject is "The Bahama Islands and their relation to our Dominion."

The Bahamas are a group of over two hundred islands, with a total area of about 5,450 square miles. About twenty of the larger islands are inhabited, though the settlements are but sparse. Their resources are as yet imperfectly developed. The total population is but 65,000, mostly colored.

The products include tropical fruits, such as grape-fruit, oranges, pineapples, cocoanuts, etc. Most of our winter tomatoes come from there. They also produce sisal fibre, which is used in the manufacture of binder twine and rope. The islands are the centre of the largest sponge fishery in the world.

The islands have had a very interesting history. It was on one of them, Watling's Island, that Columbus first landed, so that if we receive them into our Confederation, Canada will possess the spot on the North American continent with the most ancient historical associations. Later the islands became resorts of the buccaneers and pirates. Their intricate channels and numerous reefs rendered them an ideal refuge for these desperadoes. Later still, during the Civil War, they became the headquarters of the blockade runners, and the wrecks of some of these vessels are to be seen to this day piled up on the beach.

And finally the Legislature of the Bahamas has lately taken a step which may go down to history as one of the most important in the records of the British Empire. They have shown breadth of view and wisdom, by inviting the Canadian Government to a conference to consider the question of union with the Dominion, a step which may have far-reaching and most beneficial consequences, not merely for the islands and for Canada, but for the Empire.

You may, perhaps, be interested to know something of the agitation which has led up to this invitation. I ask your pardon for introducing the personal element, but it is necessary. Last January a party of friends went from Montreal on a pleasure trip to the islands. We naturally discussed the political and commercial conditions of the islands, and the desirability and feasibility of their admission to our Confederation grew on us. When we reached the islands we each took occasion, as opportunity presented, to tell our Bahama friends how much better off they would be as a Province of Canada. The suggestion met with a favor which surprised ourselves. Finally a public meeting was called in St. Andrew's Hall, which was crowded to the doors. Statecrafts have appeared in some of our papers here that there were 20,000 persons present, but that of course is absurd. I do not know how many were present, but I do know that the meeting was large, representative and enthusiastic. The Legislature cut its session short in order to attend, but when the members arrived they had to be satisfied with standing room. A resolution favoring union with the Dominion was carried with but two dissenting votes, and a committee of ways and means, consisting of six members of the legislature was appointed to carry the resolution into effect. This action was confirmed at a second meeting a week later. The matter in due course was brought up in the Legislature, and after full discussion, the motion passed the Lower House by a vote of twenty-two to five. Later it passed the Upper House unanimously, and the deed was done! In this connection I wish to say that there is one man to whom this movement owes a very great deal, and but for whose co-operation success would not have been achieved. That man is Mr. DeLery Macdonald, of Rigaud, whom I now have the pleasure of presenting to you. (Applause.) He worked continuously and enthusiastically, and he deserves the hearty appreciation which you have just shown.

Now for what reasons do we advocate this measure? I need not dwell here on the advantages to the Bahamas. What most concerns us are the advantages to Canada.

In the first place Nassau is an ideal winter resort. It has a delightful winter climate. There is the grandest of surf bathing, in water of about seventy-three degrees at the time when our own shores are ice-bound. If I were to speak to you of the fishing, I would certainly detain you too long, for I had the most glorious