

LORD STRATHCONA

It is a pleasure to state that, in the main, they have not abused their trust. When one considers the extent of their operations, the character of the people with whom they had to deal, the unrestricted opportunities and unrestrained authority which they possessed, the record of their administration for more than two centuries is an honorable one. They won the confidence of the Indians, and to the last exercised over them a wholesome and restraining influence. The Company was organized in an age when the tyrannical and intolerant spirit prevailed. In its earlier history we find evidence of that spirit in the administration of its affairs, but, as the years pass on, the kinder and more reasonable spirit which was growing in the older lands, found its way into this institution and modified the harsher modes which characterized its dealings in the first quarter of a century of its existence. It is true that it was a money-making concern, but it is also true that it carried on its business by honorable methods, that it was not indifferent to the mental and moral welfare of the people, that it maintained the traditions of the Old Land, that it was loyal to the old flag, and that, when the time came for it to relinquish its claim, it was able to hand over to the Government of Canada an enormous tract of country, bearing through all its wide extent the marks, in churches, schools and trading posts, of its beneficial control.