

CANADA AND THE EMPIRE

A SYMPOSIUM

*I.—By Sir Gilbert Parker, M.P., London**

IT is a pleasure to me to be asked by the CANADIAN MAGAZINE to send a few words of greeting from London at a time when the eyes of the Empire are turned towards the centre. As one who has devoted a good many years of his life to writing, and who has a love of literature, and as a politician whose only warrant for his place in the House of Commons lies in a considerable knowledge of the Colonies and acquaintance with foreign nations, I congratulate the CANADIAN MAGAZINE on its success and the usefulness of its work. It is one of the signs of the times. It is the first Canadian magazine to have a literary and a financial success. That is an achievement in a country where over one-third of the population speak French, a country invaded by long established and excellent American magazines. It is significant that its success has been the success of a review as well as that of a magazine. It has lived, I believe, by virtue of ideas more than by virtue of mere appeal to the eye, or the interest of the incidental article.

There is no portion of the British Empire so devoted to ideas and to ideals as Canada. There is no portion of the Empire which has had such serious problems to face, nor so steadfastly and sagely met the difficulties of those problems. She was the premier Colony; she is the premier nation of those tributary nations which move towards the purposes of a common civilization under the British flag. Canada has had a hard fight to maintain her position with a nation at her south fiscally antagonistic and commercially dominant. She has held her own. I believe her hour of commercial danger is past, because the severest strain came while yet she was an agricultural country. It would seem that nothing but some forlorn miracle of disaster would destroy her prospects now. Born in Canada, as I was, I am glad and proud to know in what profound respect she is held here at the centre. When I first began work in London, many years ago, Canada was a painful distance away, to the minds of the majority of Englishmen. How near she has come within those thirteen years—that is, practically, since the first Jubilee of Queen Victoria! Englishmen have learned that Toronto and Montreal are not provincial to any degree greater than Birmingham or Edinburgh. It is a lack of ideas; it is a contraction of sentiment; it is a want of imagination, and the absence of distinction, which make provincialism. Judged by that standard, Canada is not provincial; she has contributed in a high degree to true Imperialism. From her proceeded the spirit which gave us the Imperial Federation League and the British Empire League; and such men as Sir Charles Tupper and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, on the one hand, and

* This message from Sir Gilbert Parker was written prior to the announcement of the postponement of the coronation.—EDITOR.