

## CANADA'S FIRST CENTURIES

MUCH is heard, in these days, about French Canadian claims of pioneering precedence in Canada. French Canadian statesmen and writers are continually asserting the priority of the settlements made by their ancestors, as if the fact of such priority were disputed. During the session of parliament in 1906 this was notably the case, and it became evident that these expressions of racial sentiment were prompted by undercurrents of feeling, approaching resentment. It is true, unfortunately, that there is a tendency among certain English speakers and writers to ignore these claims. Yet we all know, or perhaps it would be better to say, most well-informed English-speaking people of Canadian birth or those who have been for any considerable period in the Dominion are acquainted with the fact, that the French were the pioneers of Canada south of Hudson Bay. Even the school histories of the English-speaking Canadian children teach that the first colonists in Canada were French, and that the ancestors of the French Canadian population made good their footing at a great cost of suffering and of life.

There are, indeed, probably few children who have not learned by heart the story of French colonization in Canada, of the early Indian wars and massacres, the tragic famines and horrible privations, and the heroism of those first days on the banks of the St. Lawrence and in Acadia. Such impressions sink deep into the mind, and to the average English-speaking native-born Canadian, therefore, it is an elementary truth that the foundations of the heritage of the Canadian people south of Hudson Bay were laid by the hands and cemented by the blood of the men and women