

good to us! The abundant harvest has done much for the industrious husbandman who tilled the fields, and it has been a boon and a blessing to all our people.

The increase in the trade of Canada during some years past is indeed remarkable and it is, to most of us, I would like to think it will be to all of us, gratifying to notice that a great stride in the trade of this country was made immediately after the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier assumed office. That growth was not ephemeral, but has continued over a period of six or seven years, and it is already apparent that the returns for the current year when brought down will show a still further marked advance. The immigration policy which was inaugurated by the government shortly after it came into office has been successful in attracting the experienced farmers of the middle and western states of this continent to the rich prairie lands of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories of Canada, where millions of acres bear testimony to the superior productivity of the soil as compared with anything heretofore known.

It has been the great opportunity and privilege of Sir Wilfrid Laurier more than of any other Canadian to direct the attention of Britain and the British empire, and through them, the other countries of Europe to the growing importance of Canada and its natural resources. We will recall that at the diamond jubilee of 1897 he was a distinguished figure. At the various meetings which he was invited to address throughout England and Scotland he was able to bring before the people of the old land the important progress which this country was making. Later by the adoption of the tariff providing for British preference, again at the Coronation of His Most Gracious Majesty the King, and at the colonial conference which followed subsequently, he was enabled to emphasize the importance of our preferential tariff to British trade and also to call attention to the advantage to be gained by greater community of interest in colonial as well as imperial interests for the sake of, and the benefit and advantage of the whole empire. The natural effect has been to bring Canada, its resources, its products and its manufacturers to the notice of the whole civilized world, to enhance the im-

portance of the country, to present its advantages and to make known more widely its attractiveness as a home for millions in the older countries who are looking for one in which their condition would be improved.

The present means of access to much the largest and perhaps most valuable part of our Northwest is not sufficient to provide for the incoming thousands of settlers. Nor do they afford anything like sufficient transportation facilities for the grain and other products of the vast areas now being opened up and settled. This makes it imperatively necessary that further avenues of transportation should be opened up with all possible speed, for the purpose of bringing to the markets of the world through our own seaports the products of the west as well as for the development and settlement of large tracts of the older provinces.

To judge of a country, its condition and progress, it is not enough to look at its statesmen, its educational or scientific institutions, its situation and natural advantages, but we should also look at the means of communication it possesses, at the means afforded the people to exchange commodities, to export their surplus products and to interchange thoughts and ideas. The railway is an essential requisite to a thrifty, peaceful and prosperous country such as ours. It is the forerunner of population. It is the pioneer of enterprise; enterprise provides employment, and employment begets prosperity.

The Canadian people believe in their country. They have faith in themselves and in their ability to develop the resources of their country, and they have confidence in the government securing for the people the full benefit to be gained by the early construction and completion of the new Transcontinental Railway.

The Canadian people therefore will be glad to know that there is no longer any obstacle to the immediate prosecution of that work, and they will welcome the assurance of the work being done to meet the pressing necessity which will each year be more and more felt for the development and progress of the country.

Seward, the great American statesman, on one occasion, speaking of Canada, said:

I see in British America a region vast enough to contain an empire. Its immense wheatfields. Chains of mountains. Great waterways. Inexhaustible forests. The richest of