

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA,

No. 9 VICTORIA CHAMBERS,

LONDON, S.W., 20th December, 1886.

To the Honourable JOHN CARLING,

Minister of Agriculture.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit to you my report upon the part taken by the Dominion of Canada in the Exhibition of the Colonies and India of 1886. In doing so, I may state, in the first place, that I feel it is desirable that I should allude to the extent to which the whole world is indebted to the Royal family of England for the initiation and promotion of international exhibitions, and that I should dwell for a moment on the grandeur of the idea which first suggested itself to the thoughtful mind of Prince Albert, and which took form in the Great Exhibition of 1851. A new and royal road to knowledge was then pointed out to the nations, to knowledge of their own and each other's needs, and of the needs possessed by the sum of nations of supplying those needs, or to be sought out by the aid of the insight gained by their coming together. So vast and so precious was the knowledge thus acquired, and so impossible was it to obtain it by any other means, that the road pointed out by Prince Albert in 1851 has never been abandoned. One after another, and some of them many times, the nations have trodden this path, which they soon discovered to be the only one which could guide them to a knowledge of their relative positions, and enable them to adjust their mutual relations. This recognition by the whole world of the indispensability of these family gatherings of the nations, is the highest tribute which could be paid to the wise and beneficent genius of their royal initiator; and by this recognition the world confesses that, had Prince Albert conferred no other benefit, this service alone would place him among the greatest benefactors of the human race.

From the noble and touching allusion made by the Prince of Wales in his address to the Queen at the opening of the Exhibition, there can be no doubt that the memory and the example of his great father were present with him when he conceived the idea of assembling together the dependencies of Great Britain for purposes resembling those of the Great Exhibition of 1851. So early as the year 1883, the Prince made it known that this idea had already received his consideration, and the ability with which it was subsequently evolved will appear more and more clearly as we proceed with the story of this memorable year. In his speech at the close of the Fisheries Exhibition, His Royal Highness said:—

"At the close of the Paris Exhibition of 1868, I had the satisfaction of receiving, from the Colonial Commissioners, an address in which great stress was laid on the desirability of establishing a permanent Colonial Museum in London, as a powerful means of diffusing throughout the mother country a better knowledge of the nature and importance of the several dependencies of the Empire, of facilitating commercial relations, marking progress, aiding the researches of men of science, and also of affording valuable information to emigrants.