

of the people, the energy of the settler, and the general halo of prosperity which surrounds you.

As a nation we have reason to be proud of much; as a people we have much to be thankful for; but, perhaps all the advantages we as a people possess, of all the national enterprise which we have shown, we have more reason to be proud of and to value the educational system in our midst and the educational advantages afforded to our youth. In this matter we may with safety challenge comparison with any people in the world. We have schools in our towns and villages, schools in townships and concession lines, schools in our cities and large centres, and free to all; schools for the farmer's child, schools for the mechanics' child, schools for the tradesman's family, and schools for the wealthy, and all free. The free school system is a great bounty to any land, but to a people such as us, largely composed of the immigrant classes of all countries, an industrious people, an advancing people, in a land where every honor and office is open to all, where no class distinction is a barrier to advancement, and where each must carve out his own future and fortune. I say, in such a land, with such a population, a school system such as ours is the greatest boon that can be conferred upon an intelligent people.

Then we have *high schools* and *colleges* and *schools of practical and theoretical sciences*, presided over by men of learning, and *Universities* under the direction of scholars of world-wide celebrity, from which, year by year, in large numbers, young men come forth to diffuse throughout the length and breadth of the land the education and information which they have thus been enabled to acquire.

I rejoice to find that this community is alive to the importance of education, and of the advantages to themselves and their children which will ensue from its furtherance. And I see in the undertaking which is now being commenced, an earnest that the people of Walkerton are determined not to be left behind other towns in securing for their youth the benefits of a good education.

I congratulate the people of this town upon the spirit and enterprise which they have shown in undertaking the erection of the large building now about to be erected on this site. I trust that it will answer all the purposes for which it is designed, and as such will prove a great convenience and advantage to the citizens of Walkerton and its vicinity, and that it will also in architectural design and completeness of arrangements not be surpassed by many at all events in the Province, and that it may prove a great ornament to this busy, rapidly increasing, and prosperous town; and I congratulate this community upon the marked progress of your beautiful town since I was last amongst you about five years ago.

I cannot conclude without a few words of reference to the day on which we inaugurate the work now to be commenced. On the anniversary of the natal day of our fair Dominion, when the scattered provinces under British rule on this continent were banded together into one country and were formed into one common people, not by the power of a bloody war, not by the force of a dominant power, but by the spontaneous action of a free and enlightened people; by the consent of all and with the aid and co-operation, and I may add, the blessing of the mother-land. The union of Canada was the signal for her marked prosperity, and she is now recognised as a powerful nation, with a territory extending from the Atlantic on the east to Pacific on the west, possessing the advantages of situation, a fertile soil capable of producing the most valuable staple products in demand, rich with mineral and forest wealth, with a population of nearly 5,000,000 souls, intelligent, industrious, active, energetic, moral and religious. Surely no one can wonder that we are conscious of an inward might and proud of our present and our future. May the Great Architect of the Universe pour down his richest blessings upon our loved land; may the bonds of loyalty to the dear old land across the seas be strengthened and bind us year by year closer in our attachment to the crown of England; may the dear old flag long wave over us; and may the Almighty bless our sovereign the Queen, guard, guide and comfort her; may brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us.

We will now proceed to lay the foundation stone according to ancient custom.

Bro. Waldo, Acting Grand Chaplain, then offered up the following prayer:

"Great Architect of the Universe, Maker and Ruler of all Worlds, deign from thy Celestial Temple, from realms of light and glory to help us in all the purposes of our present assembly. We humbly invoke thee to give us at this and all times, wisdom in all our doings, strength of mind in all our difficulties, and the beauty of harmony in all our communications. Permit us, O, Thou author of life and light, great source of love and happiness, to erect this building so that hereafter it may be useful for the important purposes for which it is intended. Glory be to God on High!"

Response.—As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. So mote it be.