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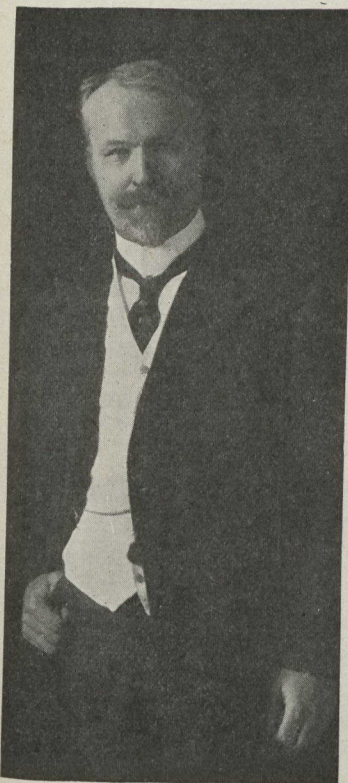
Canada Among the Nations

A Dream of Confederation Which Came True—and the Results

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It is the first business of Canadians to think about Canada. It is the mark of a good Canadian that he takes the Canadian point of view, sees with Canadian eyes, cherishes Canadian ideals, and helps to make Canadian dreams come true.



Dr. Macdonald.

If Canadian problems are not solved by the intelligent and thoughtful judgment of the people of Canada they will remain unsolved, or their solution will not make for the welfare of Canadians or for the prestige of Canada among the nations.

It is the first duty of the people of Britain to set themselves to solve the British problems. That is their business, not ours. So, too, with Australia, and New Zealand, and South Africa, and every other self-governing part of the Empire. We have all been charged to "think Imperially." A few years ago "thinking Imperially" was the mark of a progressive mind, as thinking

about the "over-soul" was in the previous generation, and thinking about the "referendum and recall" is to-day. But Imperial thinking is a very vague and vagrant exercise for those who have never thought clearly and to definite purpose on national affairs and on local problems. If the strength of the wolf is the pack, the real strength of the pack is also the wolf. Empire is a reality, strong and enduring, only in so far as the component parts of what is called Empire are free to develop each in its own way and to its own ideal of citizenship and service. It is for this reason I start out with the affirmation that the first duty of Canadians is to think about Canada.

WHAT CANADA HAS DONE.

CANADA has already done something in world politics which gives her a place among the nations. We are sometimes told that Canada has nothing to her credit. We are assured that whatever Canada has she owes to Britain. Canada has no army and her militia is only sufficient for her own needs, and for a navy we have only a debate in Parliament. Because of all this we are admonished to be humble and not to think of Canada more highly than we ought to think.

My answer to all that lotty talk is this: The facts of history make it plain that were it not for Canadians there would be no Canada, and were it not for Canada there could have been no British Empire.

What is Canada? It is a confederation of all the

Provinces of British North America into one national unit, governing itself in all Canadian matters, controlling its own revenues, choosing its own national policies, and yet an integral part of the British Empire and loyal to the person and throne of the British sovereign. And every one of those elements in Canada's status as a self-governing Dominion within the Empire is the result of Canadian choice, of Canadian statesmanship and of Canada's deliberate action.

Let no Canadian be ignorant or forgetful of the fact that if the old colonial subjection has been changed into the national self-government of to-day, that achievement was the work of a past generation of Canadians. And in that achievement, in their effort to establish free national institutions without breaking the ties of tradition and affection and historical relation that bound Canada to the mother country, those first Canadian nationalists had no precedent. The thing they undertook to do had never before been done in the world's history. No colony of any Empire, ancient or modern, had ever achieved full self-government except by cutting the painter and striking for independence. The American Colonies in the 18th century were the next-door example for the Canadian Provinces in the 19th century. The American illustration meant self-government but not Empire. Canada dreamed of both.

Those Canadian pioneers had no precedents. They were pathfinders, the true pathfinders of Empire. William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis Papineau blazed the trail. Baldwin and Lafontaine laid deep and strong the foundations. George Brown and John A. Macdonald reared the walls and set the keystone. And when the superstructure of the Dominion stood foursquare it was a new thing in the political architecture of the world. It embodied a new idea. And the vital power of that idea made possible the world-empire of Britain.

Let there be no mistake at this point. It is of fundamental importance. The old Roman idea of empire was disproved. Centralized authority over subject states could not endure, even with Rome, when those states were far-scattered, resourceful, and isolated by the sea. The case of the American colonies proved the impotence of that "Imperium" idea in the government of men of the British breed. Germany's experience with her African possessions is another illustration to-day.

That very same problem faced Canada last century. Canadians demanded self-government. It had to come, either by independence or by some other unexperimented way. Even so late as the date of Confederation public opinion in Britain favoured the independence of Canada. Both Beaconsfield and Gladstone favoured it. They saw no other way by which Canada could come to exercise the required rights of self-government. They had not seen the Canadian vision. The dream had not come to them.

But to Canadians came that vision, dimly at first, fitfully, but ever beckoning, pointing the way to new outposts of civil liberty, crossing the margin beyond which old time loyalty feared to go. It was the vision of the new Canada. It was the dream of a free nation—a new free nation that should lead a procession of unborn sovereign states which one day would belt the world with the Imperial flag of Britain. Canada was first to see the gleam, and

first to follow. Then out of her penal twilight Australia saw it, and New Zealand, and so under the Southern Cross there rose a new Commonwealth and a new Dominion. Less than a decade ago across the blood and fire of the veldt the vision passed, and in its light Boer and British joined hands in the new Dominion of South Africa.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the self-governing Colony of Newfoundland, those five overseas dominions of the King, are to the homeland of Britain like the five fingers of a great hand. They are all free; they are all vitally related; and they all close towards the palm. And on the stretched forefinger of that great hand the name of "Canada," first and brightest jewel of them all, sparkles forever.

CANADA IN THE EMPIRE.

WHAT is Canada's place in the Empire? That question is in the very forefront of political debate to-day, not in Canada alone but in Britain. It raises the same vexed question for all the other Dominions. It cannot be hushed or blinked or side-stepped. It must be faced squarely, with open eyes and resolute minds. Facing that question may demand in this generation and on the great scale of Empire the same downrightness and unflinching loyalty to principle demanded by the struggle for Canada's self-government on the narrower stage of the Canadian Provinces three generations ago.

Canada's place in the Empire? Answer that question honestly and you show your hand. Either you stand on this side, for the uncompromised national independence within Imperial relations which Canada, in principle and more and more in fact, has already achieved; or you stand on that side, for the surrender of some part of Canada's autonomy, and for the return, in principle and also in fact, to something of the rejected rule of Downing Street and the Family Compact. No middle course is open.

Three-quarters of a century ago Lord Durham made his epoch-marking report. That new epoch ushered in effective Parliamentary government at once representative of Canadian opinion and responsible to the people of Canada. Through all these years of struggle and change Canada has had statesmen who knew the seasons when to take occasion by the hand and make the bounds of Canada's freedom wider yet. The widening of Canada's freedom, stage by stage, has given the lie to the doubts and fears of those who charged that liberty and self-government would destroy the loyalty of Canadians and lead to separation from Britain.

The prophets of distrust wailed at our fathers, as they wail now at us, that freedom meant independence or annexation. Two generations of Canada's growing freedom gives back their answer. A free people are never disloyal to their flag unless that flag spells servitude or is stained with dishonour. A free people—free to govern themselves even though their government be bad, free to frame their own laws even though they work injustice, free to burden themselves and to throw off their burdens, free to tax themselves into poverty and to knock the shackles from their industry and trade, free to endure the loss of their own folly and to enjoy the fruits of their own labour—such a people, free, independent, self-governing, are never disloyal. Such freedom is Canada's to-day, and because of that freedom all Canadians are loyal to Canada and to Britain and to the great alliance of free nations owning allegiance to the King.

But such freedom is compromised in every scheme