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Canada's Fiftieth Birthday: July 1st, 1867-1917

AT Confederation We Had a Mile of Track for Every 1,480 People; To-day, for Every 214—Some Striking Changes in the Past Half Century—Fifty Years Ago, We Had Only Two Markets, But Now We Trade With 45 Countries.

By FRANK YEIGH.

WONDERFUL is the story of Canada's growth in a half-century, thrilling the tale of expansion between 1867 and 1917, on this fiftieth anniversary of Confederation. More than half-a-century of development is contained in the mere toll of the years since the first Dominion Day and the last. Progress becomes cumulative in a country, until the ratio of advance is far greater than at the beginning, and this is true of Canada since she became a Dominion, as the story will prove.

It is interesting to recall the prophecies of Confederation by the two leaders responsible for its coming to pass. John A. Macdonald said: "When we become a nation of eight or nine million inhabitants, our alliance will be worthy of being sought by the great nations of the earth." George Brown said: "It needs no special wisdom to perceive that a state presenting such resources and offering such varied and lucrative employment to the immigrant and the capitalist, would at once occupy a high position. It would be something to be a citizen of such a state."

Canada's population has more than doubled between 1867 and 1917, or from 3,371,594 to an estimated total of 8,000,000.

The census increase of the last decade, 1901-1911, was 34 per cent., as against 23 per cent. in the United States.

The population is, however, shifting from the country to the city. The increase of the rural population between 1901-1911 was 17.16 per cent.; of the urban, 62.25 per cent.

Canada's population to the square mile in 1867 was slightly over 1; in 1917, slightly over 2; in Great Britain, 471; France, 190; United States, 33.

Three-fourths of Canada's population is British-born. When the Dominion was started on its national career, the three million population was largely homogeneous. Few tongues were heard, and they of the few parent stocks. English, French, German, these three chiefly, but what a change now. Since the tides of immigration have set in Canadaward, nearly fifty nationalities and races have been represented in a single year in this human inflow, speaking as many languages and dialects.

In 20 years, 3,294,000 entered Canada, of which British were 38 per cent., foreign 27 per cent, American

36 per cent. From being a composite people in 1867, Canada has become a melting pot of the nations, a world map in miniature.

Canada's foreign trade in 1867 was only \$131,027,532, about the same amount as the customs receipts are now. This Confederation total has since increased over seven-teen-fold, to \$2,249,170,171, viz., imports, \$845,330,903, exports, \$1,151,375,768.

Then, and for many years after, the imports exceeded the exports; in 1916-17 the exports exceeded the imports by \$306,044,865, or nearly three times the total trade of 1867.

In 1867 Canada's foreign trade was as limited in geographical area as in amount, practically to the British Isles and the United States; now, Canada does business with 45 countries.

Canada's foreign trade in 1867 comprised a comparatively few articles or lines of manufacture; to-day, most of her 300 kinds of manufactures are among the exports, or the raw products in the imports.

Canada's foreign trade is now two and a half times as much per capita as that of the United States.

Banking in 1867 was conducted through only a few branches; to-day 21 chartered banks transact business through 3,200 branches. Then, the branches were confined to the few centres of population; now they cover the rural localities and have penetrated to remote corners and new-born villages. For every dollar of paid-up capital in 1867, there are \$4 to-day,—a rise from \$30,289,048 to \$111,627,000. Each dollar of deposits has jumped to \$37, until to-day at a total of \$1,346,000,000 they have reached the highest point in the country's history, representing about \$150 per head of the population. For every dollar loaned by the banks to the public in 1867, \$16 was loaned in 1916-17.

For every mile of railway at Confederation, there are seventeen now. The 2,278 miles have multiplied to 37,434,—enough to span the continent, from Atlantic to Pacific, eight times; enough to exceed the combined mileage of Australia, New Zealand, Italy and Spain; enough to girdle the globe four times.

At Confederation there was a mile of track for every 1,480 of the population; to-day, there is a mile for every 214—making a world record.