

cause of her power at sea, but to maintain her rank among her sister nations, she could not afford to be baffled either in diplomacy or in war. Had the campaign against Canada failed, her reputation as a war power would have been greatly damaged, and Pitt, the Great Commoner, who was then at the head of the War Department, would have failed in maintaining his authority in the councils of Europe. What were the many millions which he spent in the conquest of Canada, compared to the prestige and the distinction, which it conferred upon British statesmen, and the dread with which it invested her army and navy?

And lastly, the acquisition of French Canada gave to Great Britain a frontal entrance to her western possessions in North America. What would the great Northwest be worth to Canada to-day if a foreign country intervened between it and the Atlantic Ocean? Accessible directly only by Hudson Bay, it would be isolated from the world, except for a few months each year. The great waterways reaching half across the continent would be under foreign control, and the prairies of the West would be as isolated as Central Africa. To acquire Canada was to connect the east and the west, and to lay the foundation for that Canadian Empire which so happily responds to the impulses of nationhood and is already so rich in promise and so commanding in its possibilities.

And now having endeavored to interpret the significance of the events to which I have called your attention, let me ask you if it is not a fitting thing that we should rejoice in the memories they awaken and the national consequences to which they gave birth. The founding of Quebec brings us back three centuries—back to the days of the earliest explorations of North America—to the days when European civilization first laid its hand upon the new world. What a plunge into the past. Earlier than the commonwealth. Earlier than the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers. Who would not rejoice in the ancient lineage of this sacred spot—sacred to the first throbbings of a new nation—sacred to the memory of the old regime—of Frontenac and Laval—and sacred alike to those of later days, to Dorchester and Durham and the Fathers of Confederation. Fill up its history as you may, with all the modern innovations in architecture and transportation so familiar in other cities, yet Quebec still stands with the tracery of the olden days on every feature, and the legends of the old regime on every page of its history. Quaint, old city, the dearest link in our connection with the past as well as the historical centre of all that modern civilization has done for British America.